

**UNESCO Chair of Lifelong Guidance and  
Counselling: Conference *Career Guidance, Education  
and Dialogue for a Fair and Sustainable Human  
Development (Orientation, conseil et dialogue pour  
un développement humain durable)*,  
Wrocław, November 26-27, 2013**

In March 2013, Irina Bokova, Secretary General of UNESCO, and Professor Marek Bojarski, Rector of the University of Wrocław, signed an agreement that set up the international UNESCO Chair of Lifelong Guidance and Counselling at the University of Wrocław. Partner universities which co-founded the Chair include the Institute of Pedagogy at the University of Wrocław, Institut National d'Étude du Travail et d'Orientation Professionnelle (INETOP, France), the Universidad de Buenos Aires (Argentina), and the Université de Koudougou (Burkina Faso). The Chair is headed by world-famous Professor Jean Guichard (INETOP, France).

The initiative to establish the Chair arose in the context of social, cultural and economic transformations sweeping across the ambiguous and complicated contemporary world. Segmentation of the labour market causes increasingly more people to face prolonged periods of difficulty, which thwart vocational development and preclude decent life. As a result of changes in the work organisation systems, employees are expected to display quite different competencies than those demanded of them but a few years ago, which necessitates changes in vocational preparation and training. For this reason, it is a matter of urgency today to ensure equitable access to education for all, implement lifelong learning policies and foster equal opportunities. Education is assisted by supportive interventions provided by vocational guidance and career counselling.

Multiple documents emphasise the importance of promoting such developments in social life. The European Commission's communication titled *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* (2001) regards vocational guidance as a prerequisite of development and implementation of lifelong learning strategies at the national level and as a priority action area for individual countries and united Europe. In the May 2004 resolution *Guidance Throughout Life in Europe*, The

Council of the European Union endorsed vocational guidance as a significant component of educational, training and employment policies that effectively contributes to the formation of the knowledge society. *Education & Training 2010: Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms*, an interim report on the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, presents vocational guidance as a key factor in creating open, attractive and accessible learning environments. The report insists also on strengthening the role, quality, and coordination of guidance services to support learning across age groups and social backgrounds as well as to make it easier for all citizens to manage their education and career development (Sultana, 2004).

Discussing the role of and challenges to guidance and counselling in the age of globalisation and insecurity, Mark Savickas, Jean Guichard, Maria Eduarda Duarte et al. (2010, pp. 8-9) emphasise that counsellors need to provide their clients with life-long assistance, helping and supporting them in developing competencies indispensable in vocational life and career designing. In such conjuncture, contemporary counselling interventions must help individuals prepare for transitions, support them in coping with transitions, assist them in relocating across „contexts,” engaging with, but also detaching themselves from the roles they fulfil, and in assessing risks and opportunities inherent in these roles (Guichard, 2007).

Such interventions are of particular importance in the case of social groups which are underprivileged, marginalised and/or discriminated against. They should target first of all the vulnerable: young people (especially school-leavers without any formal diploma or vocational certification), women (especially those who re-enter the labour market after a break), the elderly and immigrants.

As the UNESCO Chair of Lifelong Guidance and Counselling supports dissemination of education, equal opportunities, creation of open systems and optimisation of educational and vocational choices, it can foster emancipation and social advancement of these social groups. It stands a fair chance of success, especially if it manages to take advantage of the combined effort of multiple research teams which engage in advocacy and activism for removal of social barriers and inequalities (particularly the age- and gender-related ones) as well as for competence development and management. It seeks to promote an integrated system of research, life-long learning opportunities, information and documentation activities in the field of educational and vocational counselling. In this way, the Chair's operations align with the priorities articulated and implemented by UNESCO.

The Chair's objectives include:

- creation of a widely accessible platform for exchange of good practice – methods, techniques and tools used in career counselling;
- promotion of exchange of information on methods applied in career counselling through the foundation of Observatory and organisation of open lectures, seminars, workshop, regular scientific meetings and international conferences;
- designing and development of career counsellor training curricula and professional development programmes for career counselling specialists/practitioners;

- coordination of research projects and programmes, supervision of Ph.D. research and dissertations and organisation of Visiting Lecturers' exchange;
- close collaboration with UNESCO under relevant cooperation programmes.

The Chair's activities are supposed to foster reflection on various assistance and support models in lifelong career counselling. This should contribute to propagation of valuable innovations, dissemination of achieved results, implementation of innovative solutions and formulation of recommendations for the further development of lifelong career counselling in a range of geographical and cultural settings.

The UNITWIN/UNESCO scheme under which Chairs are set up worldwide facilitates collaboration of researchers from renowned universities and other higher education institutions from Europe, Africa, Latin America and other regions of the world. Such cooperation of many partners helps transfer knowledge across frontiers, develop innovative education and training programmes for counsellors and launch such services as distant learning based on modern technologies.

Currently the Board of the UNESCO Chair of Lifelong Guidance and Counselling, headed by Prof. J. Guichard (INETOP, France), includes dr. Violetta Drabik-Podgórna and dr. Marek Podgórný (the Chair coordinators for Poland, Institute of Pedagogy, University of Wrocław), Prof. Diana Aisenon and Prof. Gabriela Aisenon (University of Buenos Aires, Argentina), Prof. Valerie Cohen Scali and Prof. Jean-Luc Bernaud (INETOP, France), Prof. Issa Moumoula (Université de Koudougou, Burkina Faso), Prof. Jacques Pouyol (University of Segalen Bordeaux, France) and Prof. Jean-Pierre Dauwalder (University of Lausanne, Switzerland).

To officially celebrate the establishment of the Chair, an international scientific conference – *Career Guidance, Counselling and Dialogue for a Sustainable Human Development* – was organised at the University of Wrocław on November 26-27, 2013, under the auspices of Prof. M. Bojarski, Rector of the University of Wrocław, Prof. Elżbieta Kościak, Dean of the Faculty of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences, Rafał Dutkiewicz, Mayor of Wrocław, Rafał Jurkowlaniec, Governor of the Lower Silesia province, the Polish UNESCO Committee, the Embassy of France in Poland, and L'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (Frankophone University Agency).

A vibrant event, the conference assembled scholars from as many as 16 countries and 5 continents (Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Lebanon, Lithuania, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, the RSA, and Switzerland), delegates of 6 associations of career counselling researchers and practitioners (International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance – AIOSEP/IAEVG, Division 16: Counselling Psychology of IAAP, European Society for Vocational Designing and Career Counselling – ESDVC, Association des Conseillers d'Orientation-Psychologues de France – ACO-PF, Naukowe Towarzystwo Poradownicze – NTP [Counsellogical Association], Stowarzyszenie Doradców Szkolnych i Zawodowych RP – SDSiZ RP [Polish Association of School and Vocational Counsellors]), and representatives of Wydział Edukacji

Miasta Wrocławia [Education Department of the City of Wrocław], Centrum Informacji i Planowania Kariery [Wrocław Information and Career Planning Centre] and Wrocławskie Centrum Akademickie [Wrocław Academic Centre].

The conference was officially opened by Prof. M. Bojarski, Rector of the University of Wrocław, Prof. Adam Jezierski, Vice-Rector of the University, and Prof. E. Kościk, Dean of the Faculty of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences. An opening address was also given by Prof. Jan Sadlak, President of the IREG-OBSERVATORY (International Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence).

Prof. Alicja Szelaǳ, Head of the Institute of Pedagogy, in a brief talk summarised research interests and achievements of the Institute, highlighting long-standing collaboration with the French partner, which had laid foundations for the UNESCO Chair of Lifelong Guidance and Counselling. The representatives of the founding universities outlined the tenets and objectives of the UNESCO Chair. In the opening lecture, Prof. J. Guichard elaborated on *career counselling, education and dialogue for a sustainable human development*.

Over the two days, the conference was arranged in four sessions. The first one, devoted to *Developing Innovative and Effective Interventions in the Domains of Career and Personal Development*, was chaired by Prof. Issa Moumoula (Université de Koudougou, Burkina Faso) and Prof. Jean-Pierre Dauwalder (University of Lausanne, Switzerland). The speakers tackled a range of issues. Prof. Marcelline Bangali (Laval University, Québec, Canada) proposed a *reflective approach* to analysing *competence promotion strategies*; Prof. Jean-Pierre Dauwalder presented *integrating competencies, life-designing and innovation as a European challenge*; Prof. Kobus Maree (University of Pretoria, RSA) argued for *combining quantitative and qualitative career counselling techniques and strategies to facilitate "best practice"*; Prof. I. Moumoula introduced the conference participants to *tools and methods of intervention in vocational guidance in Burkina Faso*; and Prof. Guðbjörg Vilhjálmisdóttir (University of Iceland) reported on *developing an integrated guidance system on the Internet*.

The second session, which focused on *Counsellors' Competencies: Education and Training of Career Practitioners*, was chaired by Prof. Marcel Monett (Laval University, Québec, Canada) and Prof. Jacques Pouyaud (University of Bordeaux, France). Prof. Bernd-Joachim Ertelt (HdBA, Mannheim, Germany) discussed *career counsellors' competencies and education* in an international, comparative perspective; Prof. M. Monette went in some detail on *contextualised education at Laval University*; Prof. Maria Paula Paixão and Prof. Jose Tomas da Silva (University of Coimbra, Portugal) gave an account of the current status of the *counsellors' competence training programme in Portugal*; Prof. J. Pouyaud referred to the *PEDRO project* as an example of *practical training and supervision of counsellors within the life-designing framework*; and Raza Abbas (Bahria University, Pakistan) highlighted the urgency of devising a *counsellors/practitioners development programme for under-developed and developing countries*.

The third session, which addressed *Current Research Issues in the Domains of Career and Personal Development*, was chaired by Prof. Gabriela Aisenson (University of Buenos Aires, Argentina) and Prof. Valerie Cohen Scali (INETOP, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, Paris, France). Prof. G. Aisenson focused on *social problems faced by the youth in Argentina*, defining them as *challenges to practice* and outlining *major research fields explored by the vocational counselling psychology team* at the University of Buenos Aires. Prof. V. Cohen Scali talked about *approaches and emergent research frameworks in vocational counselling in France*; Prof. Maria Eduarda Duarte (University of Lisbon, Portugal) advocated *making bridges between theory and practice, between research and intervention*; Prof. Geneviève Fournier (Laval University, Québec, Canada) discussed *directions of research at Laval University and globalisation as a context for the development of career counselling sciences*. Prof. Annamaria Di Fabio (University of Florence, Italy) used *Italian scholarship* as an example illustrating *the transition from tradition to innovation in lifelong career counselling*; Prof. Christian Heslon (Université Catholique de l'Ouest, Angers, France) highlighted the *subjective age incidences on choice and orientation in lifelong career*; Prof. Kęstutis Pukelis (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania) sketched briefly the “*gravitation*” theory as a *theory of self-counselling*; and Prof. Marcelo Ribeiro (University of Sao Paulo, Brazil) thematised *precariousness and instability of labour as challenges to career counselling research*.

The last session was devoted to presenting Polish perspectives on *career counselling and counsellology*.<sup>1</sup> It was chaired by dr. Violetta Drabik-Podgórna and dr. Marek Podgórný (Institute of Pedagogy, University of Wrocław), coordinators of the UNESCO Chair for Poland. The papers delivered in the session exemplified the counsellological discourse introduced by Prof. Alicja Kargulowa (University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław), who recapitulated the stages of constructing counsellology over decades of research and sketched its current status; Prof. Magdalena Piorunek (Department of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań) charted *empirical exploration fields relevant to biographical career patterns*; Prof. Andrzej Ładyżyński (Institute of Pedagogy, University of Wrocław) argued that *family* could be viewed as a *career-designing space* since *career is made possible by family*; and dr. V. Podgórna reflected on the *ethical dimension of career counselling and counselling studies*, underscoring *anthropological and dialogue-sensitive thinking*.

Importantly, the conference sessions attracted a very wide audience, including not only scholars, researchers, and counselling practitioners, but also Ph.D. candidates and students training for the counselling profession.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Prof. J. Guichard „*Counsellology can be defined – in line with Alicja Kargulowa’s work – as an anthropology based on the insight that man is fundamentally a speaking being able to look at things from the perspective of the other, and, in doing so, to give advice to other people or to him/herself as well as to receive advice from others or from him/herself* (Prof. Guichard’s conference report is available at [www.pedagogika.uni.wroc.pl/unesco](http://www.pedagogika.uni.wroc.pl/unesco)).

The Chair's immediate plans include further expansion and creation of a university cooperation network. By definition and from the very start an international enterprise, the Chair is a perfect cradle of a network of resources, development, research, counsellor training and professionalisation, which, though transnational, preserves and respects the cultural specificity of each member institution and state.

Violetta Drabik-Podgórna

Marek Podgórný

(Translated from Polish by Patrycja Poniatowska)

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