



Migration, educational and career guidance and social inclusion

Andreas Fejes¹ · Manon Chamberland² · Ronald G. Sultana³

Accepted: 31 August 2021

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature B.V. 2021

Migration: a complex picture

International migration has increased substantially during the last two decades, increasing by more than 50% between 2000 and 2019—and reaching 272 million in 2019. 3.5 million of these were asylum seekers. Migration flows are triggered by numerous factors, including natural disasters, global warming, social unrest and war, family reunions, changing employment patterns as well as a global need for skilled workers (Faber & Schlegel, 2017; Shan & Fejes, 2015). All migrants face challenges in adapting to their new life circumstances in the new host country. However, asylum seekers are often in a specifically precarious situation—often living in a refugee accommodation (or the equivalent) hoping for a positive response to their application for asylum (see e.g. Dahlsted & Fejes, 2021; Eurofound, 2016).

However, no matter the reasons for leaving one's country of birth, migration is challenging in terms of inclusion, for migrants as well as for the new host country. How can migrants be supported in order to gain access to the labour market and the "host" society more widely? This question comprises a number of policy challenges and institutional innovations not only for governments, regional organizations and municipalities but also for social partners and a civil society more broadly.

Such challenges do not only arise due to the different reasons for which people migrate. Such people, after all, constitute a very diverse group, something which is often neglected or downplayed in the media and in public debates. Migrants are of different ages and genders, have different educational backgrounds and labour market experience, and come from different national and cultural contexts. The only thing they might have in common is their current or recent relocation to a new geographical setting. Failure to take such diversity into account when supporting

✉ Andreas Fejes
Andreas.fejes@liu.se

¹ Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden

² FSE Département des fondements et pratiques en éducation, Université Laval, Quebec, Canada

³ Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

migrants towards their path to social inclusion does not only invite failure from the start: it also signals an inability to recognize and respect the other.

However, migrants—and asylum seekers especially so—have to face several problems and ever-changing conditions with regard to the formal assessment of their identity and citizenship, their living conditions and their relation to the local community, to social networks, to labour market and to welfare and caring institutions. From the point of view of individuals and families, the migration journey is a complex process of life transition and entails everyday learning in an effort to adapt to new conditions. Such a process might be easier for some and more challenging for others. For most if not all, however, educational and occupational background, recognition of prior learning, as well as language proficiency are crucial components that contribute, in no small measure, to the adaptation to the ‘host’ society and to access to the labour market.

As a mediator between migrants’ previous experiences of education and work, educational and career guidance becomes essential in supporting the newly-arrived on their path towards social inclusion. Seen from a social justice perspective, this mediating position triggers a whole host of questions, especially when considering the challenge of taking diversity, whether cultural or otherwise, into account. The response that educational and career guidance can make to cater for the successful integration of migrants and refugees is the theme of this special issue. Contributors draw on their research and experience in order to shed light on a number of central questions and issues that many societies—including practitioners across a range of linked professions and occupations—have to face. Such questions include the following:

- What role does educational and career guidance play in supporting migrants and refugees on their path towards social inclusion?
- What are the challenges that need to be faced when it comes to providing educational and vocational guidance services for migrants and refugees?
- What can we learn from the efforts of educational and career guidance services in our effort to respond to the needs of migrants and refugees in different countries?
- What kind of research approaches and strategies are most promising and productive when trying to understand—and cater for—the career development needs of migrants and refugees?

Overview of the contributions

In an effort to respond to these and similar questions, and against this backdrop that signals both diversity and commonality of experiences of people on the move, we are pleased to present a number of critical reflections that should prove to be both relevant and timely. They should moreover help those providing career guidance services think through some of the key issues related to the labour market integration of migrants and refugees, while learning from the efforts of international colleagues in the field, be these researchers or practitioners.

This special thematic issue showcases a mix of empirical data from several countries, including Australia, Denmark, Finland, Italy and Sweden and Switzerland, with a focus on persons arriving from various troubled parts of the world. Authors draw on a range of research methods to generate important data that provide an important empirical foundation that gets us close to the lived experiences of people on the move. Equally important, authors interrogate their findings by drawing on an extensive range of analytic and multi-disciplinary perspectives in an effort to both throw light on the challenges faced by individuals, groups and societies in the various phases of displacement, as well as to make sense of these complex experiences and predicaments.

All the articles in this special issue try to address the dynamic interplay between individual and society, with some giving more attention to internal psychological states—reminding us of the human drama of existence—without, however, ignoring the fact that such dramas can be averted from turning into tragedies if the ‘host’ society responds appropriately to the ethical call made by the ‘Other’ in their midst. Such dramas are best captured through qualitative approaches, which inform most of the papers in this collection. So too do life stories, which increasingly underpin many of the theoretical and practical ways of engaging with complex situations that require a human and empathic response to the specific, without losing sight of the overall context that shapes them.

Four of the papers featured in this special issue consider career guidance that is offered through programmes leading directly to employment. The other four papers focus on the mediating role of education, training and re-training in facilitating access to employment. In what follows, we will introduce each paper in turn, organising them sequentially under these two categories, while keeping in mind that the boundaries between the two are both fluid and blurred.

Career guidance, the newly-arrived and employment

Representing main issues and themes

The volume starts off with a scoping paper by **Ronald G. Sultana**, titled “The labour market integration of migrants: Career guidance and the newly-arrived”. Sultana considers macro- and micro-level processes that give rise to people’s mobility within and across nation states, be such movement temporary or permanent, legal or ‘illegal’. He adopts a position of radical humanism, by which he means the recognition of the dignity and rights of individuals and groups above any classificatory system that places persons in a hierarchy, with some having access to rights that others do not. Sultana synthesises available literature on the labour market integration of the newly-arrived by highlighting such factors as the learning of the local language/s, deeper understanding of local culture/s and having access to facilities that enable independent living, all of which are likely to enhance constructive interactions with locals. He explores the ways in which career guidance can provide support to migrants and refugees, especially when such a service is seen as part of a connected set of integrated systems, where issues to do with self-identity, cultural

competence, awareness of one's duties and rights and so on are all relevant. Such an integrated approach calls for the mobilisation of career guidance theories that recognise that individuals are at the interstices between self and society, and where the notion of 'possible selves' is mitigated by 'adaptive preferences', acknowledging that choices are made within constraints.

Career guidance has the potential of addressing both capability and possibility, and Sultana identifies some of the experiments and initiatives that have reportedly made a positive difference. These include skills assessment, accreditation of prior learning, goal clarification, enhancement of employability and advocacy to combat prejudice and discriminatory practices. They also include efforts by career practitioners to enhance social capital without which transition to work becomes difficult. These need to be seen in the context of broader labour market provisions, such as easy access to vocational education and training and apprenticeships, subsidised job placements and strategies to make the engagement of the newly-arrived attractive to employers. All these efforts are likely to promote the timely integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market, which in and of itself has a number of positive personal and societal implications, attenuating the twin dangers of anti-migrant feeling on the one hand, and frustration, hostility and even radicalisation of the newly-arrived on the other.

Sultana highlights a number of psychosocial obstacles that the newly-arrived need to overcome in order to recover their sense of agency in the face of multiple challenges in their personal, social and vocational life transitions. He concludes his article by documenting the manner in which career guidance is gradually rising to the challenge of catering for a diverse group of migrants by mobilising theoretical frameworks that are fit for purpose, by developing and enhancing training programmes for practitioners, and by drawing on the lessons learnt by those on the front line, who often depend on their ingenuity and creativity when it comes to catering for needs that were not envisaged when institutional structures and practices were put into place. One and all, Sultana argues, are an indication of the vibrancy of the career guidance profession in trying to come up with principled responses to the challenge of migration in ways that promote a social justice agenda. Such responses are especially promising when they eschew an emphasis on individual resilience, on positive psychology, and on voluntaristic life design that can easily lead to responsibilisation of individuals rather than of social structures (Hooley et al., 2018, 2019).

Career adaptability and troubling dilemmas for the newly-arrived

Many of the issues and themes introduced by Sultana feature in the article by **Peyman Abkhezr, Mary McMahon and Marilyn Campbell** titled "A systemic and qualitative exploration of career adaptability among young people with refugee backgrounds". The authors focus on young people under the age of thirty who have experienced a journey as refugees. In addition to the time required for their status recognition and resettlement process in a new country, there are several important questions about their career path. Their career transitions are among the most

complex that one can possibly imagine, due to the disruptions, discontinuities, unexpected occurrences and hardships endured at a range of different levels of their existence, before, during and after their migration journey. These perform impact on their experience of study and work.

The authors draw our attention to ‘career adaptability’, a component in the chaotic transition of young refugees that has still to be properly explored, and yet whose relevance is readily understood. The unpredictable situations that young refugees have to face—not least because of the gap between resettlement needs and places available—renders adaptability very challenging. Such issues are explored by the authors thanks to semi-structured narrative inquiry interviews with five participants recruited from educational institutions and community organizations in the Brisbane area. These had recently resettled in Australia, had lived in refugee camps and prior to relocating, had experienced multiple transitions over a period ranging from 11 to 15 years. As with other contributors to this special issue, this paper highlights the potential of storytelling in reaching out to—and connecting with—refugees, suggesting that this is indeed a relevant avenue to explore in terms of both practice and future research.

The persons we meet in this article speak about their life journeys, and we gain privileged insight into their experiences, which are often daunting, to say the least. We learn, for instance, about the frequency with which they were obliged to change tack in response to shifting circumstances and prolonged periods of uncertainty during the transit from one country to another, before reaching their hoped-for destination. Thematic analysis, based on the theoretical constructs of career adaptability and the Systems Theory Framework, also help us understand how, despite the impact of complex personal, social, geographic and socio-political factors, many still exhibit ‘career adaptability’, showing concern and curiosity about possibilities, control and confidence in the decision-making process and cooperation with others in order to achieve their goal. It is of course true that the educational and career development of these young migrants is interrupted, and that they become caught up in a series of involuntary transition. And yet, argue the authors, such experiences, while painful, can nevertheless lead to the development of a strong ability to adapt and to learn, where “tensions give rise to intentions”. Improved understanding of the young people’s adaptability in the face of ordeals and tribulations can lead to the deployment of bespoke support strategies that correspond to actual realities and needs.

Career development needs of refugees

Another paper that draws on the Systems Theory Framework is by authors **Paola Magnano, Rita Zarbo, Andrea Zammitti** and **Teresa Maria Sgaramella** who focus on their native Sicily—one of the frontline central Mediterranean islands which, together with Lampedusa and Malta, are in the way of the transit of thousands of refugees from the coast of North Africa towards Europe. In their paper “Approaches and strategies for understanding the career development needs of migrants and refugees: the potential of a systems-based narrative approach”,

Magnano and colleagues reflect on the challenge that Europe in general—and Italy in particular—has to face given the reality of migratory flows from the Global South to the Global North. They argue that it is not possible for career advisors to make meaningful interventions in the lives of persons that have embarked on such hazardous, life-threatening and life-defining journeys unless they deepen their understanding of the meaning of “the sense of self in transition”. To achieve more profound and insightful levels of understanding, career workers are duty-bound to listen to the complex narratives of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and to acknowledge the multi-faceted nature of the experiences that such persons have had to endure. It is on the basis of such stories—stories that capture complex socio-cultural realities—that one can then attempt the difficult task of designing situation-specific and context-appropriate actions that promote and facilitate inclusion in the host society.

Magnano and colleagues highlight the fact that the notion of ‘social inclusion’ needs to be carefully interrogated in an effort to identify those aspects that can play a part in integrating the newly-arrived. It is by cultivating such critical awareness that career practitioners can develop approaches, tools and methodologies that take into account the personal and social circumstances that define the transition to a new context. This is especially true when such transitions take place “under difficult circumstances, language differences, disjointed educational backgrounds, racism and classism in the host country”.

In the view of the authors, the Systems Theory Framework represents one such meta-theoretical approach, providing as it does a conceptual and practical map for career counselling aimed at fostering inclusion in society and at work. Building on case studies of early-stage career-related interventions with adult migrants to Italy, Magnano and her colleagues describe the procedures and processes implemented in an effort to facilitate access to employment. They argue that the mobilisation of narrative approaches within a Systems Theory Framework—through the use of the instrument ‘My System of Career Influences’—helps give due attention to both individual and contextual elements underpinning the transition process.

As with a number of other papers in this volume, here too we are privileged to be introduced to real people—Mustafa and Kalir, Elettra and Laura—and to get a sense of the traumas the protagonists featured in this article have had to endure, as well as the inner strength and courage they muster to persevere against great odds. The authors’ intention is to “highlight themes, voices, contents and processes coming from migrants’ personal histories and from the diverse and dynamic relationships they develop with the contexts and systems they experience”. Here too, therefore, we have an insight into the ways in which the individual and the social, the personal and the systemic, interact with each other to create life experiences, defined by the dialectic between limitations and constraints on the one hand, and opportunities and possibilities on the other. The narratives therefore present the reader with two groups of contrapuntal voices, i.e. ‘restrictive voices’ (highlighting deprivation, powerlessness and underestimation, in short, the silencing voice); and ‘agentic voices’, (including voices of determination, exploration, transition and effort, leading to a perceived sense of agency).

The authors adopt a social justice perspective in order to interrogate the role of career counselling, and to ask whether its role is limited to helping individuals fitting

in, or whether it also involves problematising structures and practices that perpetrate systemic violence on subordinate groups. The authors adopt the position that career counsellors can and should become facilitators of the inclusion process, and that justice-oriented professionals can produce a greater sense of agency in their clients by taking into consideration “the micro- and macro-level contextual influences that call for advocacy, social action and lobbying”, as well as “the ways in which individuals make sense of their cultural, contextual and relational factors through the drawing of their maps [of possible influences] and the telling of their stories”. The former entails the identification of themes across the different systems (individual, environmental-societal, personal and arising from reflections about past, present and future). The latter entails ‘voice-centred relational analysis’—a methodological strategy that recognises the centrality of social relationships and considers the person to be entangled in multiple social relationships that are revealed to active listening (for the plot, for I-poems, for relationships, for cultural contexts and social structures).

Magnano et al.’s contribution helps us better appreciate that doing career development work with individuals and groups with an immigrant background compels professionals to become more sensitive to the interactions between different systems of influence and, thus, to be ever more alert to the dynamic interplay between cultural, contextual and psychosocial factors in the life design process. This openness to complexity can stimulate creative and innovative career guidance interventions, some of which may be more powerful and more effective when it comes to promoting a social justice agenda.

Beyond employability

The paper by **Inger-Lise Vanja Lund Petersen, Kristina Mariager-Anderson, Thi-Van Patillon & Jean-Luc Bernaud**, titled “Existential career guidance for groups of young refugees and migrants: A Danish initiative”, also takes us deep into the heart and minds of refugees and asylum seekers in order to remind us that we are here not dealing with ‘human capital’, numbers, statistics or categories, but with human beings who are likely to feel confused and alienated when they finally make it to their new destination. Some will have lived through traumatic events, both in their home of origin as well as in transit. Most will feel lost without the familial, linguistic, material, spiritual and cultural anchors that underpin identity and help provide a frame for one’s engagement with life. Sensitivity to this daunting aspect of transition calls for forms of career and life-wide counselling that acknowledge the difficulties that need to be faced, while helping individuals and groups make sense of their new circumstances, and to find within themselves as much as within the surrounding community the strength and stamina needed to integrate without losing their sense of self.

One such approach could be existential counselling, given that this entails a respectful and understanding therapeutic relationship that supports self-awareness and the search for meaning, while encouraging hope in the face of difficulties. This paper therefore deals with the antecedents of employment. In other words, the

concern here is not as much with the purely utilitarian routines that may lead to a job—increasingly referred to as ‘career management skills’, which are supposed to enhance employability. Rather, it is about providing a safe space for counselees to re-establish contact with their sense of self, and to consider work opportunities from a position of both psychological and social strength. As the authors note, career choice represents a ‘boundary situation’ that requires reflection on meaning and one’s core values. The encounter between counsellor and counselee/s thus takes the form of a co-construction of plans of action that are powerful because they are embedded in a search for meaning. Reminiscent of Freire’s dialogic pedagogy—even though not explicitly referred to here—is the understanding that adult learning of language and literacy skills can be enhanced if the quest for proficiency is embedded in the lived realities of the learner. Learning is also more powerful when creative ways of expressing oneself—through such means as art, photography and music—are deployed, helping counselees “find new ways to accept, discover and construct their lives and enabling new understanding.”

The desire to help refugees through the impasse they face during the first months of arrival in the host country is also evident in the choice of methodology that the authors make. Here we again have a recognition of the potentially emancipatory power of narrative, but in this case, it is nested in an action research approach besides careful thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. The paper also stresses the healing power of a group rather an individual approach to counselling, whereby participants foster hope, altruism and catharsis, not least by understanding that their pain and anxiety is shared by and with others, and that strength can be gained by giving. A sense of agency and inner focus, nurtured through interaction with others, can help overcome instability, existential anxieties and uncertainty.

To their credit, the authors wonder whether such an approach is too deeply steeped in Western cultural norms, values and worldviews—and indeed one could argue that no approach to career guidance is perfect, and that it is precisely such critical reflexivity about any method used that is the only path to authentic service to others. Despite such caveats, the authors conclude that existential career guidance can support refugees and migrants in their reflections on how to live a meaningful life in a new country. It can also help the counsellors themselves to become aware of their own horizons of prejudice, and to learn from the experiences and reflections that are shared by the counselees. This mutual, reciprocal learning—another theme close to Freire’s heart—is in itself therapeutic, in that it signals appreciation, esteem and acceptance, which is a balm for injured and troubled souls.

Career guidance, the newly-arrived and education

Credentialling already qualified refugees and migrants

In contrast to popular misconceptions about the skills profiles of migrants and refugees, **Elin Ennerberg** reminds us that some newly-arrived have credentials that would normally give them access to professions in their home country. In her article “Fast track to the labour market? Experiences of learning in an active labour market

policy measure for migrant teachers in Sweden” Ennerberg focuses on programmes for newly-arrived educators in Sweden who, despite their qualifications, are obliged to re-train before being allowed to teach in schools. She starts by highlighting policy developments that are increasingly focussed on finding ways to use migrants’ competencies in order to meet labour market demands. Within such policies, activation as well as lifelong learning are given priority. Ennerberg provides empirical data on a programme aimed at providing such migrant teachers a fast track into schools in Sweden, with a view to investigating if such an initiative narrowly serves the activation measures agenda, or whether there is also room for lifelong learning enhancing individual autonomy.

The author draws on a lifelong learning capability approach in analysing the data. This consists of interviews with migrants who took part in a course that qualified them to become teachers in Sweden. Sixteen were interviewed at the beginning of the course, while another eighteen were interviewed at the end of the course. University staff delivering the course also participated in this research, as did employment officers, given that the course was part of an initiative to integrate migrants in the labour market.

A thematic analysis was carried out, with the author directing her attention to the notion of choice in the first instance. While choice is implicitly part of a capability approach, Ennerberg argues that this is not generally the case in relation to activation policies, where the priority is to get individuals into training and/or paid employment, no matter what. She illustrates how complex the question of choice can be. On the one hand, employment officers have the task to place migrants into the labour market; on the other, there is also room for negotiation regarding which path migrants should choose. In the second part of the analysis, the focus is on instrumental learning and the desire to quickly find any sort of employment. For some participants the choice of taking a job that requires lower qualifications than what they actually have is construed as a reasonable compromise that facilitates access to much needed income. For others, however, not getting a job according to one’s qualification is seen as highly problematic.

This aspect is also further elaborated in the third section of the analysis in which the author illustrates how while there is a willingness to learn about Swedish values, including a pedagogy based on discussions, there is at the same time a desire for a more didactic and goal-oriented approach to teaching, so that they get through the course quickly and move on to a job. In other words, the situation of precarity that these groups of migrants find themselves in—where, for instance, permanent employment is necessary in order to get a contract for renting an apartment—seems to make them favour instrumental over intrinsic forms of learning. However, in the final section of the analysis, the author illustrates how the course nevertheless seems to provide participants with a transformative dimension. By supporting each other within the group and by encouraging one another, personality development can occur, even if aspects of this transformation, such as the need to change one’s behaviour and modify one’s value system in order to fit into a new context, can be perceived as negative.

The article provides valuable insights in terms of the tensions highly educated migrants face when trying to enter the labour market in their new country of

residence. On the one hand there is the will to learn and get a job that meets one's qualifications, while on the other hand this desire is counterbalanced by the policy imperative to get migrants into the labour market as quickly as possible, even when such work does not correspond to the migrants' qualifications. Such tensions need to be acknowledged by all those who work with guiding migrants through the educational and labour market system in the host country.

Higher education responses to the needs of refugees

The paper by **Karen Dunwoodie, Clemence Due, Sally Baker, Alexander Newman** and **Connie Tran** is similarly concerned with refugees following a course within higher education settings, this time in Australia. In their paper titled "Supporting (or not) the career development of culturally and linguistically diverse migrants and refugees in universities: Insights from Australia", the authors highlight the predicaments that students from a culturally and linguistically diverse migrant and refugee (CALDM/R) background encounter in further and higher education settings. Here, the challenges that such students face—both in academic and career-related learning, as well as in making the transition to work—do not receive the specific support that is required. Indeed, it is telling that little is known internationally about what good practice might entail when it comes to facilitating CALDM/R students' preparation for employment, or indeed about the factors that might predict their engagement with career services. This study sets out to provide some signposts on the basis of which one could articulate a more robust, tailor-made response to the specific career development needs of students with a CALDM/R background.

Using a mixed method approach, which involved a desktop audit of all Australian public universities, a survey to which 32 individuals responded, as well as online interviews with ten members of staff, the authors identified four areas which career guidance as well as equity practitioners could and should focus on in order to advance a social justice agenda with students with a CALDM/R background. While the authors' attention is exclusively on Australian universities, the insights generated by this study—including a greater awareness of service gaps—have relevance to other higher education settings, both in Australia and beyond. Furthermore, the support needs identified by the authors have implications for other regular staff not formally attached to the career guidance services.

While universities have aggressively adopted an internationalisation policy, aiming to attract students from overseas as a way to generate income and to increase their reputational capital, they have been less energetic and entrepreneurial in catering effectively for the diversity of their student population. This study identifies four lacunas that career and equity practitioners could target, with the first two focussing specifically on the experiences of CALDM/R students at university, and the second two on their experience of transition to work.

The first concerns the development of carefully thought-through strategies that help staff identify students with a CALDM/R background. This process is necessary, as without knowing who is likely to need support one cannot engage with students and provide personalised services that respond to real needs.

However, it is also problematic as it raises issues of data protection, and the extent to which students should be asked to reveal information about their background when registering for courses. While it is relatively easy to identify international students, it is difficult to know whether they are migrants or refugees, and to be aware of the traumas they might have gone (and might still be going) through.

A second lacuna identified by this study is the lack of programmes and resources that are fit for purpose and that speak to the specific needs and experiences of a diverse student population. Most international students can benefit from help in navigating university systems and processes, with attaining language and literacy proficiency and with managing differences in learning expectations and approaches used in their country of origin. However, CALDM/R students often need personalised, face-to-face and intensive support that cannot be covered by a one-size-fits-all approach. Ambiguity of equity policy and funding, unhelpfully broad equity categories, diminished resources leading to a shift to working with whole groups and to online service provision—one and all have a deleterious impact on students with a CALDM/R background, rendering career services less responsive to needs.

The next two lacunas relate to the difficulties that students with a CALDM/R background face in the transition-to-work process, where they need to engage with employers who all too often are unwilling to take on interns or job applicants with a diverse background due to prejudice and outright racism. This leads to another set of difficulties, whereby students with a CALDM/R background encounter obstacles in their search for course-mandated work placements, which further reinforces their lack of work-readiness and their lack of familiarity with the mainstream work culture. CALDM/R students also often have less knowledge of employment options, and have fewer social networks that can facilitate the job search process.

The authors claim that such lacunas help explain why CALDM/R students find it especially difficult to make successful transitions to meaningful work—understood as employment that is commensurate with an individual's skills and qualifications, is remunerated fairly and provides employees with a sense of purpose. Indeed CALDM/R graduates are over-represented in the national statistics concerning under-employment and unemployment. This state of affairs reflects structural problems rather than individual deficits, as the authors make very clear.

A consideration of these realities through an institutional theory lens leads to an analysis that highlights the misalignment between the three pillars that collectively shape the characteristics of an institution, namely regulatory (e.g. equity policy), normative (e.g. moral obligations) and cultural-cognitive (e.g. shared values, beliefs and assumptions). In designing and delivering career development services, guidance staff should work with other equity and diversity practitioners in order to challenge a status quo that fails CALDM/R students, who, lacking as they do a critical mass, fall through the cracks of economically rationalist and technocratic higher education settings. As such, note the authors, there are few examples of 'good practice' to showcase, with staff uncertain as to how

to address the tensions between the three pillars given paucity in resources, deficiency in training and lack of support or recognition from their institution.

Enhancing social justice through the career guidance encounter in schools

Yet another paper that considers career guidance for migrants and refugees in education settings is provided by **Sanna Vehviläinen** and **Anne-Mari Souto**. In their article titled “How does career guidance at schools encounter migrant young people? Interactional practices that hinder socially just guidance”, the authors present readers with a multicultural high school setting in Finland. Here, thanks to ethnographic research and analysis of interactional conversations, as well as on the basis of a project with teachers and career counsellors, the authors try to articulate concrete avenues for guidance and counselling practices informed by a social justice perspective.

The authors first argue that career guidance is a social practice, i.e. it represents a way of thinking about individual and social ‘problems’, as well as the relationships between them, with such conceptualisations having an impact on the way ‘solutions’ are articulated. Career guidance is also a ‘family of practices across various institutions’, i.e. it is embedded in other professional practices such as teaching, training, social work and so on. By adopting a social justice perspective in relation to such a social practice, one agrees to highlight the fact that representations of both ‘problems’ and ‘solutions’ are steeped in power relations. Furthermore, in the view of the authors, such power relations manifest themselves at different levels. And yet, they contend, much of the discourse around emancipatory guidance has mostly focussed on macro-level analysis. They hold that it is also important to consider social justice issues as they manifest themselves at the micro-level, at what they refer to as the level of ‘interactional practices.’ This is necessary because, they argue, it is not enough to be critical: it is also essential that critical insights about power have a real effect on the way career practitioners actually comport themselves, leading therefore to “changes of mind and activity”. They are thus after articulating what they refer to as a “critical-but-practical theory of guidance” in an effort to identify “the conditions under which guidance can gain its emancipatory potential”, when, that is, “it takes a turn towards societally and intersectionally conscious practice.”

The authors set themselves the task of identifying points in the dyadic and group interaction between career advisers and students with a migration background where one can detect power at work. Using the tools provided by Conversation Analysis methodology, they focus on two aspects of career conversations which are problematic. These are the dominance of a problem-solving orientation (as opposed to a supportive or inquiry orientation), and the avoidance of what they refer to as ‘dreaded topics’, i.e. topics that are central to the lives and experiences of refugee students, but which counsellors feel uncomfortable addressing. These include racism (whereby inequality and exclusion are experienced in both the country of origin, and in the host country), and dispersed and diasporic family relations (whereby young migrants are expected to be autonomous and individually responsible for the choices they make, when for them listening to and respecting their family’s views

and hopes is an important value, whether the family members are still in the country of origin, or have also departed).

Vehviläinen and Souto emphasise the pedagogic nature of the guidance setting, where the goal is to enhance agency. And yet they eschew a superficial client-centred approach where one remains within the bounds of what the counselee considers appropriate as a topic for consideration, even when silence is the absent centre of what needs to be contemplated. The guidance encounter is also pedagogic in the sense that counsellors remain open to learning from the students that they are interacting with—a stance that is more likely to help address the shallow and safe focus on ‘problem-solving’, and to leave a door open for more profound supportive and inquiry orientations. To do so, however, requires practitioners to work together, so that they muster the courage to engage in interactions that are more present, more real and more enabling.

Refugee student orientations to careers: choice within constraints

The final paper in this special issue is by **Laurence Fedrigo, Shagini Udayar, Cecilia Toscanelli, Eva Clot-Siegrist, Federico Durante** and **Jonas Masdonati** and is titled “Young Refugees’ and Asylum Seekers’ Career Choices: A Qualitative Investigation”. The authors are here concerned with both social and occupational integration, and indeed their view—shared implicitly or explicitly by all the contributors to this volume—is that it is through work that individuals and groups most readily and most rapidly integrate in the society they have moved to. Finding employment in the formal economy, the authors argue, is a major achievement and indeed is a condition for successful integration. And yet, many refugees and asylum seekers have to overcome several obstacles before they do get a regular job, not least due to the lack of recognition of their qualifications or work experience, lack of work permits, discrimination, insufficient command of the local language and limited social networks that would normally open up opportunities. Fedrigo and colleagues are, however, careful to avoid representing such groups exclusively or solely in terms of deficits: refugees and asylum seekers also have personal and social strengths that help them make sense of the situations they find themselves in, and to develop aspirations to engage in work that has social value and utility.

The authors are keen to understand the processes involved in making such occupational decisions—choices that are seen in the light of life trajectories and the situations that refugees and asylum seekers encounter in their everyday lives. In order to deepen their understanding of such processes, the authors adopt a consensual qualitative research protocol and a phenomenological research approach and focus on a small group of 14 youths attending an integration programme in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. The researchers interviewed these young people in the hope of understanding how they exercised their agency so as to progressively navigate challenging circumstances, to explore possible selves and to design their own career trajectories.

Fedrigo et al.’s approach is informed by a constructivist understanding of the way individuals and groups make sense of their situation, drawing on their past

experiences and on their resources in order to achieve future goals. The authors also mobilise theoretical constructs provided by capability approaches in order to explore how their interviewees make reasoned choices—exhibiting ‘adaptive preferences’—on the basis of a play-off between what they value, and the reduced range of possibilities that contextual constraints afford.

The rich interview data about the young people’s lives back home, their migratory experience and their current situation in the host country help generate important insights that are of value to the career guidance community internationally. The authors organise these insights around two key domains. The first concerns life trajectories (including the situations in refugees’ and asylum seekers’ home countries, the motives that led them to leave and their arrival in Switzerland). The second pertains to their current situations (including their resources as well as the barriers they encountered).

Discussions around career plans and interests, as well as about cherished values, led the authors to conclude that three profiles characterised how the interviewees made their career choices and constructed their respective careers. These profiles were labelled “vocation seekers” (where career plans are guided by vocational interests, irrespective of prior work-related or personal experiences), “altruists” (where career plans concern the social or care sectors) and “work lovers” (where career plans were based on the general desire to work, without expressing any preference for particular occupation or specific sectors).

While the results cannot be generalised to other contexts, this study opens up valuable conversations around key issues and processes that are central to the work that career advisors can accomplish with refugees and asylum seekers. It also sheds light on the manner in which such individuals construct their careers, with career plans being “the result of a complex constellation of influences stemming both from their singular trajectories and contextual affordances and constraints”. The theme of choice within constraints—which is at the heart of the debates around the dialectical relationship between agency and structure—is thus given further nuance, contributing to critical considerations of career development. More practically, this paper highlights the importance of career guidance support that values refugees and asylum seekers as persons with resources while acknowledging the many contextual barriers that constrain their career choices and their development in and through work. It is precisely at the interstices of the two that advocacy and emancipatory action can make the difference between potential and flourishing.

Concluding invitation

The extended syntheses we have provided above have hopefully served to highlight some of the most prominent and pressing themes and issues relating guidance to migration studies. They should also serve as an invitation to all those who have educational and career guidance at heart—be they practitioners, researchers, trainers or policy makers—to dig deeper into the complexities of this field by entering into a genuine dialogue with the papers in this volume and with their authors. The contributors have built on the growing funds of knowledge about the integration of the

newly-arrived in host societies so as to share with us insights about lives and about ways of engaging with such lives in order to acknowledge, support and struggle for the right to dignity for one and all. It is our hope that somehow, somewhere, the labour that we have all invested in reflection, writing and editing contributes to such a worthwhile task.

References

- Dahlsted, M., & Fejes, A. (Eds.). (2021). *Utbildning i Migrationens Tid: Viljor, Organisering och Villkor för Inkludering*. Studentlitteratur.
- Eurofound. (2016). *Approaches to the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers*. Publications Office of the European Union.
- Faber, D., & Schlegel, C. (2017). Give me shelter from the storm: Framing the climate refugee crisis in the context of neoliberal capitalism. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, 28(3), 1–17.
- Hooley, T., Sultana, R. G., & Thomsen, R. (Eds.). (2018). *Career guidance for social justice: Contesting neoliberalism*. Routledge.
- Hooley, T., Sultana, R. G., & Thomsen, R. (Eds.). (2019). *Career guidance for emancipation: Reclaiming justice for the multitude*. Routledge.
- Shan, H., & Fejes, A. (2015). Skill regime in the context of globalization and migration. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 37(3), 227–235.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.