



# STUDENTS' CAREER, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: PERSPECTIVES, APPROACHES, CHALLENGES

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APPROACHES, CHALLENGES**

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## PREFACE

Preparing young people for their professional and private lives is, in contemporary society, gaining new form and significance. Rapid social changes and uncertainty in the labour market are reflected in the development of scientific backgrounds which, in recent decades have allowed for the acquiring of new insights, developing new approaches and identifying new challenges in relation to empowering young people for their personal, social and career development. Notwithstanding the ideological views about the organisation of contemporary societies and the role education plays in these societies, or perhaps precisely as a result of them, a comprehensive framework that would facilitate comprehensive lifelong career guidance of young people in Slovenia has not yet been established. Changing conditions within society call for this framework to be updated on a regular basis. By providing an in-depth insight into current approaches to lifelong career guidance at European and national levels, the monograph *Students' Career, Personal and Social Development: Perspectives, Approaches, Challenges* raises some important considerations about the conceptual understanding of the connection of personal, social and professional development of young people, and highlights some methods for streamlining the current approaches and developing new ones in order to prepare young people for their successful personal and professional lives in contemporary society.

The scientific monograph was created as part of the project *Creative Awareness Raising and Empowerment for Employability and Resiliency* which, in 2014 and 2015, was carried out at the Educational Research Institute, and the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training in co-operation with the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, and by the support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia. The project is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme, by means of which the European Commission supports the attainment of European strategic objectives in education and training within the EU Member States, whereby special emphasis is placed on stakeholder participation, experimentation and innovation.

The challenge faced as part of the project were those children and adolescents in primary and secondary education whose future in the contemporary labour market is unpredictable. The particular focus of the project was on identifying individual factors and those within the family, school and wider social environments, which are, according to the findings of international comparative assessment studies and other education-related studies, linked to young people's career choices and paths. In addition to the theoretical framework, which is a result of research and integration of various scientific disciplines, special attention was devoted to developing approaches, whereby the ultimate objective is focused on the early empowerment of individuals for their personal, social and career development. Another aim of the monograph is to raise the awareness of experts and practitioners, as well as education policy makers, about the significance of career management skills for the achievement of both individuals and society as a whole.

*Urška Štremfel and Miha Lovšin*

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

CAREER	Creative Awareness Raising and Empowerment for Employability and Resiliency
DOTS	Decision learning, Opportunity Awareness, Transition learning, Self awareness
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
ESS	Employment Service of Slovenia
EU	European Union
ICT	information and communication technology
GATB	General Aptitude Test Battery
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SORS	Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
USA	United States of America

## INTRODUCTION

### **STUDENTS' CAREER, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL, EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL CONTEXTS**

*URŠKA ŠTREMFEJ AND MIHA LOVŠIN*

Social and economic changes, as well as technological development and innovation observed in recent decades, are reflected in the ever-changing labour market. Changes in the organisation and nature of work, impact working methods and forms of employment, and change the needs for the competencies, knowledge and skills of the workforce.

In a knowledge society, learning and working are increasingly interrelated. In industrial society, individuals were educated and trained for their profession at school or during their internship and were then able to use the acquired knowledge throughout their lives without any major changes, whereas today this is no longer the case. The nature and conditions of work in most professions are changing so rapidly that it is essential for individuals to continually acquire new knowledge and to adapt their personal traits, self-concept and values. An increasingly important question in contemporary knowledge society is how to change jobs throughout life without losing contact with oneself and with one's social identity.

Intense technological development in recent decades has resulted in a fundamental change in expectations about the knowledge and skills that young people are supposed to acquire or develop to be successful in adulthood. It needs to be pointed out that in these new circumstances, the acquisition of knowledge and skills not only takes place at school or during other types of formal learning, but also outside of the school environment, in contact within one's family, peers and the wider society. However, the educational system remains the primary mechanism based on which attempts are made at improving youths' level of knowledge and skills through setting objectives, standards of knowledge and adopting suitable approaches to teaching and guidance or counselling. Career development is, without doubt, an important aspect of one's life and it is therefore advisable that it is suitably supported and facilitated at its optimum level depending on the characteristics of individuals' overall personal development.

The contents and approaches used to empower young people within the education process for successful entry and performance in the ever-changing labour market, constitute lifelong career guidance. In recent decades its paradigm has shifted from the principle according to which it is society which co-ordinates individuals' education and employment, to the concept based on which individuals themselves mostly bear the responsibility for their educational and employment opportunities. Therefore, in contemporary society young people are expected to be aware of the changes in the labour market and to assume responsibility for their personal, social and career development.

Changes in modern society are also reflected in the need for revised approaches of lifelong career guidance, both in terms of scientific and professional backgrounds for its

implementation, as well as in terms of policies at international (EU, OECD) and national levels.

As is the case in other areas of education, the EU and OECD Member States are likewise characterised by different traditions and a history of lifelong career guidance development. However, also in this field, globalisation-related challenges have fostered Member States' joint efforts to develop a common framework of co-operation (see e.g. Watts and Sultana, 2004).

A. Bengtsson (2011) argues that a significant shift in terms of strengthening the co-operation of EU Member States in the field of lifelong career guidance has been evident since the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, when a paradigm shift in its understanding occurred. The Lisbon Strategy defines lifelong career guidance as an instrument of implementing the strategy of lifelong learning. Although the activities and contents of lifelong career guidance were at a later time laid out in a number of EU documents<sup>1</sup> the most elaborate definition and explanation of lifelong career guidance was given in the resolutions of the Council of the EU in 2004 and 2008. The Resolution of the Council of the EU (2004) states:

*In the context of lifelong learning, guidance refers to a range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.*

Academic discussions lead to the conclusion that the definition and significance of lifelong career guidance in the EU make for an especially interesting topic in discussions on the role of education in contemporary society. Some authors (e.g. Levin, 2005: 614) point out that education is, by its nature, a value-laden activity which contains a number of goals that are not always mutually consistent. Other authors (e.g. Dale and Robertson, 2009) state that the divide between the goals to be pursued by education is most pronounced in the Lisbon Strategy. They also point out the division of education between two incompatible, or even contradictory, strategic goals of the EU, i.e. economic competitiveness (or the so-called hard goals of education and related discourse on the knowledge economy) on the one hand, and social cohesion (or the so-called soft goals of education and related discourse on the knowledge society) on the other.<sup>2</sup> This incompatibility not only called into question the traditional priorities of education that are associated with a social dimension (citizenship, national identity and social justice), but has also allowed the dominance of economic goals (competitiveness, employability, adaptability to the labour market) over social ones. Some authors describe such dominance metaphorically as a shift from European citizens to European workers (e.g. Holford and Mohorčič Špolar, 2012). In relation to this it should also be noted that this is not merely a case of simple dominance of economic goals, but a shift in the understanding of knowledge as an economic resource. A knowledge economy creates the need for a permanent, appropriate and flexible adjustment of education to the changing

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed overview of the contents of individual documents in terms of lifelong career guidance see Divisia (2010).

<sup>2</sup> Holford (2008) adds that economic goals of education within the EU have gained priority over political goals of education, however, they are not necessarily always mutually exclusive.

economy and labour market (whereby economic goals are constantly changing as a result of the ever-changing global economic environment) (in Štremfel, 2013).

I. Bergmo-Prvulovic (2012: 157) believes that conceptual ambiguity as to the meaning and role of lifelong career guidance in the European educational space is noticeable in formal EU documents. She links this with a variety of meanings and interpretations of career and career development in various theories and scientific disciplines (elaborated on in the chapter by M. Lovšin). In a reference to A. Collin (2007)<sup>3</sup>, I. Bergmo-Prvulovic (2012) does not rule out that the EU seeks to promote a particular view of lifelong career guidance, or that when several approaches are used simultaneously the EU creates contradictory messages in regard to the significance and role of lifelong career guidance in contemporary society. She illustrates this by giving an example of individuals' personal development, which does appear in official EU documents, however, it is not seen as a goal in its own right, but is demoted to the status of individuals responding to the requirements of economic forces. The difficulty of decision-making in a period of constant changes is thus characterised by a change in the rhetoric from individuals seeking self-realisation to individuals constantly adapting to the demands of the changing labour market. I. Bergmo-Prvulovic believes that lifelong career guidance is thus trapped between two extremes, i.e. between individuals' adjusting to different (economic) structures, and individuals' personal development and their genuine empowerment. To allow individuals to be autonomous in making decisions and choosing their career paths, and to be responsible for their own personal career development and not merely for their responses to the demands of the labour market, it is necessary to support their emancipation and critical awareness of contemporary social problems and policy processes. The role and aims of education in contemporary society must therefore, according to I. Bergmo-Prvulovic (2012), shift from adapting to the market to empowering individuals for autonomous and responsible functioning in contemporary society.

Although the aim of European education policies is to pursue a common objective, Member States are not passive recipients of EU policies. They are involved in the complex process of selective adoption of European policy instruments and may, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, consequently develop highly diverse and inherent policies and means of achieving common European objectives adapted to specific national, historical, cultural and social contexts.<sup>4</sup> However, they may also reject those elements of European policies that are not consistent with their respective national contexts and priorities (Alexiadou, 2007).

The EU also devotes special attention to Europeanisation of national education policies in the field of lifelong career guidance, which is evident from the activities of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), whose mission is focused on the European

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<sup>3</sup> A. Collin (2007) believes that conceptual ambiguity creates space for the concept to be used for various social, economic, political and management purposes.

<sup>4</sup> The specificity of national contexts of Central and Eastern European countries for developing lifelong career guidance - due to the transition from a targeted to a market economy - is pointed out by Watts and Sultana (2004: 108, 109). They believe that in the past in centrally planned economies there was no need for career counselling, unemployment did not exist officially, people were steered towards their roles based on a selective process, careers were associated with individualism and regarded as a social demerit. In contrast, in market-oriented democratic societies it is understood as the right of individuals to a free choice of their professional lives and linking personal goals to the socioeconomic needs of the society in which they live.

dimension of guidance within the systems of education, training and employment.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the aim of the ELGPN is to develop guidelines for the future development of lifelong career guidance at an EU level and, even more so, to stimulate the introduction of a common policy in the Member States by means of national forums. Simultaneously, the Council of the EU (2008) points out that the ELGPN constitutes a space for sharing experiences among countries. The diversity of means used by the Member States in endeavouring to regulate the field of lifelong career guidance is thus also an opportunity for countries' mutual learning and comparison.

When the EU Member States, in line with their respective national priorities and in comparison with other countries, fail to successfully pursue common European objectives in the field of education, as defined in the Education and Training 2020 work programme, the European Commission produces so-called 'country-specific recommendations' for these countries. Similar recommendations are also prepared in relation to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, wherein the Commission assesses the attainment of objectives in individual Member States in terms of budgetary, macroeconomic and structural reforms. In its 2012 recommendations to Slovenia, the European Commission (2012: 5) pointed out the following: "Responsiveness of the education and training system to labour market needs remains insufficient, although within the entire education cycle career guidance services are currently being set up, while endeavours are also being made to provide information on future careers. /.../ These measures are appropriate, however, combined they constitute an insufficient response to this challenge."

Since authors of academic discussions have pointed out that the definition of lifelong career guidance at EU level contains some contradictory messages (Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2012), and promotes a particular view of the role of lifelong career guidance and education in contemporary society (Bengtsson, 2011; Collin, 2007), it is in addition to the aforementioned recommendations of the European Commission and, generally speaking, necessary to pay special attention to its adequate conceptual understanding within the Slovenian national educational space and other national educational spaces. T. Ažman and B. Rupar (2015: 10) argue that in terms of the development of lifelong career guidance policies, Slovenia follows the European guidelines and objectives to some degree. A brief overview of the strategic and operational documents that deal with the scope of lifelong career guidance in the Slovenian educational space is therefore provided in the latter part of the Introduction, wherein close attention is given to the connection of career, personal and social development of young people.

The key strategic documents concerned with the development of education in Slovenia show that the definitions of lifelong career guidance follow contemporary European guidelines. The White Paper (2011: 46) states that "Appropriate career guidance makes a significant contribution to equipping the workforce to meet the requirements of employers, and to the individual's social security." In reference to the goals of primary and lower-secondary education it is stated that "it provides for an internationally comparable level of knowledge and in co-operation and with the support of parents and the wider social environment, ambitious goals regarding knowledge, as well as social and personal

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<sup>5</sup> The focus of other ELGPN's tasks are a) a common understanding of basic concepts and principles of career guidance; b) the quality of career guidance services; c) issues of social inclusion, increasing the access to lifelong learning and the integration of education, training and professional life.

development." In the section on shaping critical, autonomous, responsible and independent individuals, it stated that pupils "develop the ability to understand their personality traits, interests and strengths within their career choices, develop responsibility for lifelong learning and continuous personal development." The Lifelong Learning Strategy (2007) highlights the need to develop career education as an activity that takes strategic priority. Special attention is given to developing a personal and professional path (career). It is pointed out that the two fields are inextricably linked because the development of one's personal and professional path begins in early childhood, takes place throughout initial education and adult life, and continues well into a quality and active old age. The definition of lifelong career guidance is provided below, as defined by the Resolution of the Council of the EU (2004), whereby special attention is also devoted to its terminology-related explanation.

T. Ažman and B. Rupar (2015: 10) argue that the laws from the field of education in Slovenia deal with lifelong career guidance rather generally and indirectly and that the terminology used is outdated. T. Bezić (2014) notes that lifelong career guidance is not included in the development-related school documents as cross-curricular content. The results of an analysis of primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary secondary education curricula (Sentočnik, 2011) indicate that there is no systematic integration of lifelong career guidance into the curricula. Failure to set any procedural and metacognitive goals is noticeable, as are low taxonomic levels that do not steer towards experiential learning (Rupar, 2014). The activities that are part of professional (career) guidance in primary and secondary education are set out in the 1999 and 2008 Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in upper-secondary education (National Curriculum Council, 1999; 2008). The Guidelines, as one of the primary areas of counselling work with pupils and students, refer to the field of career guidance, however, this field is based on an outdated understanding of the concepts of lifelong career guidance and inadequate time standards and is carried out as part of non-systemised counselling hours (Ažman and Rupar, 2015: 10). The Programme Guidelines for the work of individual class teacher assemblies and classes in primary and secondary education and halls of residence list seven areas (in separate sections), including 1) creating optimum conditions and promoting individuals' personal development (developing a positive self-concept, universal ethical principles, values, developing the ability of independent, creative and critical thinking and judgement...) and 2) vocational education (p. 9). The objectives of vocational education include the following: a) pupils get to know themselves, their capabilities, needs, interests, values and aspirations; b) they develop skills necessary to explore training-, education- and employment-related options; c) they learn how to make sensible decisions based on a sound knowledge of themselves and the environment; d) they acquire some of the skills needed in the transition from one level of education to another, or to employment (p. 11).

By looking into the terminological (and therefore conceptual) understanding of lifelong career guidance in Slovenia, it can be established that the term *karierna orientacija*, which is used in Slovenian, is a translation of the English term *career guidance*. In Slovenia, no consensus has been reached as regards the Slovenian translation of the term *career guidance* or its complementary terms *guidance*, *educational* and *vocational guidance*. The activity denoted by these English terms is in Slovenian called a) *vseživljenjska karierna orientacija* – lifelong career guidance (Vocational Education Act); b) *poklicna orientacija* – vocational guidance (Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary and

secondary education); c) *poklicno svetovanje* – vocational counselling (Organisation and Financing of the Education Act).

The first concept of integrating the career management skills was developed in Slovenia as early as 2003 (Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) and National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia) and the handbook for the implementation of related activities in the field of primary and secondary education was created in 2005 (Ažman et al., 2005). In 2011 and 2014, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education defined the career management skills (Ažman et al., 2012) and developed a tool for counsellors to use for measuring these skills. The career guidance terminology glossary was published in 2011 (Kohont et al., 2011) and it defines career management skills as "a set of skills that allow individuals and groups to gain, analyse, synthesise and organise information about themselves, education and occupations (all in a structured way), and a set of skills for decision-making" (ibid.: 27).

S. Škarja et al. (2012, 74) state that the term 'career management skills' is used in Slovenia only in rare instances. They also believe that in Slovenia there is no such thing as a common national definition of career management skills (however, the terms used are career planning skills, career education, personal skills, the so-called DOTS skills - Decision learning, Opportunity awareness, Transition learning, Self awareness).

Individual strategic, legislative and operational documents that are concerned with and govern the field of education in Slovenia include a number of different guidelines, activities, objectives and terminological definitions of lifelong career guidance. This points to a lack of coherent understanding of the importance of lifelong career guidance in the Slovenian educational space and highlights the need for the enhancement and consistent systemic organisation of this field.

In discussing the reforms within the Slovenian educational space that have taken place since Slovenia's independence, Gaber (2008) underlines that in the past in Slovenia there was not an adequate understanding of the contradictory and simultaneously reciprocal nature of instrumental (work-centred) education and non-instrumental (knowledge- and personal fulfilment-centred) education. Therefore, in the future, educational model should be developed that will adequately and mutually put into effect both of these two dimensions and one that will be able to be adapted to the demands of the global labour market, while fully taking into account the experience and knowledge that are of key importance for individuals' personal and social development. Successful education can result only from suitable mutual complementarity of both concepts and from a joint search for the good in contemporary society.

The presented deliberations are of crucial importance for the field of lifelong career guidance which, in Slovenia, is still being systematically established and optimised, and present it with a major challenge. The challenge faced in this context in carrying out the project *Creative Awareness Raising and Empowerment for Employability and Resiliency*, as part of which the monograph was created, were children and adolescents in primary and secondary education whose future in the contemporary labour market is unpredictable. The particular focus of the project was on identifying individual factors, and factors within the family, school and wider social environments, which are, according to the findings of international comparative assessment studies and other education-related studies, linked to young people's career choices and paths. In addition to the theoretical framework, which is a

result of research and integration of various scientific disciplines, special attention was devoted to developing approaches whereby the ultimate objective is focused on the early empowerment of individuals by providing them with career management skills. Approaches are used at different educational levels, include different contents, adopt various interaction methods and have, as such, proven to be effective in addressing all direct and indirect participants in the education process (i.e. counsellors, teachers, children, adolescents and their parents).

The project included an analysis of how lifelong career guidance is implemented in the Slovenian educational space, with a particular emphasis on suitable conceptual integration of career, personal and social development of young people. The analysis was performed based on a synthesis of a wide range of theoretical backgrounds, an analysis of formal documents (legislative, strategic and operational documents governing the implementation of lifelong career guidance in the EU and in Slovenia in terms of education policies and practices) and an analysis of results of ongoing and completed projects in the Slovenian (Ažman and Rupar, 2015: 22–41), European and wider international spaces (Educational Research Institute, 2015a). Later in the project, special attention was devoted to the role of school counselling services in implementing lifelong career guidance in the Slovenian educational space, and a platform for its conceptual understanding and enhancement of related activities in this field was prepared. The fact that there are good reasons for this was not only indicated by the results of preliminary project analyses (Štremfel et al., 2014), but also by the fact that the "Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary and lower-secondary education (1999) and Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in upper-secondary education (1999, 2008) list career guidance as one of the primary areas of counselling work with pupils and students, however, this guidance is based on an outdated understanding of concepts of lifelong career guidance and inadequate time standards and is carried out as part of non-systemised counselling hours" (Ažman and Rupar, 2015: 10). Scientific-professional relevance of this platform was tested at a scientific conference (Educational Research Institute, 2015b) and the practical relevance and feasibility of the platform as part of the practice of Slovenian schools were tested on sixteen study groups consisting of counsellors in primary and lower-secondary education. A guided discussion titled 'Career Guidance as an Integral Part of Students' Personal and Social Development and Schools' Annual Plan' took place as part of these study groups. During the discussion, counselling practitioners revealed the obstacles they encountered in implementing contemporary career guidance concepts in practice and suggestions on how to overcome these obstacles were put forward (Educational Research Institute, 2015c).

The key findings of the project are presented in the scientific monograph, the aim of which is to shed light on the importance of lifelong career guidance from various scientific, professional and practical perspectives, and to highlight the different approaches to improving its implementation in the Slovenian educational space. Special attention was devoted to policy recommendations for improving the Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary and lower-secondary education in sections on Vocational Guidance and Personal and Social Development, Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in upper-secondary education in sections on Vocational Guidance and Counselling for Personal and Social Development, as well as to preparing other operational documents,



contents, and activities that might support successful implementation of lifelong career guidance in Slovenian primary and secondary education.

In the first part of the monograph the focus is on conceptual understanding of lifelong career guidance in contemporary society. In the first chapter, Miha Lovšin outlines the development of individual groups of career guidance theories and illustrates how they are reflected in current counselling practices in the field of career guidance in the Slovenian educational space. In the second chapter, Igor Bijuklič presents the difference between careers and professions in a knowledge society and the question of how to understand the emergence of a new career guidance paradigm in the context of education and preparing young people for the field of work. In the third chapter of the monograph, Polona Kelava devotes special attention to the term career empowerment as a process of equipping young people for their entire professional path and no longer merely occupations.

The focus of the second part of the monograph is on approaches of successful career guidance in practice. In the fourth chapter, Alenka Gril presents the possibilities of creating a stimulating learning environment and use of appropriate teaching methods to facilitate the personal and social development of all children and adolescents in school. In the fifth chapter, Mojca Štraus analyses the data acquired from PISA 2012, which indicate what Slovenian 15-year-old students think about the importance of learning and school work, and especially their views about the importance of learning mathematics in terms of their career and professional opportunities. The focus of the sixth monograph chapter by Tina Rutar Leban are various theories and empirical studies that highlight the importance of the relationship between children and parents for the development of children's careers. In the seventh chapter, Tina Vršnik Perše presents the role of teachers as adults who play an important role in helping students and young adolescents acquire competencies and skills for placing information about careers and education in a suitable context. The concluding monograph section summarises the key points of individual chapters and highlights their possible implications for further development of education policies and practices in the field of lifelong career guidance in the Slovenian educational space.

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## **I. CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS OF CAREER GUIDANCE**

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF CAREER GUIDANCE FOR PUPILS AND STUDENTS

MIHA LOVŠIN

*Understanding the theoretical frameworks that affect career guidance activities is of crucial importance for understanding counselling practices and documents related to this field. Each theory is a reflection of the time in which it was created, and the degree of its implementation at a practical level depends on how efficient it was in addressing important social issues. However, theories and practices do not disappear with time, they accumulate much in the same way as did previous forms of society and the associated type of careers have partly been preserved.*

*The guidelines for school counselling work, as a key document that governs the activities of career guidance for students and pupils, originate in the theories that proved most efficient at addressing social issues in the 20th century. An analysis of the school counselling services' work in Slovenia also confirms this trend in the guidelines for school counselling work, however, an overview of project activities in schools reveals that the challenges of the 21st century are being taken on. It is this awareness that can contribute to the modernisation of key documents and thereby to systemic adjustment to the changed social situation.*

*Key words: career development theories, lifelong career guidance, counselling work, theory and practice*

### Description of Theories in the Field of Career Guidance for Pupils and Students

The theoretical field that impacts career guidance activities is established simultaneously with the formation of counselling practices. From a historical perspective, counselling work dates back to the late 19th century, when the advent of industrialisation resulted in the emergence of new professions, while many traditional ones were on the way to disappearing. Thus, decisions on a certain profession were no longer predetermined and known, but became the subject of individuals' choice. On the other hand, the new work method in factories, with its tendency to optimise production, called for employing 'the right people in the right positions'. Industrialisation has also led to increased migration of the population and society's tendency to integrate new settlers in production relations as quickly as possible. Thus, individuals and their career decisions have become important both for individuals themselves and for businesses and society.

Based on the implied *individuals – society* dyad, the theories are commonly classified as psychological or sociological. The former are based on the presumption that individuals are free in choosing their profession and that they themselves largely influence their professional future, while the latter are based on the premise that in choosing a profession, individuals are steered and limited by social structures, cultural norms and institutions. In this context, counselling work, whose core task is dealing with individuals and their careers in terms of chronology, places the first theories into the group of psychological theories, within which

there are two aspects of career exploration. Theories that examine careers in terms of individual differences are focused on establishing how individuals' traits match certain types of careers or occupational types. Theories that deal with careers in terms of individuals' career development are centred on the interpretation of how individuals' change and develop throughout their lives (Greenhaus and Callanan, 2006). Similarly, some sociological theories are focused on establishing the links between individuals' social status and certain types of career or career choices. Some other sociological theories are centred on the interpretation of how the careers of individuals as social beings change or develop in interaction with the social environments in which individuals are present. In this sense, Law (1996) distinguishes between structured and interactive psychological and sociological theories. Structured theories are characterised by the fact that they understand individuals as structured, unchangeable entities, and interactive theories by the fact that they perceive individuals as functioning and changing and as susceptible to a wide variety of impacts (ibid.).

However, it is possible to classify these theories into more than just psychological and sociological. John Killeen, who generally refers to all theories in the field of career guidance as career development theories, has developed a classification on the basis of the answers to the following three questions: (1) who is the study subject; (2) in what kind of an environment does an individual's career take place and (3) what is the nature of career activities. According to Killeen, the study subject is a person with a career who can act as someone who has, or does not have enough, strength to take effective decisions, and thus controls, or does not control, his or her career. On the assumption that anyone can influence his or her career to a certain extent, it is possible to establish whether this pertains to rational influence or to impacts beyond the limits of rationality. In researching environments in which career development takes place, the focus is on different environments, i.e. the labour market, occupational structures and social structures. Alternatively, psychologists - like biologists - also talk about a general environment.<sup>6</sup> In regard to the nature of career activities, Killeen (1996) notes that the central question was how to match an individual with an occupation. He points out the following three things: firstly, that the exploration of individuals' career decisions involves an interplay of environmental factors and individuals' own factors, whereby he allows some open options regarding the relationships between these factors; secondly, that there is a difference in the conception of the environment between the sociological and psychological approaches to individuals' careers, which also points to possible differences in the conception of individuals; thirdly, with the aforementioned question itself Killeen suggests a significant characteristic of career studies, i.e. application in practice. In the chapter sections that follow, individual theoretical concepts are explored in terms of how they deal with these relationships and also in terms of their application in practice.

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of general environment is extremely broad and weak at the same time. The focus of psychological theories was on the elements that directly impact individuals' career-related behaviour. Over the last thirty years, attempts have been made in psychological theories to organise the identified environmental impacts in a way that is reminiscent of the sociological approach. One of the forms of organisation of the environment regards this as a microsystem (a direct contact at school, at home etc.), a mesosystem (connection between microsystems, e.g. of the school and home environments), an ecosystem (certain social structures in which an individual does not take part, e.g. parents' social network, education policy etc.) and a macrosystem (a system of beliefs, values and institutions) (Killeen, 1996).

## Overview of Individual Theoretical Discourses

The trait and factor theories are considered to be the first theoretical discipline in the field of career guidance and are classified as psychological and structured theories. This group includes theories whose goal is to show individuals their competencies, achievements and personality traits, with the aim of linking them with the factors or requirements of occupations (types of careers). Weaknesses of the theoretical discourse in traits and factors lie primarily in the fact that each trait is treated as a static category and that the decision-making process is not explained.

The issue of static treatment of individuals' traits, and the challenge of how to explain the decision-making process, is dealt with by the development theory, which belongs to the group of psychological and interactive theories focused on researching the perception of one's own competencies and motivation and on how self-perception changes. In terms of individuals' development, Donald Super discusses vocational maturity as a separate category. In the same way that intellectual, emotional and physical development presumes intellectual, emotional and physical maturity, so career development presumes differences between individuals in vocational maturity. This involves two elements: (1) individuals' position on the diagram of behavioural development, which ranges from the stage of exploration, growth, foundation and maintenance, to the stage of decline in occupational activities, and (2) individuals' actual behaviour with respect to his or her chronological age (Lapajne, 1997). Law (1999) classifies developmental theories into a wider group of self-concept theories.<sup>7</sup> In regard to the self-concept theories, two other theories need to be pointed out, i.e. the theories by A. Roe and L. Gottfredson, which contribute to the understanding of the decision-making process. Both theories prove that events in early childhood are crucial for further decisions and actually influence the way of life (Brančič, 1986; Gottfredson, 1996).

The logic, according to which development is a key element in shaping individuals' occupational interests, is also applied by the social learning theory of career decision-making. Its founder, Krumboltz, proceeds from Bandura's social cognitive theory, which is based on the assumption that there is a continuous reciprocal interaction between a person (cognition), the environment (physical context, including with the organisational structure, and the social context, i.e. other people) and behaviour (Greenhaus and Callanan, 2006: 685). Based on this, Krumboltz developed an explanation of how genetic characteristics (race, gender, talent) are combined, as well as characteristics and events from the environment, learning experience and skills of tackling tasks (standards, work habits, mental sets) and how this is, in turn, reflected in the development of individuals' career paths. The theory, which is one of the interactive theories, is successful in explaining how individuals change, even more so than the self-concept theories with the social learning model. There are different opinions as to whether the theory should be classified as psychological or sociological. Brown (in Brown et al., 2002) classifies it as a psychological theory, and Law (1996) describes it as a community interaction theory, thus placing it among sociological and interactive theories. The author of the chapter agrees with the observation by Hodkinson and Spark, who have, in connection with Krumboltz's theory, argued that the theory still retains a dividing line between external

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<sup>7</sup> This is a concept developed by humanistic psychologists and refers to self-conception (Greenhaus in Callanan, 2006).

environmental impacts and internally guided decisions and is, as such, based on an enhanced version of behaviourism (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997).

The logic according to which one influences one's own career is applied by a more recent, constructivist career theory, which is based on two assumptions: (1) individuals' knowledge and identity are a product of social and cognitive processes and take place in the context of interactions between individuals and groups, as well as in the process of negotiation between them; 2) the importance that individuals attribute to reality is created in the social, cultural and historical context within the discourse by means of which mutual relationships are shaped (Savickas, 2011). The constructivist career theory describes career as a moving perspective that attributes personal significance to remembering or reassembling the past to suit present needs and support future aspirations. Narrative processing of identity constructions gathers threads of meaning from familiar small stories and weaves them together into a large story with a patchwork of deeper meaning. Savickas illustrates this with the path that individuals go through while they are co-creating their careers, i.e. the path from actors, to agents and then to authors of their careers. As actors they are, in early childhood, supposed to quickly assume and fulfil the roles assigned to them by the environment. Later, during the school period, they set goals, look for new ones and also strive to achieve them as agents. At the end of adolescence, society expects them to start integrating the individual roles they have played, and the activities they have learnt during schooling, and thus they become the authors of their own life stories (ibid.).

In terms of understanding the static nature of individuals' traits, self-concept theories, Krumboltz's social learning theory and constructivist career theories all go beyond the trait and factor theory. All three theories add a dynamic component to individuals' traits and also provide an explanation of the decision-making process, which is either a result of individuals' (personal) development, a result of social learning, or a result of their own activity. Hodkinson and Sparks (1997: 32) believe that the following characteristics describe all three theories: "(1) all three of them see career-related decision-making primarily as an individual process; (2) they define career-related decision-making as a rational process, i.e. a process that takes place at a conscious level; (3) they attribute individuals with the ability to influence, or even control, the factors that impact their career decisions [either by finding a match between individuals' traits and the factors of individual types of work, or by developing individuals' skills and personal maturity, or on the basis of the findings of social learning]."

Opportunity structure theories, which are classified as sociological and structured theories, explore what work is accessible to people depending on their social status. Thus, the logic behind this is that it is not an individual who chooses work, but the social environment that determines what he or she will be able to choose in the first place. One of such theories is the status attainment theory developed by Blau and Duncan (1967), which proves, and also shows empirically, that individuals' professional status depends heavily on the achievements of their parents. In contrast to Super's concept, Roberts (1968) proves that being given a certain job is significantly more dependent on the so-called opportunity structures than on the previous occupational interest. The opportunity structure is conditioned mainly by the attained level of education and the social environment from which individuals' originate. In a study that examines the behaviour of lads from a working class environment, Willis (1977) similarly shows a significant impact of their primary working-class social environment on their



professional career. At the same time, he also points out the unconscious impact of the social environment and the associated opportunity structures.

Hodkinson and Sparkes continue to apply the logic of the opportunity structure theory. Their theory of career decision-making, which Law places into the group of sociological and interactive theories known as the community interaction theories, is based on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*<sup>8</sup> and includes three key and inter-connected components: (1) pragmatically rational decision-making; (2) interactions with others in the (youth training) field, related to the unequal resources different 'players' possess; (3) the location of decisions within the partly unpredictable pattern of turning-points and routines that make up the life course. Through a combination of all three components Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997: 41) offer an interpretation for understanding the background to career decision-making: "Everything [the career decision-making process] takes place within a macro-context, which has social, political, economic, cultural, geographical and historical dimensions. Within this is the field, with its interactions, power struggles, alliances and negotiations, where the rules of game are determined by these interactions together with the formal regulations. Within a field, people make pragmatically rational decisions within their culturally-derived horizons for action, at turning points. These turning points are both preceded and followed by periods of routine, which themselves are located within the field and the macro-context. The periods of routine and the turning-points are themselves interrelated, so that neither can be understood fully without the other, and the separation between them is often arbitrary. The pathway from turning-point to turning-point can be predictable and smooth or irregular and idiosyncratic."

In comparison with the opportunity structure theories, Hodkinson and Sparkes interpret career decision-making as a process, thereby taking into account the logic of interactivity. In doing so, however, they do not link this process to a model that would predetermine decisions, as in the case of self-concept theories. Although this seems to solve all the fundamental dilemmas, Law (1996) nevertheless identifies three key questions that, according to him, career-learning theories might still seek to answer: (1) when a person has come under multifarious conscious and unconscious influences, why does the career-related change come about; (2) how is it that different people attend to different influences; (3) how do people embark upon the discovery of and response to these influences, how is that voyage developed and extended into adulthood, and what enables and hinders it. Law bases the answers to these questions on the premise that information is not knowledge until it has been processed and defines conscious learning as being of key importance in individuals' career and in the search for answers to these three questions. In the career learning theory, Law thus presumes that, like other learning, career development can be educated. A programme which builds a cycle, or cycles of learning, developing from sensing through sifting and focusing to understanding, will equip a person with an educated repertoire of capacities to support career-development actions. However, based on the findings of the opportunity structure theory, the social learning theory and the social learning theory of career decision-making, he takes into account that career learning takes place within a time and a place, that it can be conscious or unconscious, planned or spontaneous, and purposeful or accidental (Law, 1999).

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<sup>8</sup> "Habitus is the system of acquired dispositions [from the environment] functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment or as classificatory principles as well as being the organising principles of action" (Bourdieu, 2003: 19).

**Table 1:** Characteristics of theoretical concepts

<i>Theoretical explanations</i>	Trait and factor theories	Opportunity structure theories	Developmental theories, social learning theories and constructivist career theories	Community interaction theories	Career learning theories
<i>Phenomenon in the foreground</i>	competence	social class	personal construct	Interactions	learning
<i>The relationship between individuals, career and society</i>	individuals influencing their own careers	social status influencing individuals' careers	individuals influencing their own careers, whereby social factors are taken into account	individuals influencing their own careers, whereby this is socially inherent	individuals as social beings influencing their own careers through learning
<i>Aim</i>	to ascertain how well individuals' competencies, achievements and personality traits match work factors	to ascertain what work is accessible to individuals depending on their social status	to explain career development.	to explain the factors that affect the decision-making.	to explain career development as a learning process.

### Application of Theories in Practice

The described theoretical concepts differ in how they impact the counselling practice. Here it is assumed that the most influential theories are those that are most effective at addressing important issues. The leading theories, which prevail among career guidance professionals, are the trait and factor theory, the developmental theory and the social learning theory (Osipow, 1990; Greenhaus and Callanan, 2006). All three are psychological theories, which is expected in view of the historical development.

The trait and factor theory is one of the most established theories as it offers simple and effective answers to the biggest challenge of industrial society in the first half of the 20th century. At the time, industrial society was mainly oriented towards the production of goods in large, organised factory systems that required the right people in the right positions to be able to operate effectively. Systems were relatively stable and people managed to make ends meet by means of the occupation that they had had throughout their lives. The key to this was that they took a career decision that was in line with their traits and competencies. The theoretical discourse of the traits and factors implies the definition of counselling work as work that provides candidates with occupational advice about the integration in those areas of work or occupations that are, in terms of their subjective options and objective circumstances, their best match (Oman, 1976: 28). In Slovenia this activity has been defined as vocational direction. The most commonly used counselling methods based on this theory are self-assessment instruments, psychometric aptitude tests and questionnaires on professional interests, clearly indexed labour-market information and, at a later time, also computer-assisted guidance, relevant databases and expert interviews (Law, 1999).

With constant technological progress and changes in work tasks, one of the key issues over time became how to ensure individuals' career development within an organisation. As is

evident from their names, the developmental and the social learning theories develop models that regard individuals as evolving beings. Two elements are introduced with this concept: continuous monitoring of the development of individuals' relevant traits, and systematic work with occupationally-immature clients. This also involves an important redefinition from the concept of vocational direction into vocational guidance (Brančič, 1986): "Vocational guidance is the process of helping individuals develop and accept an integrated picture of themselves and their role in the world of work, and to actualise it to their satisfaction and the satisfaction of the society in which they live." Some of the work techniques used are career counselling, tutoring or pastoral care, work in small groups, keeping records of experience, designing portfolios, role play etc.

Influenced in particular by the developmental theory, the social learning theory and the trait and factor theory, and to some extent also by the opportunity structure theory, Law (1999) in the 1970s developed a counselling model based on the DOTS analysis (*Decision learning* - learning about types of decision-making and the factors that must be considered; *Opportunity awareness* – discovering opportunities for education, training, employment, learning about careers and the world of work in general; *Transition learning* – learning the skills necessary for the transition between different levels and types of education, transition to the labour market etc.; *Self awareness* – identifying one's traits, interests, knowledge, capabilities and talents etc.) In addition to focusing on individuals' traits and competencies, the model is centred on taking into account individuals' personal experiences when it comes to changing the traits (developmental theory), and on taking into account the connections between individuals' decisions and opportunities presented within their social environment (the opportunity structure theory). By taking into account the developmental theory, the model assumes that of key importance for individuals' career is not a single act of making the right decision, but the developmental aspect that lasts a lifetime. The skills acquired by individuals through learning in all these four areas are referred to as career management skills. This crucial paradigm shift from a one-off decision to a lifelong nature of career also results in the redefinition of the role of counsellors. In this sense, the main task of counsellors is to encourage learning in those individuals they advise (Lapajne, 1997: 50): "they should not look on themselves as someone who matches workers to jobs, but rather as trainers, educators and mentors". This paradigm shift also constitutes an altered definition of counselling work, sometimes referred to as lifelong career guidance (Kohont et al., 2011: 28): "Career guidance services or activities [...], which are organised in a way that allows them to help individuals (at any age and at any point of their lives) make decisions about education, training and career, and enable them to manage their life paths in learning, work and other environments."

In 21st century society, also called the knowledge society, the global economy and even more rapid technological progress generate a significantly higher frequency of workforce transition. In regard to this, the key question is how, without losing touch with oneself and one's social identity, one can keep changing jobs throughout life. Counselling practices combine several approaches, similar to those that were based on the DOTS analysis. Nevertheless, it is still possible to conclude that the dominant influence is exerted by the trait and factor theory, developmental theory, social learning theory and their later versions. In this context, two theories need to be highlighted in particular: the career learning theory and the constructivist career theory. The former generates counselling practices in accordance with a model that Law (1999) refers to as the new DOTS and lists the following counselling

practices: collection of and focus on relevant information about work, roles and oneself, exploration of the important virtues of work, roles and oneself, integration (in terms of time and content) of gained experiences within the process of mutual exchange of information, recording what has been learned (by means of a diary or some other method of recording) and learning to learn.

Similarly, counselling practices that originate in the constructivist career theory and are reflected in the life-designing model, involve organising individuals' past impressions (information about work, oneself and the world, integration of gained experiences in terms of time and content). When individuals have organised information, they do not continue the life-designing model by means of learning activities (such as the new DOTS); what follows is merely just selecting activities based on the findings. These activities include a range of the aforementioned counselling activities and techniques (testing, career learning etc.) (Savickas, 2011).

The sociological theory of career decision-making does not seem to have an influence on counselling practices. However, by classifying it in the group of community interaction theories, where he also places Krumboltz's social learning theory, Law (1999) reveals the potential influence of this theory on the counselling practice. The objectives of the counselling practices that are based on this theory pertain to exploration of social and moral issues in the field of work, learning about how work connects individuals with the lives of other people, the search for and exploration of other people's views in connection with work, role and oneself, and to the search and use of counselling and other types of help. These objectives should primarily be achieved through activities in the field of mutual co-operation, such as voluntary work associated with community tasks, implementation of pilot projects, gaining work experience and many other types of experience within the community and mutual visits inside and outside the community.

As previously shown, changes in society go hand-in-hand with changes in theoretical perspectives and thus also career guidance activities. In relation to this, it has been observed that this involves an accumulation of theories or, as noted by Savickas and Lent (1994), that all the theories constituted a basis for a sustainable contribution to the career theory (and practice) repertoire. This is understandable, as in spite of the social changes the earlier forms of social organisation continue to exist, at least to some extent.

## **The Slovenian Context**

The key documents governing the field of career guidance for pupils and students are Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary and lower-secondary education, and Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in upper-secondary education. In both documents, related activities are defined as career guidance and are therefore, by definition, defined as the concept of the twentieth century. Prevailing activities, which are in more detail defined in the Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary and lower-secondary education, involve the provision of information about further education, occupations and employment options, identification of individuals' traits, and matches with the requirements of occupations and vocational education, which mostly include elements of learning career management skills. Programme guidelines for the

work of counselling services in upper-secondary education are considerably more general; among the recommended activities, those that have here been pointed out before are activities that follow the DOTS model from the 1970s (National Curriculum Council, 1999: 24).

An analysis of the survey with school counsellors about the state of vocational guidance in primary and lower-secondary level schools conducted in 2008 by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS), shows that, at the time, more than ninety percent of the surveyed counsellors were carrying out the following activities (often in collaboration with the ESS): individual consultations with parents, individual consultations with pupils, team talks (with fellow teachers), external knowledge assessment in Year 9, testing by means of General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB), the Career Guide folder (*Poklicni kažipot*), the career path questionnaire, lectures on the choice of profession and specific vocational education lessons (Gabor et al., 2008). These are all activities that are in line with the recommendations, whereby it should be noted that the GATB testing and the career path questionnaires provide a very important basis for school counsellors' individual consultations with pupils and parents. Thus, seven of the nine examined categories are related to the activities that are, for the most part, based on the trait and factor theory. Special vocational education lessons - as an element that is based on the DOTS model - are in line with the recommendations of the guidelines limited to a few hours per year. Team conferences show great potential for integration between practitioners and, in this context, constitute mainly the provision of counselling infrastructure.

An analysis of counselling work in primary and secondary education, carried out by means of group conversation in the study groups of counsellors from primary and secondary schools in late 2014 and early 2015, confirms the findings of the 2008 survey. However, it also reveals an important new finding. In interviews with counsellors, it turned out that vocational education is, in practice, understood as education for an occupation, mostly carried out by teachers in the context of the subjects they teach, or as career guidance in general (Štremfel et al., 2015). This confirms that, in practice, vocational education represents what is, with this term, described by Muršak (2012: 76): "Vocational education is a process of deliberate and systematic development of those qualities that are characteristic of a particular profession and, simultaneously, conscious and intentional influence on the development of vocational identity and the course of socialisation processes, either at school or at work, in the practical training part of the work process, or during work placement. It is also possible to use the term planned or guided professional socialisation. The term vocational education is often incorrectly used as a synonym for occupational counselling or career guidance." Thus, in this sense, vocational education is, in practice, also a category whose strongest framework lies in the trait and factor theory.

Analyses of the curricula of compulsory subjects in primary and lower-secondary education and compulsory subjects in comprehensive upper-secondary schools (gymnasiums) in terms of career guidance in Slovenia also revealed that the learning content in this area is scarce, therefore, it is impossible for it to have a strong impact (Sentočnik, 2012).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, various projects in Slovenia involve activities in relation to learning to learn, self-initiative and entrepreneurship, stimulating creativity and integrating the creative potential etc. (Ažman and Rupar, 2015). These are career guidance activities that address some of the important issues of today's society and many of these activities are carried out by teachers in schools. However, project-based implementation of these activities

does not reflect, nor does it ensure, systemic regulation of this field. In this sense, the guidelines for counselling work in schools that would include such recommendations for the implementation of activities that could contribute to solving current social challenges might turn out to have a considerable connecting potential.

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## **EMPOWERMENT AS THE ABILITY OF COMMUNITY ACTION: CAREER RESILIENCE OF INDIVIDUALS AND THE OPPOSING ASPECTS OF TRADE UNION-BASED SELF-ORGANISATION**

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*This chapter deals with the difference between a career and professions in a knowledge society and how to understand the emergence of a new paradigm of career guidance in the context of education and preparation of young people for work. Starting from the premise that the aim of school education cannot be limited to being a mere preparation for work, the chapter aims to offer possible answers to the question as to what the purpose of education has become in a knowledge society, where the concepts of career guidance originated and where they were perfected, how to understand the concept of career resilience, and whether this concept can contribute to the empowerment of young people in the first place. Based on these questions, the author tries to address what is offered as an appropriate approach to preparing young people for work. A detailed analysis of the concepts, theorems and paradigms, on which the present-day career-related discussions are based, identifies the key problems and dilemmas that need to be considered before deciding on any sort of action.*

*Key words: (career) resilience, instrumentalisation, knowledge society, management, knowledge worker, trade unions' self-organisation*

### **Introduction**

This chapter deals with some key aspects of what is seen as a shift in the focus from professions towards careers. However, this is certainly not merely a shift in terms of terminology, or a simple verbal modernisation in the sense of 'we used to talk about professions, but now we talk about careers, as this seems to be more popular these days'. Speaking about careers goes beyond the previously normal and common understanding of the term, as it is conceptually constructed and systemic. What is even more important is that speaking about careers has its specific paradigmatic foundation, based on which it is expressed in specific ways that will be explained in the latter part of the chapter. As such it is also noticeable in Slovenia, accepted and integrated into the national institutional endeavours of how to turn the recurring European strategic objectives into 'national' ones. The intentions of achieving the instrumentalisation of education<sup>9</sup> - aimed at the convergence of education and the field of work in a way that the former serves the objectives of the latter, i.e. that

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<sup>9</sup> These intentions institutionally disseminate the key European strategies that are presented as educational. Based on the wording of *Education and Training in Europe 2020* (2013) and the resulting *Rethinking Education* strategy (2012b) it can be argued that the aim of the two strategies is not educational, but economic. In the introductory parts, where the aims of the strategies are presented, the former speaks of "fulfilling the role [of education] to create a stronger European economy" (2013: 11), and the latter about "the vision for education, by means of which it aims to revive economic growth and competitiveness" (2012b: 2). This shows that education is understood and also actively dealt with in a way that it instrumentally serves the objectives and aims of stimulating economic growth and competitiveness.



education becomes a means of accelerating economic growth, innovation, employment etc. - are also the basis of the intentions to streamline the guidelines for schools counselling work.<sup>10</sup> To be more specific, the hitherto activity of vocational guidance is to be modernised by introducing the new concept of lifelong career guidance. This is supposed, in line with the aforementioned convergence, to more appropriately address and resolve the issue of how to prepare young generations for knowledge work and the knowledge society<sup>11</sup>, in which traditional forms of work, fields of work and jobs are disappearing. In the latter part of the chapter it will be shown (or at least attempted to) that this is something new compared to what was previously the case (professions) and that this solution is, in fact, the main problem. Given that these strategies are aimed directly at a sensitive area of education and the system of education (across all of its levels), it is all the more important to give this topic some prudent consideration. To begin, this consideration should not be focused on the question of how to achieve these goals, but initially on the question and problematisation of these 'goals' as such. Therefore, the central question is how to understand lifelong career guidance in the context of education and what perspectives it provides.

### **Differences between Careers and Professions in the Knowledge Society**

Lifelong career guidance is not merely a new name for an activity that was previously known as vocational counselling, provision of vocation-related information, and finally as vocational guidance, but it instead brings completely different conceptual and paradigmatic contents. The most obvious qualitative shift is that it no longer concerns *professions*, but *careers*. To follow a profession or to live a career-oriented life is not, and cannot be, one and the same. While professions still belong to the industrial age, a career is something that goes beyond professions and is thus better suited to the post-industrial era of the knowledge society and its central figure: the knowledge worker. The transformation of knowledge into a usable economy resource and a major factor of production, pronounced specialisation and continuous improvement of this type of knowledge, loss of boundaries between time devoted to learning and time spent working and the integration of both into lifelong learning<sup>12</sup> make up the essential components of this society in the presence of which professions become superfluous and outdated. While the main principle that this society runs on is systematical innovation, i.e. the need for ever-new knowledge, which must satisfy and prove itself within the activity of work and production of an increasing number of things in ever-new ways, any kind of learning for today's professions, that depends on time duration and the corpus of valid knowledge, becomes pointless, since these professions may, within these new dynamics, turn out to be outdated as early as tomorrow. The knowledge society, whose formation is facilitated by the EU's 'post-Bologna' educational strategies (referred to in footnote No. 9),

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<sup>10</sup> See Education and Training in Europe 2020 (2013: 7).

<sup>11</sup> See Drucker, 1969, 1993.

<sup>12</sup> Both learning/education and work are now integrated into a new activity that lasts a lifetime as constant relearning of the new, i.e. the acquisition of new knowledge, skills, competencies, which must be demonstrated directly through work and production. When knowledge is only valid if it is useful, then any knowledge valid yesterday may turn out to be ineffective and redundant tomorrow. Thus, in a knowledge society, everyone constantly learns to be able to work and relearn in order to be able to continue working. This is a crucial, yet all too often overlooked, essence of the concept of lifelong learning (see Drucker, 1985).

establishes the specific situation in which being educated for a profession (and thus professions themselves) become something that no longer suffices.

While professions are determined and limited by their respective areas of competence (i.e. one refers to 'this' or 'that' profession), careers have no such areas. Therefore, the question 'What is your career?' cannot even be asked, as it makes no sense because the scope of an individual's career is, so to speak, their working life as a whole. However, in the knowledge society the term *career* is less and less often used to refer to a career in a single profession and, also, is not only a career consisting of changing from one profession to another. The career of knowledge workers, in relation to their knowledge work, is not only lifelong in terms of duration (i.e. a lifetime), but also in the sense that it encompasses and claims an increasing number of other aspects of their life. In other words, for knowledge workers a career is the only remaining way of their existence. The first and most obvious example is education<sup>13</sup> itself. Since the declared aim of education within the knowledge society is "production of highly skilled and versatile people who can contribute to innovation and entrepreneurship"<sup>14</sup> (European Commission, 2012), knowledge workers constitute the kind of product that has been produced in order to thrive in a single field, in a single activity: in work. They have knowledge and work on acquiring new knowledge so that they can use it as part of their work tasks. Another expression used to refer to them, i.e. *mind workers*, shows that their work is no longer manual, but that they do it by applying their own mind (Drucker, 1969: 266). Strictly speaking, knowledge workers no longer think just for the sake of thinking itself, because this would be one of the fundamental human abilities, or for the sake of understanding and contemplation, but their thinking actually always equals "doing" (Drucker, 2002: 4), as they are workers both by name and definition.<sup>15</sup> If, on the other hand, the psychology of management is considered, a similar thing can be noticed, i.e. that 'hard work' is no longer torment, on the contrary, it is a path to fulfilment of man as man, a path to human happiness itself, not merely a Protestant-like turning point, but also a 'scientific' principle of a large part of contemporary psychology and its diligent contribution to the development of management techniques for managing people. A reference example of this is Maslow's work *Eupsychian Management* (1965), where the management of the work lives of human beings is performed as 'revolutionary art'. The revolutionary aspect of this psychological technique, i.e. the way of steering people towards an effective work life, lies in nothing other than that it gives purpose to what is considered to be the instrument (i.e. work); Maslow argues that this "business of self-actualisation via a commitment to an important job and to worthwhile work could also be said, then, to be the path to human happiness (ibid.: 6). From this perspective, the work that merely provides the means for life is perceived as something that no longer suffices, as it does not offer this kind of added value: "A job that gives a "living" is no longer enough. It must offer a career." (Drucker, 1969: 266). The source of the presently almost unheard reduction to absurdity "I am my career" is in the scientific language of psychology

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<sup>13</sup> The term education will hereafter be used mainly in reference to the context of education within the school system.

<sup>14</sup> Strictly speaking, neither innovation nor entrepreneurship belong to professions, as they are as activities not limited by a specific field.

<sup>15</sup> However, knowledge workers are not workers just for the sake of it, but they are, by definition, individuals who need to be productive and efficient. The task of the management is to provide an answer to the question as to which methods and means of management and self-management will make them this way (see Drucker, 1993; 2002).

and its 'what is supposed to be', according to which "highly evolved individuals assimilate their work into the identity, into the self" (Maslow, 1965: 1). These, and the resulting 'scientific' principles, served as a basis for the presently quite self-evident claims that a career is the field where personal growth and development, self-fulfilment, self-realisation, self-awareness, self-improvement etc. are supposed to take place; in short, the field where knowledge workers are supposed to be perfected as people along the way.<sup>16</sup> However, this perspective needs to be read in the opposite direction, i.e. this is about turning people, including the school-age population, into knowledge workers, from a wide range of various human abilities and potentials, from different fields of human participation into mere technical skills, competencies and specialisations, acquired in order for them to prove themselves in the only remaining activity that is available in the society of the so-called 'working animals': in work and production.

If the differences between professions and careers are examined in terms of the knowledge society, the emphasis is on the fact that compared to professions, which are always defined and limited in terms of a certain field, career is a different type of category, which has a much wider focus: a specific way of life, i.e. the work life as life itself. What does this mean when questions about professions and careers are starting to be asked within the context of education to the school-age generations? The contents of the current so-called 'vocational guidance' are still focused on presenting and choosing field-determined professions, choosing fields of study that will lead to a certain profession. In other words, the question that guides this decision-making process (the decision of *what profession* one would like to follow) comes to an end when the decision is made; and although the question may arise again, it likewise comes to an end when the decision has been made. However, when it comes to lifelong career guidance the focus is on a completely different perspective and dimension. It is not about a simple choice (e.g. choosing between being a veterinarian or an engineer), but it involves many other aspects that go even further. Since a career refers to a specific way of life, the focus is no longer on either professions or choosing between them, but on acquiring skills and attitudes that dictate *how* to act, respond and manage oneself, in other words, *how* to live a career-oriented way of life in a way that makes it productive, efficient, competitive etc.

## The Origin of Career Guidance Concepts

A perspective revealed by lifelong career guidance in the context of education is the thing that is worth viewing as a problem, because specific contents that it integrates into the field of school education have a different purpose than to educate. Other aims are not the result of some mysterious reasons, but simply of the fact that these contents originated from another field where the focus is on different purposes and objectives than that of educational ones. Before clarifying this further, it should also be noted that the reform of the guidelines and the introduction of career guidance targets - so it seems at present - all levels of the education system. By also taking into account the aforementioned 'convergence' of school education and

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<sup>16</sup> However, this 'perfecting' is far from the humanist perspective of "Bildung", according to which the development of man's essence, i.e. man's intellectual capacities, the ability of ethical and moral judgment, and man's activities, calls for interaction with the outside world. On the contrary, they are perfected as knowledge workers who no longer interact with the world, but they - believing that they are recreating it during the course of work processes - only transform the world into 'un-wordly' formations and products.

the economy, it should also be pointed out that the aim of education cannot be reduced either to preparation for a profession or to preparation for a career, not even in those areas within education that are specifically vocationally oriented, let alone in primary and lower-secondary education or even in nursery schools.<sup>17</sup> The aim of school education cannot be merely preparatory training for work, as this would mean that it does not introduce and prepare future generations for entry into the world as such, but only in one of its parts where worldliness is not yet assured, since this 'part' is subjected to the necessity of the life process itself and to providing the means for it. Therefore, until now it has been common to claim that the task of education is not merely to educate (for individual fields), but to educate autonomous and active individuals, adult citizens, who are capable of understanding and critical thinking and who can orient themselves within a common world and live in it together with others as active members of the political community.

However, when the contents and objectives of career guidance enter the field of education, they do not adopt this broader, previously described – humanistic, so to speak - perspective of education, but rather they maintain and introduce their own original language into the places where the key concepts, definitions and objectives of educational activities are present. A tangible example is found in the Slovenian Glossary of Career Guidance Terminology 2011 (Kohont et al., 2011: 6), wherein the growing interest in this activity in the field of education is explained by the fact that the guidance within the EU is identified as an important mechanism for a more effective development of human resources. Given that the focus here is on school education, a fundamental difference should be noticed between "educating pupils or educating citizens" (which would be quite common for this field) on the one hand and "human resource development" on the other. If this difference is not noticeable, then it should be elaborated on in a more factual way. Symptomatic talk of 'human resources', as well as the key concepts of today's education policies at EU level, such as 'learning to learn', 'lifelong learning', 'knowledge society', 'innovation', which the talk of 'career guidance' is likewise composed of and related to, are not concepts that would have originated from the field of educational sciences for the purposes of education, but they were both name-wise and content-wise taken from a completely different field. It is a verifiable fact that these concepts were formed and were systemised in the field of management<sup>18</sup>. However, the main aim of this technical discipline is not education-related, but is connected with the question as to *how* to turn people into human resources and how to develop these to their maximum efficiency, allowing them to self-manage.<sup>19</sup> This recognition of career guidance and the associated career management skills as an important mechanism for the development of human resources, and not of students, citizens or anyone else, is a simple consequence of the fact that the concepts of career and career management skills have been developed in the field of management and

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<sup>17</sup> Increasingly frequent experiments are noticeable of entrepreneurship being introduced into nursery schools, where playing no longer takes place for the sake of playing itself, as a way towards overall development, but is now focused on contributing to the development of entrepreneurial skills. Thus, even nursery schools become training sites for employability and together with the youngest individuals assume the task of stimulating economic growth.

<sup>18</sup> To confirm this fact, it suffices to read some of the most important authors and fundamental works from the field of management, especially those parts where the focus is on knowledge as a new resource and factor of production – i.e. on the 'knowledge society' (e.g. Drucker 1969, 1985, 1993, 2002). It took the Bologna reform for these managerial theorems to be introduced into education policies and through research and project funding also into educational sciences at universities and research institutes, where they were all too often accepted as self-evident and were perfected accordingly and further disseminated.

<sup>19</sup> See Drucker, 2002.

practised in its sub-disciplines (for instance "human resource management") or – as stated in the Slovenian Glossary of Career Guidance Terminology 2011 (Kohont et al., 2011) - in private agencies that deal with employment and human resource development, whose activities are primarily intended for those individuals who have already entered the labour market, and not the population that is still being educated. As such, these concepts and skills do not pursue the aims that apply or used to traditionally apply in the field of school education, but serve the purposes and meet the objectives that apply in the field of human resource management, which have been described above. Based on this, it can be concluded that the transfer of such concepts into the field of education that will dictate practical implementation of career guidance, but now for the population that is being educated, is in contrast to the aims of education that strive for the education of autonomous and active individuals that are capable of understanding and critical thinking.

### Conceptualisation of Resilience

In the following part of the chapter, a chosen example will be used to highlight some aspects that speak in favour of the foregoing hypothesis about the activities aimed at human resource development being in contrast to the objectives of school education. As has previously been pointed out, the differences dealt with that lead to these contradictions are not merely verbal (as in 'it does not make much difference if they are referred to as human resources or citizens'), but at least paradigmatic. In other words, this concerns completely diverse perspectives on human behaviour and attitudes. Since modern concepts of lifelong career guidance now also entail and call for something like individuals' personal and social development, it is necessary to think about *what kind of* personal and social development these concepts expect. The first possible answer could be probably the kind that serves the purposes of successful career planning and management, however, this is not a sufficient answer to the question. An attempt will be made to find the answer by first establishing what kind of actions, behaviour, response and attitude is required by career-oriented personal and social development. One of the key terms that describes this is *resilience*. If, for the time being, resilience is described as meaning something like resistance, then it can be said that it is focused on the way one acts, responds and, especially, how one deals with all kinds of burdens in their working life. For this reason, this term has, in the collocation *career resilience*, been allowed to enter the concepts and formulations of career guidance, whereas in connection to vocational guidance it would be meaningless. What kind of resilience does one need in choosing a profession? In order to understand the term more accurately, it is necessary to briefly look back into the history of its use. Hollnagel (2015) ascertained that the term resilience was for the first time used to describe and study the properties of timber and its durability under varying loads. As a professional term (Breen and Anderies, 2011) it was first systemised in the field of classical engineering and materials science, where natural sciences (chemistry, physics) are applied to study and improve the properties of materials, i.e. in particular their elasticity at different load forces and their ability to return to their original state after the load has been removed, while maintaining their functionality unchanged. This would not be of any particular importance for the issue discussed here if the field of engineering was not exactly the field that "provided a useful and rigorous way of formalizing

a very common, colloquial use of resilience" (ibid.: 43). However, this formalisation not only concerns a general understanding of the term, but also the universally applied conceptual basis for direct use: "The features of engineering resilience [of materials, author's note] make plain the appeal of using it, metaphorically or more rigorously, in other fields: it is simple to understand, accords with plain usage, and generates simple management strategies." (ibid.: 44). Its versatile applicability has been recognised by, among others,<sup>20</sup> a part of psychology,<sup>21</sup> because "engineering resilience was traditionally the dominant paradigm of resilience in developmental psychology" (ibid.), which means that the engineering concept of resilience was also introduced to the field of human affairs for the purposes of improving so-called 'man's mental well-being'.

### **Can Career Resilience Actually Contribute to Empowerment?**

The field of materials engineering, based on natural science, represents the foundation which is used by the conceptual formalisations of theorems and techniques of resilience in other areas, including those disciplines whose focus of study is man. Thus, the treatment of man's resilience retains the elements of engineering attitude and engineering-like treatment of inanimate matter, despite the fact that the subject they are dealing with has been essentially replaced. In other words, in much the same way as the engineering mode was used to deal with inanimate matter as a material, the same mode is used for the treatment of man as a material.<sup>22</sup> An example of this are references to resilience for work and education in one of the projects of the European Lifelong Learning Programme (Lifelong Learning Programme, 2015), which summarises this vantage engineering paradigm and design. Accordingly, it talks about resilience as a key competency of *adjusting* to societal changes and demands of the labour market, or as training for the development of skills for *bouncing back*, as a skill of *flexibility*, or even a personal strategy of demonstrating *positive feelings* as a means of coping with the strains of life. A similar definition of resilience in the field of work is provided by Bridges (1995) - he describes it as an "ability to bend and not break" (1995: 57). Another example is provided by Van Vuuren and C. Fourie (2000), who also list such behavioural components of career resilience that reflect the ability of coping with strains and difficult circumstances, such as adjusting to changing circumstances, a positive attitude regarding work- and organisation-related changes, a limited need for security, a high tolerance towards uncertainty etc. In relation to this it is interesting to note that the authors, like many others, clearly recognise the worsening of working conditions (insecurity, stress, workers being laid off etc.), however they do so by accepting this as an unchangeable and unquestionable fact. Consequently, the response can only be two-fold, and here lies the basic myopia and danger of the concept of career resilience, whether one is "career vulnerable" (one cannot endure

<sup>20</sup> The emergence of some sort of (pseudo)cyber language about system resilience, wherein the system can literally mean everything from "ecosystems, cities, governments, bridges, society or individuals" (Breen and Anderies, 2011: 42) confirms that in the various branches of science and technology it has become possible to study and develop the resilience of everyone and everything in an engineering way.

<sup>21</sup> While the introduction of the concept of resilience into the field of psychology initially took place in developmental psychology, the concept of career resilience today is most present and discussed in the field of positive psychology.

<sup>22</sup> Precisely this engineering is the origin of the language of human material or, at a later time, of human resources, which is currently present just about everywhere.

difficult working conditions) or "career-resilient" (one can endure the uncertainty, stress etc.). The myopia and the danger lie in that this concept conceals what is decisive, i.e. the perspective itself and the possibility of questioning and addressing the causes of, and the factors behind, the circumstances in which we live and work. The presented examples lead to the conclusion that the concept of career resilience imitates (in terms of its essential features) the engineering conceptualisation of resilience and durability of materials. This is of immense importance for this discussion, as the concept of career resilience is far from being marginal, but "receives wide support as a key issue in facilitating the transition from a traditional career paradigm to the new career paradigm" (Birchall and Lyons, 1995; Bridges, 1995; Mirvis and Hall, 1994; Waterman et al., 1994, in Van Vuuren and Fourie, 2000: 15). If this is the case, the focus of the new career paradigm is how to prepare and train people for 'bending without breaking' in today's increasingly difficult and precarious working conditions.

The previously highlighted characteristics can be used to search for an answer to the aforementioned question about what kind of actions, behaviour, response and attitude are assumed by career-oriented individuals. Since career resilience is a key component of lifelong career guidance, the question should be asked whether it can really contribute to the empowerment of youths in today's labour market situation. Given the fact that the focus here is on empowerment, and not merely *resilience*, the answer is *no*. In terms of empowerment even the antithesis of this is noticeable, because career resilience establishes the rudiments for the (self-)suppression of the key human capacities. The essential aspects of this suppression<sup>23</sup> can be summarised as follows:

1. It views man - by negating his/her capacity for judgement and action - as something that does nothing but suffers and responds. Although it talks about actions, it does so only in the sense of bouncing back, i.e. returning to the previous state while maintaining functionality unchanged.
2. Within the horizon of resilience, man is described merely as being responsive and adapting to circumstances, as if these were outside and beyond the reach of man's contemplation and action; as if this was about natural (physical) forces and phenomena that cannot be any different than they are and which people cannot control.
3. Man is viewed singularily, and as such he supposedly enters into, pushes himself and thrives in the labour market.

Career resilience treats man (also in terms of education) in only one dimension – as an adjusting individual, thus obscuring everything else at the very start, including the most important point: the ability to think and judge the existing, and to act according to his/her own judgement. Career resilience is able to serve the development of human resources' effectiveness, however, its viability for youths' empowerment in the labour market is more than questionable. Although a clear answer to this has already been provided in the previous part of this chapter, a somewhat different question can now be asked. How can one expect, or count on, youths' empowerment in the labour market, if they are, for this field, guided with conviction and with instructions that they are present there as merely adjusting individuals, as

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<sup>23</sup> This suppression is brought about by the concept of resilience itself, as, put simply, it tackles man and man's improvement in much the same way it was technically tackled by the science-based engineering of inanimate matter.

never sufficiently effective, never sufficiently trained...? The answer is only by simply completely brushing aside the present situation in the labour market, erasing tradition and the present possibilities of endeavours for workers' rights and, last but not least, by incorrectly understanding empowerment as the development of resilient human resources.

### **How and Why Leave Career Resilience Behind and Change Over to Empowerment as the Ability of Community Action?**

Endeavours to empower youths in the labour market must in no way be limited to diligence or career success, on the contrary, they need to be initiated outside the clearly defined scope of work. In a somewhat descriptive way it can be said that empowerment also means that all aspects and options are considered, based on which youths can, as individuals or as a community, strive for something such as decent and fair working conditions, more free time etc. This is emphasised on purpose because these aspects are completely excluded and, by definition, have no place within the concepts of career guidance. However, since these concepts have now been given free rein into school education, it is all the more justified and legitimate to talk about empowerment differently than what is expected by career guidance concepts. The question within the above subtitle has been framed accordingly and an answer to it will be provided below. Firstly, this means doing away with viewing people as merely adjusting individuals and empowering them to act on their own initiative and at their own discretion, which includes the ability to break off the dominant processes of what exists at present or initiate something new in relation to what exists. Secondly, it is advisable to reject viewing people as individuals, who supposedly compete with one another and are focused only on their personal success. In short, this constitutes a shift from being merely *responsive* to the *ability to act* and a shift from *individual* to *community-based*. Speaking about man's ability to *cope with* the unpredictability of life, cruel blows dealt by fate and natural facts, such as death, natural disasters etc., in the sense of being able to bounce back, is reasonable and also justified, as these are matters that one is unable to impact, make decisions about or prevent through actions. On the other hand, systematically developing techniques and strategies of something like resilient elasticity - as a general, or even as the only, valid principle of human response and actions in the field of human affairs, i.e. including where no laws of nature or natural forces apply, and where things can also be different than they are - is unjustified and completely misguided. The same applies to the scope of work, as it is to a large extent composed of factors that are within the reach of man's reflection and influence. This simply means that work requirements, conditions, circumstances and situations are not to be taken as a fixed, given fact, but are subject to change and one can imagine and strive for the situation to be *different* to what it is at present. In this regard, what matters more than diligence and specialist knowledge, are some other different human capacities, for instance discussions and reaching agreements, self-organisation and community action. As one does not enter the labour market alone and, while there, is not isolated as an individual, but often works as part of a team of employees, also sharing similar circumstances and conditions with many others outside of this team, it is quite pointless to agree to the assumptions of a career that only highlights individuals' successful work life, to which only they themselves can contribute through their own hard work. The activity of work is inextricably linked to various



forms of integration and co-operation for this purpose. However, this does not mean integration for the sake of work, but also integration for the purposes of taking part in decisions about working *conditions*,<sup>24</sup> which, in the current process of deindustrialisation and elimination of trade unions, means mainly being able, together with others, to establish other forms of trade union-based self-organisation and activities.

### Why Trade Union-Based Self-Organisation?

This shift in the perspective, i.e. from being merely responsive to the ability to act, and from individual to community-based, is nothing new, but has always been present in tradition and known in various forms of (self-)organisation, which are here known as different types of trade unions. The problem lies in the fact that existing trade unions are mostly tied to traditional industries and sectors, and cover the forms of work and employment that are not on the increase, rather the contrary. However, what is on the rise are precarious types of work, i.e. the types of work that no longer involve standard, secure positions of employment or rights. They are outside the scope of any trade union-based representation, which can only extend and further deteriorate the situation of a growing number of young people for whom this is becoming the only available type of work. The existing trade unions do not cover this field of work, and have, as far as this is concerned, failed or become insufficient. Given these new circumstances, it has become crucial for the generations that are being educated to be at least familiarised with, or preferably advised on, the various possibilities of establishing their own (new) forms of trade union-based self-organisation and action, all the more so if they are entering a labour market where no such trade union-based representation exists. If school education also prepares new generations for entry into working life, then these kind of contents can be considered an integral and, in today's situation, an essential part of these preparations.

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<sup>24</sup> At regional seminars in Slovenia organised as part of the Career project (Štremfel et al., 2015), it was revealed that the aspect of integration for the sake of taking part in decisions about the conditions of work has, so far, not been devoted any attention in the work of school counselling services and has not been discussed with students. Partly, its importance was not even understood properly and was mixed up with 'doing work as part of company's team of employees'.

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## FROM PROFESSIONAL SOCIALISATION TO CAREER EMPOWERMENT

POLONA KELAVA

*One of the duties of the school counselling service is career guidance, a part of which care is taken in selecting an appropriate course of professional socialisation. Significant changes in the labour market, in the nature of occupations etc. walk hand in hand with considerable changes in the processes of preparation for work (cf. Muršak, 2009). Hardly any of those individuals schooled today will practice the occupations they are being educated for throughout their lives. Even if the term 'career' is used, and no longer the term 'occupation', and if career guidance is conducted in schools in lieu of vocational counselling and guidance, professional socialisation must not simply be renamed 'career socialisation'. Career socialisation is a contradictory concept as it assumes that support would be provided in the process of socialisation, i.e. while getting accustomed to one's career. However, it is difficult to foretell anyone's career as it is unpredictable and the concept of career socialisation is therefore difficult to formulate. This process of equipping young people for their entire professional path, which is no longer merely an occupational one, can be referred to as 'career empowerment'.*

*Key words: professional socialisation, career empowerment, vocational identity, school counselling service, upper-secondary education*

### Introduction

The chapter addresses the use of the terms *professional socialisation* and *(lifelong) career guidance* in terms of the content.

One of the duties of the school counselling service is career guidance, a part of which is the care taken in selecting an appropriate course of *professional socialisation*. One of the desirable outcomes of a suitably guided process of *professional socialisation*, which begins during education (Muršak, 2012; 75, 76), and continues in the workplace, is a suitably developed vocational identity. Nowadays, vocational education (in Slovenia) is in crisis (cf. Medveš, 2013). Students within vocational education and training often continue their education, as a result of which preparation for work has become a marginal task of vocational education and technical upper-secondary programmes (cf. Muršak, 2009). Hardly any of those individuals schooled today will practice, throughout their lives, the professions for which they are being educated. On account of uncertainty associated with occupations it is easier to plan and talk about individuals' careers, however, caution is needed in doing so (cf. Irving and Malik, 2005; Anderson, 1999). Due to these processes a new definition of *professional socialisation* would be needed (Muršak, 2012; 75, 76). Even if the term used is 'career' and not 'occupation' and if schools no longer provide vocational counselling, but instead offer career guidance, it is not possible to simply rename *professional socialisation* as *career socialisation*. Career socialisation is a contradictory concept, as it assumes that support could

be provided in the process of familiarisation, i.e. socialisation in regard to something that is impossible to predict for every individual. When certain socialisation is planned, it would be reasonable to expect that one has a fair idea of what the outcome, i.e. the result of this socialisation, would be. If the aim is to set down the means of, or the ways towards, bringing socialisation into one's career, while being aware that the career of each individual is absolutely unpredictable and impossible to forecast, then a conclusion can be reached that the concept of *career socialisation* is virtually impossible to develop suitably.

On account of the foregoing, changes in the nature of work and occupations are accompanied by changes in the role of the school counselling service (cf. Anderson, 1999). Thus, the aim of the Career project was also to start preparing the groundwork for suitable amendments to the Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary and lower-secondary education, as such extensive changes have occurred since 1999 that the guidelines have become outdated.

More so now than in the past, the need for close co-operation of teachers of all subjects with the school counselling service is apparent. This is aimed at equipping youths with the broadest possible range of knowledge and skills and making sure they develop a suitable attitude to work, so they will be able to cope with all the possible challenges that might be encountered on their career paths. This will often involve different types of work not necessarily related to their primary occupations. The process of equipping youths for their entire professional path, which is no longer merely an occupational one, can be referred to as *career empowerment*.

Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary and lower-secondary education (National Curriculum Council, 1999) expect education and career guidance to be one of the tools for supporting the basic types of activities of the school counselling service (ibid.: 14).

A new introduction into Slovenian primary and lower-secondary education by the 1999 Guidelines was the term *vocational guidance*. Within the Programme guidelines, it is stated that vocational guidance involves "working with students, teachers, parents and the school administration with the aim of helping students choose an educational and career path and actualise it", whereby it is also pointed out that the term *vocational guidance* replaces the old term used to refer to this field, i.e. vocational counselling, as it is better suited to the current situation and the latest scientific findings. Vocational guidance includes the following activities: *provision of vocation-related information, diagnostics, vocational counselling, vocational education, placements, representation, feedback and client monitoring*." (ibid.: 24). Also presented in detail are the tasks of the school counselling service in relation to the vocational education of children, for which part of the responsibility is borne by the teachers of individual subjects. In the later part, standards are defined, and elaborated on, for the following areas: counselling work with students, counselling and consultative work with teachers and other educational staff, counselling work with parents, co-operation with the administration and also co-operation and co-ordination of work with other institutions. Programme guidelines for primary and lower-secondary education do not specifically mention the role of vocational guidance in the development or start of professional socialisation.

As is the case for primary and lower-secondary education, the Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in upper-secondary education (National Curriculum Council, 2008/1999) expect schooling and vocational guidance to be one of the tools for supporting the

basic types of their activities (ibid.: 14, 15). The guidelines for upper-secondary education do not distinctly define vocational guidance, but set the standards from this field to a lesser extent than in relation to primary and lower-secondary education. However, Programme guidelines for upper-secondary education do refer to professional socialisation as one of the desired effects of successful vocational guidance by stating "monitoring the development of professional maturity and effectiveness of professional socialisation" (ibid.: 20), specifically as one of the possible cases of developmental-analytical tasks, from which the school counselling service can choose.

Today, some serious consideration is given to whether the term *vocational guidance* should be replaced with something more appropriate. The authors of the White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia (Ministry of Education and Sport, 2011) propose the term *career guidance* or *lifelong career guidance*. The following is pointed out in this relation in the White Paper (ibid.: 45, 46):

*Today, the notion of career is defined as the lifelong progress of the individual in learning and work. In accordance with the change in paradigm, a career is viewed as a phenomenon that is built up with the aid of appropriate choices made by the individual throughout his or her life. The development of a career is no longer limited to a small number of individuals with "successful careers"; this opportunity must be accessible to everyone. This means that the conditions for the lifelong guidance of a career must be available to everyone during the appropriate periods of life. With suitable measures, it is necessary to ensure each citizen the conditions for access to lifelong career guidance. Appropriate career guidance makes a significant contribution to equipping the workforce to meet the requirements of employers, and to the individual's social security.*

Discussions with school counsellors at regional seminars, organised around Slovenia as part of the Career project, have revealed that the understanding of the concept of career guidance is not uniform, which is quite understandable, as at present the 1999 Programme guidelines are still applicable. The terminological and conceptual ambiguities in understanding the concepts of lifelong career guidance are also reflected in the diverse aims followed by counsellors when it comes to the implementation of lifelong career guidance in primary and lower-secondary education (Štremfel et al., 2015). This should be viewed as a major concern, as it means that, at present, students in Slovenia are receiving different treatment, diverse approaches and contents in relation to their choice of occupation.

For this reason, it is important to work out what the scope of the school counselling service in terms of vocational guidance and professional socialisation should be, and it is also important to address the question as to whether the requirement for lifelong career guidance in primary or secondary education might be overly ambitious. Is it too ambitious to start discussions about *lifelong* career guidance or about *career* as such early in the school period? Below, the reasons will be analysed why the demand for lifelong career guidance to be implemented in the work of the school counselling service, in both primary/lower-secondary and upper-secondary education, might pose a specific challenge.

It will be shown that lifelong career guidance can also be a contradictory concept and that the methods of work with children and adolescents in regard to the choice of profession or education that leads to a particular profession should be supported through rather different values. The use of the term *career empowerment* will be proposed.

### **Professional Socialisation, Vocational Identity**

To be able to deliberate over vocational (or career) guidance, which is one of the essential tasks of the school counselling service in schools within primary and secondary education, as well as upper-secondary education, it is first necessary to explain some basic concepts in this field. "Professional socialisation is the process of developing vocational identity, which starts during the course of education and continues throughout individuals' professional paths. During this process, the attitude to work and the understanding of oneself in relation to work are formed and developed. To develop a vocational identity, in addition to the actual situation within the work processes, the reference group wherein individuals work and where dynamic group relationships are created between members of the same occupational group that provides individuals with feedback on their work and allows the processes of mutual identification is also of crucial importance" (Muršak, 2012: 75, 76). Professional socialisation is therefore something that starts in school and its effectiveness in individuals is thus, at least partially, affected by vocational guidance. An essential product of professional socialisation is vocational identity, the development of which likewise starts during the course of education. Thus, by guiding or steering students towards a certain profession, the process of professional socialisation and the construction of vocational identity begins.

"Vocational identity is the result of professional socialisation and represents individuals' perception of themselves in relation to their occupation and the professional work that they carry out. It is a socially accepted means of individuals identifying with one another in terms of work, occupations or employment" (ibid.: 74). Vocational identity is therefore inextricably linked with occupations that individuals do or are being educated and trained for, hence, the way career guidance is conducted in schools is of utmost importance.

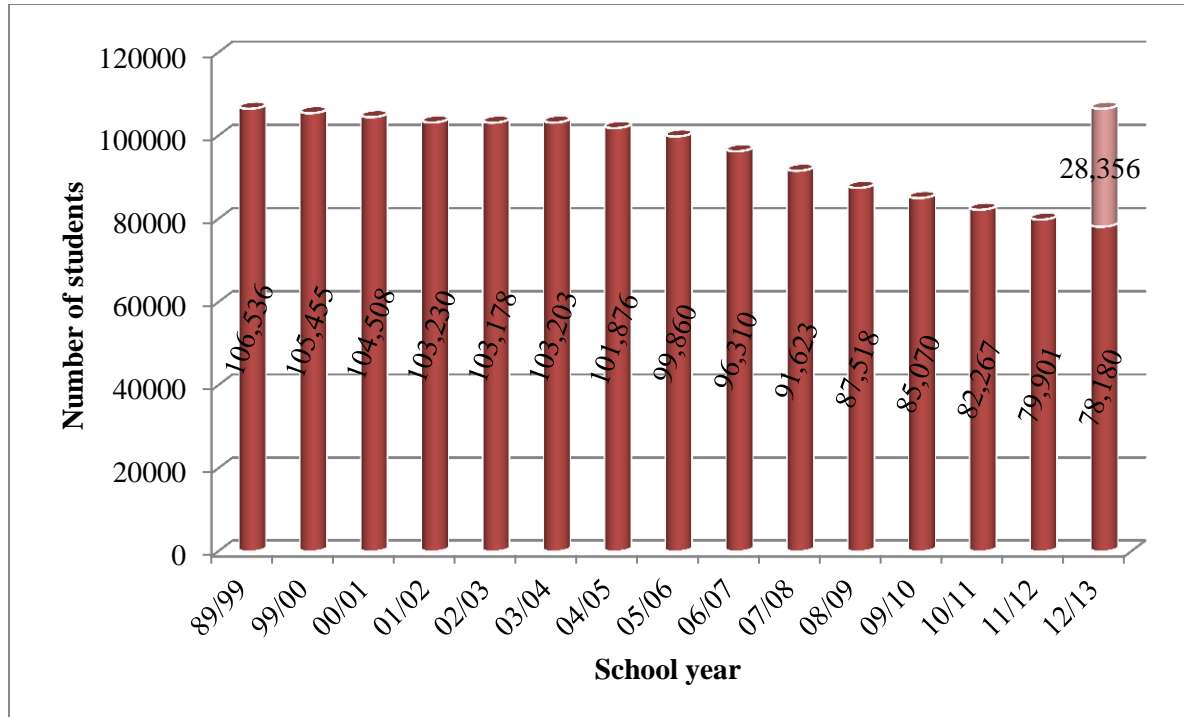
### **Smaller Numbers of Students than in Past Generations and Changes in the Labour Market that Affect Students' Career-Related Decisions**

The progress and effectiveness of career guidance can be better understood by means of an analysis of the field in which career guidance pertains.

Today's generations of students are smaller in number than in the past. "The number of students and apprentices in the period between the 1998/1999 school year and the 2012/2013 school year decreased by 28,356 (26.6%), which equals 43 average-sized schools within upper-secondary education, each with 667 students" (Šola za ravnateljce / National School for Leadership in Education, 2014: 20). At the same time, the percentage of students and apprentices, who are enrolled in comprehensive upper-secondary schools (gymnasiums) and those in vocational-technical upper-secondary education (4-year) and vocational education and training (3-year) also changed. In the 1998/1999 school year, 29% of students enrolled in gymnasiums, 38% of students in vocational-technical upper-secondary education, 30% of students in vocational education and training and 3% of students in 2-year (short-term) vocational upper-secondary programmes. Fourteen years later, in the 2012/2013 school year, as many as 41.5% of all students were enrolled in comprehensive upper-secondary schools and the same percentage were in vocational-technical upper secondary education, while the percentages for vocational education and training and 2-year (short-term) vocational upper-

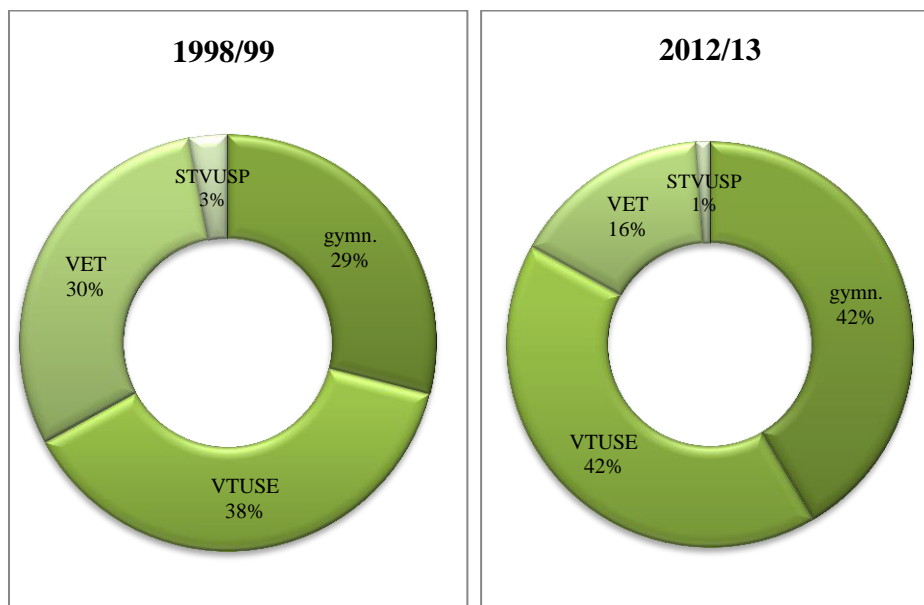
secondary programmes were 15.9 and 1.1 respectively (Šola za ravnatelje / National School for Leadership in Education, 2014: 21).

**Figure 1:** Number of students and apprentices in upper-secondary education programmes in 1998/1999 - 2012/2013 school years



Source: School for Headteachers / Šola za ravnatelje (2014: 20)

**Figure 2:** The percentage of students and apprentices in all upper-secondary programmes for the selected school years



*Abbreviations:* gymn. - comprehensive upper-secondary schools (gymnasiums), VTUSE - vocational-technical upper-secondary education, VET - vocational education and training, STVUSP – 2-year (short-term) vocational upper-secondary programmes

Source: School for Headteachers / Šola za ravnatelje (2014: 20)

The data reveals that a relatively high percentage of youths in lower-secondary education have yet to make a career decision, as they enrol into general-education programmes and thus postpone the decision to the end of upper-secondary education. Hence, for many individuals, professional socialisation starts at a later time.

However, the numbers of students and their percentage in these programmes are not the only areas that are undergoing some major changes at the upper-secondary level of education in Slovenia.

The labour market is less stable than it was in the past few decades. There are many unemployed individuals, including those with higher levels of attained education. Occupations are disappearing, new ones are emerging and jobs are being axed. Such dynamics have been present throughout history, however, nowadays it is all happening at a somewhat frenetic pace.

Studies have revealed (de Lange, Gesthuizen and Wolbers, 2014) that the rates of unemployment and temporary employment among youths are high, which is why systematic integration of youths into the labour market is recommended.

Muršak (2009) notes that the uncertainty in employment and changes in the contents of work and work-related relationships result in changes in professional socialisation. Therefore, the conventional structure of the reference group is disappearing. Since the education system is mainly characterised by vertical mobility and since a high percentage of youths continue their education, the function of preparation for professional work and the associated planned professional socialisation of youths in vocational education and training are being called into question. Vocational identity is also in crisis, as supposedly is vocational education (cf. Medveš, 2013). Due to the emergence of a knowledge based society we are supposedly witnessing occupational deprofessionalisation and demarcation, because employment based on flexible work tasks is being increasingly developed, while less of it takes place within the framework of specific occupations. The role of professions as a source of knowledge is assumed by labour organisations and informal networks (Pavlin 2007).

In a situation where vocational identity, one of the expected and essential products of professional socialisation, is no longer self-evident, the question of the importance of career guidance is inevitably faced.

Is it possible to say that a well developed and solid vocational identity constitutes a good foundation for empowered individuals throughout their career paths? The question is whether on account of all these changes the term *career* might have started to be used instead of occupation, of course, initially at an international level, and at a later time also in Slovenia.

## **Career, Occupation**

If in more recent documents (Council of the European Union, 2004; Council of the European Union, 2008) a tendency is noticeable to talk about career guidance, whereas in the Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in Slovenia *vocational guidance* is the term used, then some attention should be devoted to the difference between the two concepts.

Muršak (2012: 73) defines occupation as "a type of work performed by an individual, often described by means of a broad range of skills and competencies required for it." A career is



more difficult to define, as it can have several different perspectives. As an example, two different definitions are given here: "Careers are all the work that an individual performs during his working life" (Wether and Davis, 2005). Career is a series of individual, yet related work activities that provides continuity, order and meaning in human life (Filippo, cited after Cvetko, 2002).

Occupations are characterised by a structure, rules and norms, therefore, individuals who choose to be educated and trained for a particular occupation know what to expect. Depending on the characteristics and requirements of each occupation, vocational guidance can be adapted to each individual student. In comparison with occupations, careers are impossible to determine, define or plan in advance. Careers happen, they are built as a result of a variety of influences. Is it then truly possible to implement career guidance in the first place? If career guidance is introduced into schools in terms of activities done by pupils and students, then guidance will be implemented into the school system at the discourse level, too. What does one orient oneself by when it comes to career guidance? What does one go by? Can adolescents' careers actually be defined as early as the primary or secondary level of education and can adolescents be steered based on this?

It should also be pointed out that among educational professionals, career guidance has, in the last decade, been a highly topical issue, by means of which attempts have been made to deal with a number of social issues, including social exclusion, economic growth etc. Critics, however, warn that there is a hidden economic interest behind such orientation (Irving and Malik, 2005).

There is some major concern that career guidance is an attempt at implementing mechanisms into the school that will allow a greater impact of the economy and the big question is how this will affect the generations of youths who will be subjected to this.

Nevertheless, some authors use the two terms interchangeably (see Pavlin, 2007) or they explain them (more appropriately) through career information and counselling (cf. Muršak, 2006), whereby guidance is not supposed to be limited only to the period of education, as is the case for vocational guidance, but is supposed to be understood as a lifelong process (ibid).

It is believed that particular caution is necessary in relation to this because of two reasons: 1) a similar thing applies to that pointed out in relation to substituting 'career' for 'occupation' in the term *career socialisation* instead of *professional socialisation*, hence, *career guidance* can, by analogy, be a contradictory concept in itself; 2) merely being occupied with career (more precisely: being oriented towards career) in the period of schooling can be problematic given the assumption that, in the school environment, broader aspects of one's life are being dealt with in terms of occupations and that it is difficult to plan individuals' careers at the start of such an early stage.

However, since the term *career* (especially whenever occupations, preparation for them, their continuity and range in society are changing) cannot be avoided, a compromise is proposed below to avoid these terminological issues.

## Career Empowerment

Vocational guidance is a process as part of which students start orienting themselves towards their occupation. Through this the process of professional socialisation, which begins no later

than when individuals take up a working (or apprenticeship) position, starts taking place at school. Professional socialisation in today's youths might commence when they enter into education, but its content can significantly change and differ from what was anticipated when they carry on with their education or if they change their initial education pathway.

Thus, the question is how to combine the need for support provided to youths with the significantly changed nature of work. For an appropriate conceptual understanding of lifelong career guidance nowadays, the use of the term *career empowerment* is proposed by the author. This means no longer equipping youths only for their previously started occupational path, but for their possible involvement in several occupations, encompassing sufficient knowledge, skills, self-esteem, autonomy, responsibility and attitude. Of great importance in relation to this is individuals' awareness and understanding of themselves, so they will be able to decide, depending on the situation, and choose appropriate paths based on the given options. Youths who have been empowered understand and are able to change and co-shape the circumstances of their life and work and are personally and socially developed.

Responsibility for youths' career empowerment must be borne by everyone, i.e. the school counselling service, teachers of *all* subjects, parents, the family and society. Therefore, it is wrong to let youths themselves take responsibility for their own professional or career paths.

In recent decades the labour market has been changing faster than it used to in the past, which has also resulted in changes in education, counselling and guidance (cf. Anderson, 1999). In transitioning from lower- to upper-secondary levels of education, or from gymnasiums to university, individuals can select an occupation, but they may end up working in a field far from their primary one. There is not only one predetermined linear path to a successful career that individuals will find fulfilling. Jobs that will, in the future, be done by individuals who are now young might not yet even exist. (In the future, it is assumed that individuals will not be thinking about jobs, but only about work skills (Davies, Fidler and Gorbis, 2011).) Therefore, they cannot be steered, guided or provided with instructions on how to behave. They can only be empowered for the path that lies ahead. On account of the uncertainty associated with occupations, it is easier to plan and talk about individuals' careers, however, caution is necessary in doing so (cf. Irving and Malik, 2005; Anderson, 1999). Due to these processes, a new definition of "developing a vocational identity" is needed, as are the definitions of "creating and developing an attitude to work and understanding oneself in relation to work" and "the role of the reference group in relation to this" (Muršak, 2012: 75, 76), because the need for professional socialisation has been called into question.

Changes in the nature of work and occupations nowadays go hand in hand with fundamental changes in the role of the school counselling service (cf. Anderson, 1999). With all its other obligations, the counselling service on its own is unable to make sure adolescents' career choices will be wise, nor is it fair to expect school counsellors alone to take responsibility for this. Teachers are much more familiar with children as they spend a lot of time with them. They also occasionally deal with content related to occupations during lessons and the curricula also specify how much of such content is to be dealt with in the classroom. Therefore, school counsellors must, in co-operation with teachers of all subjects, strive to equip youths with the broadest possible range of knowledge and skills and to develop a suitable attitude to work. This will allow individuals to cope with the many challenges encountered in their career paths, which commonly involve various work activities not

necessarily related to their primary occupation. This process of equipping youths for their career (and not merely occupational) path can be referred to as *career empowerment*.

### **School Counselling Service and Children's Occupational Decisions**

School counsellors are in a difficult situation when they guide, advise and steer youths towards the uncertain labour market. Naturally, individual students do make occupational decisions themselves, perhaps with their parents and under the influence of peers and the media, however, the kind of support and information they receive at school as a whole is of utmost importance. At regional seminars (Štremfel et al., 2015), school counsellors observed that the range of their work in the field of vocational guidance is enormous. It includes providing students with information and support in terms of self-awareness and understanding, which makes it easier for them to understand their needs, wishes, and goals, and ultimately make career-related decisions.

When school counsellors are successful and manage to discuss with students the contents that are "focused on students' self-realisation and development of their personal skills" (ibid), it is possible to refer to it as *career empowerment*; this is the case when vocational guidance goes beyond merely providing occupation-related information and the like. The situation in society, the large number of unemployed individuals and many employees with low incomes, which may lead to financial insecurity, makes it difficult for teachers and students to draw motivation for vocational guidance or for starting professional socialisation, for which it is impossible to predict where it will lead. For school counsellors it is often hard to be convincing and decisive in encouraging youths to make the effort and persist in learning and personal development, even though youths might not see the relevance and although their work-related future is difficult to predict. Knowledge, attitude, and orientation, which will help youths to be determined in taking their first occupational decisions and, even more so, help them persist on their path (not *even though* it might lead them somewhere else, but *because* of it, as they will themselves be aware that they have a choice), weigh up their decisions and follow them - all of this constitutes proper empowerment.

Therefore, career empowerment might be the answer to the impermanence of occupations and the labour market, the changeability that youths have to deal with. For school counsellors, who bear their share of responsibility for preparing youths for their paths of life, it will be easier to work with youths, and they will be more successful in doing so, if they are allowed to work on self-concept, independence, autonomy, responsibility, attitude and disposition, which will also facilitate making decisions about the choice of education for one's first occupation, even though it may not be the last one.

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## **II. SUCCESSFUL CAREER GUIDANCE APPROACHES**

## IN WHAT WAY DO STUDENTS IN SLOVENIA ASSOCIATE ACADEMIC LEARNING AND WORK WITH LIFE IN ADULTHOOD AND WITH PROFESSION AND CAREER

MOJCA ŠTRAUS

*In the last decade, the PISA study has been commonly used for determining how prepared young people are for adult life which, in addition to assessing students' competencies also collects data about the environment in which students learn, about their habits, views and attitudes. Some of these data can also be seen as non-cognitive results of the educational process and can be used as guidance for providing student with advice on their vocational and career development.*

*The focus of the chapter is an analysis of the data collected in PISA 2012, which indicate the opinions that young people in Slovenia hold at the end of compulsory education, i.e. at the start of their upper-secondary education, about the importance of academic learning and work, and especially about the importance of learning mathematics for their career and professional opportunities. The analysis reveals potential deficits in achieving non-cognitive educational goals, based on which it is possible to improve the guidelines of school counselling work, both at the systemic level for the entire population of students, as well as within individual education programmes.*

*Key words: PISA, education, views on mathematics, vocational and career guidance*

### Introduction

It is difficult for students to plan their career development themselves without the proper aid of their parents and, perhaps even more difficult without the help of the school environment. What is of importance when it comes to this are the responses of the home and school environments, which help students form perceptions of their own level of achievement in various fields and, based on this, develop motivation and make decisions about their future work (Ajzen 1991, from OECD, 2012: 185). The reform of the Slovenian education system, which started in the mid-1990s, resulted in the introduction of various mechanisms (further changed again at a later time), the so-called external assessment of knowledge, which provide students, schools and the system as a whole, with information on their achievement, as defined in these mechanisms (Ministry of Education and Sport, 1996). In the 1990s, the (general) matura examination was introduced at the end of general upper-secondary school (gymnasium), national assessments of knowledge were introduced in the early 21st century at the same time as the introduction of the nine-year primary/lower-secondary education programme, and international comparative assessment studies, which are used to compare the differences in achievement among education systems, became effective in the same period. All this is supposed to contribute to the so-called evidence-based decision-making, which is important not only for policy makers in formulating the strategies for the development of the

education system, but also for schools and individuals in developing plans for life and work in the future.

Programme for international student assessment (PISA), which, in the recent decade has become effective as a means of comparison among countries in terms of the preparedness of their youths for life in adulthood, assesses the competencies of 15-year-old students since, in most OECD countries, this is the age that approximately corresponds to the end of compulsory education (OECD, 2012). Students who have just completed their compulsory education cannot, understandably, be expected to have already learnt everything they will need as adults, as the acquisition of knowledge and skills is a lifelong process (OECD, 2000). However, they can be expected to possess basic knowledge and skills allowing them to continue to learn and apply what they have previously learnt in situations outside the context of the school curriculum (see e.g. OECD, 2012). Intense technological development in recent decades has resulted in a major change in expectations about the knowledge and skills to be acquired or developed by youths for a successful adulthood. In these new circumstances it is necessary to understand that the acquisition of knowledge and skills not only takes place in schools or in the context of other types of formal learning, but also outside the school environment, in contact within the family, with peers and society at large. However, the education system remains the primary mechanism by which youths' level of knowledge and skills are attempted to be improved through setting aims, standards of knowledge and the application of appropriate approaches to teaching and counselling.

A conceptual shift in this understanding is also noticeable when it comes to international comparative assessment studies in education, which have in recent decades become effective as mechanisms for collecting various data used to identify individual dimensions of quality and efficiency of education systems. The focus has been shifted away from assessing knowledge and understanding of the contents covered by the curricula and instead towards measuring the understanding of basic principles and processes and the use of knowledge and skills in a variety of everyday situations (see e.g. Cotič et al., 2010; Markelj, 2010; OECD, 2005). In relation to this it also needs to be pointed out that compared to the national assessment, by means of which Slovenia collects information about students' outcomes on a legislative basis, international comparative assessment studies, in addition to the data about the outcomes, the so-called background information about the circumstances in which students learn, their habits, views and attitudes is also collected. These data aid in developing (additional) perceptions of the various factors that affect the achievement of goals within the process of education, and thus in the empowerment of youths on their career paths.

Several different conceptualizations exist about the concept of educational goals and outcomes. Most commonly stated as outcomes are various skills and knowledge and there are also several different paradigmatic conceptions of knowledge (Uljenš, 1997). In addition to knowledge and skills, education systems have always strived to develop other features in students: from learning habits, motivation, attitude, and moral and ethical principles, to the development of an integrated personality (e.g. Gogala, 1966; Strmčnik, 2001; Šilih, 1961). In the last decade, an understanding has emerged that views educational outcomes as a concept that is, in addition to knowledge and skills, supposed to entail other aforementioned dimensions as integral parts, hence these outcomes will be referred to as competencies (e.g. Lafontaine 2004; Medveš, 2004; Markelj, 2010; Peschar, 2004; Rychen, 2004; Rychen and Salganik, 2003b; Salganik, 2001).



When it comes to thinking about youths' empowerment for their career paths, the non-cognitive dimensions of educational outcomes are undoubtedly important. Therefore, the focus of this chapter will be on youths' views on the significance of learning and other academic work for their later adult life, careers and professions. The basis for this will be the last PISA study, i.e. PISA 2012, which, in addition to assessing the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of 15-year-old students in nearly seventy countries around the world, also collected the background data related to the development of these literacies, with a focus on mathematical literacy, being the main part of the PISA assessment in 2012. The chapter will also provide an analysis of the views Slovenian students hold, at the beginning of upper-secondary education (typically aged fifteen), about the importance of academic work, especially in mathematics, for their life in adulthood. What is also relevant is that the case study of the views students have about the importance of learning mathematics for their professional life and career can also indicate some starting points for deliberations about counselling work in other areas or in general for the comprehensive development of students within Slovenian education.

Since upper-secondary education in Slovenia is organised in various education programmes, analyses will be conducted separately for the following: programmes of general and classical upper-secondary schools - gymnasias (abbreviated as Gymn - general), programmes of technical upper-secondary schools - technical gymnasias (economics, electrotechnics and ballet; abbreviated as Gymn - technical), programmes of 4-year vocational-technical upper secondary education (abbreviated as VTUSE) and programmes of 3-year vocational upper-secondary education (abbreviated as VUSE).<sup>25</sup> Other studies have previously established significant differences in the achievement and background factors between genders by individual upper-secondary education programmes (Štraus, 2009), hence the analyses will also be conducted by gender. Thus, the research question addressed in this chapter is as follows: How do Slovenian students, at the beginning of upper-secondary education, value the importance of their academic work, especially learning mathematics, for life in adulthood and for their professional and career prospects, and what are comparisons of these valuations across upper-secondary education programmes and genders?

## Data and Methodology Description

### Selected Items from the Student Questionnaire in PISA 2012

PISA collects background data in accordance with the framework prepared in advance (OECD, 2012). In 2012 the data were collected by means of student questionnaires, while the questions needed for the analysis of the specified research question pertained to either (strongly) agreeing or (strongly) disagreeing with the following statements:<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Although students in short-term vocational upper-secondary programmes do participate in PISA, due to a shortened time allocated for the assessment they do not respond to the questions relevant for the present analysis and have therefore not been included in the analyses in this chapter.

<sup>26</sup> For all the statements, students could choose among the following four options: *I strongly agree*, *I agree*, *I disagree* and *I strongly disagree*. For the analysis in this chapter, the first two responses were combined as *I agree*, and the last two responses as *I disagree*, which means that the percentages of students for whom, in the presented results it is stated that they agree with individual statements, add the percentages of those students who

*Making an effort in mathematics is worth it because it will help me in the work that I want to do later on.*

*Learning mathematics is worthwhile for me because it will improve my career prospects. Mathematics is an important subject for me because I need it for what I want to study later on.*

*I will learn many things in mathematics that will help me get a job.*

*My parents believe that mathematics is important for my career.*

*School has taught me things which could be useful in a job*

*Trying hard at school will help me get a good job.*

*School has done little to prepare me for adult life when I leave school.*

*School has been a waste of time.*

Based on the first four statements, the *index of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics* was derived in the PISA 2012 data collection and will be used in the analyses.<sup>27</sup>

## Sample Characteristics

Table 2 presents the basic characteristics of the sample of students that was used in the study.<sup>28</sup> It also shows students' performance in the PISA 2012 mathematical literacy assessment. On average, the participants in this sample achieved lower (492 points, Table 2) than all Slovenian 15-year-old participants combined (501 points, OECD, 2013b), which was to be expected, as the additionally included students who are not aged fifteen are typically older and make slower progress in their educational career, which is then related to their averagely lower achievements.

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have in the original questionnaire selected the first response with the percentages of those students who have selected the second one.

<sup>27</sup> Indices in the PISA data collection are constructed on interval scales with an OECD mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1, whereby an equal weight is given to each of the participating countries (OECD, 2014). It is important to understand that a negative index value does not imply that students responded negatively to statements from which the index was derived, but rather that they responded less affirmatively (or more negatively) than the average response across OECD countries. Similarly, a positive value implies more affirmative (or less negative) responses than the average response in OECD countries.

<sup>28</sup> In accordance with international standards, individuals participating in PISA are 15-year-old students in education (OECD, 2013b). In Slovenia the majority of 15-year-old students attend upper-secondary school programmes (SORS, 2014a; SORS, 2014b). The programmes fundamentally differ in characteristics and aims and therefore, the Slovenian PISA students were sampled representatively for these education programmes is representative. However, in designing guidelines for teaching, the class level of students is more important than their age. Therefore, for the purposes of research in this chapter, the PISA 2012 data for Slovenia will be used that are representative of all students of Year 1 of upper-secondary schools; this was achieved by extending the sample of 15-year-old students, which served as a basis for international comparisons, by an additional sample of students in Year 1 who were not aged 15 during the implementation of the PISA study.

**Table 2:** Basic sample characteristics

		<b>Total</b>	<b>Gymn - general</b>	<b>Gymn - Technical</b>	<b>VTUSE</b>	<b>VUSE</b>	<b>STVUPSP</b>
The number of students in PISA 2012 sample for Slovenia	all	6657	1533	698	2524	1685	217
	female students	2989	934	369	1143	480	63
	male students	3668	599	329	1381	1205	154
		<b>Total</b>	<b>Gymn - general</b>	<b>Gymn - Technical</b>	<b>VTUSE</b>	<b>VUSE</b>	<b>STVUPSP</b>
The estimated number of students in a population for Slovenia for which the PISA 2012 sample is representative	all	19808	6270	1478	7792	3933	335
	female students	9432	3764	776	3652	1143	97
	male students	10376	2506	702	4140	2790	238
		<b>Total</b>	<b>Gymn - general</b>	<b>Gymn - Technical</b>	<b>VTUSE</b>	<b>VUSE</b>	<b>STVUPSP</b>
Mathematical PISA 2012 achievement for the selected population	all	492 (1,0)	574 (2,0)	525 (3,2)	472 (1,6)	402 (1,7)	348 (5,1)
	female students	491 (1,6)	562 (2,4)	505 (3,3)	454 (2,2)	383 (3,6)	327 (8,7)
	male students	493 (1,5)	591 (3,1)	548 (5,0)	487 (2,1)	410 (2,1)	356 (4,8)

Note: *Gymn - general* are general and classical gymnasias programmes, *Gymn - technical* are technical gymnasium programmes, *VTUSE* are programmes of 4-year vocational technical upper-secondary education and *VUSE* are programmes of 3-year vocational upper-secondary education. Students in short-term vocational upper-secondary programmes (*STVUPSP*) did not provide responses to these questions.

Figures listed in brackets are standard errors.

Source: PISA, 2012.

## Statistical Analyses

For the analysis<sup>29</sup> of responses to selected questions from the PISA 2012 student questionnaire, the percentages were calculated for those respondents who agreed with the statements, as were the mean values of the *index of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics* by education programmes and by gender. Additionally, the correlation between the *index of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics* and achievements in mathematics was analysed for the entire population, by gender and by individual programmes. The correlation indicates the direction and the strength of the connection between a factor and the achievement, which is then used to determine whether a factor plays an important role in the development of reading. However, caution is required in making interpretations, because this is not necessarily a direct causal relationship, but the relationship may indirectly originate in a third factor or this may be a case of retrocausality, where achievement affects the factor.

<sup>29</sup> SPSS 22.0 statistical software package was used for the analyses, with the addition of the IDB Analyzer application (IEA, 2014), which allowed calculations of statistical parameters and their population estimates with standard errors with the use of suitable sample weights and all five plausible values of achievement in PISA 2012 data collection. In the interest of readability, in this chapter statistical significances of parameters are not presented, however, they can be determined using the specified standard errors at a selected alpha level.

## Analysis of the Situation in Slovenia

### Analysis Results

Table 3 presents the percentages of students in Year 1 of Slovenian upper-secondary schools who, in PISA 2012, responded that they agree with selected statements about the importance of learning mathematics and other academic work for their future life and their professional and career prospects.

The table indicates that the majority of students agree with all the positively presented statements and, similarly, most students disagree with the two negatively presented statements. This can be understood as an indicator of youths' relatively high awareness of the importance of academic work and learning mathematics for their future professional life and career. The highest percentages of agreement are noticeable for two statements about the usefulness of school for work and professions in general; the statement *Trying hard at school will help me get a good job* is agreed with by at least 88% of both female and male students in all programmes, and the statement *School has taught me things which could be useful in a job* is agreed with by at least 78% of both female and male students in all programmes. One could say this is further confirmed by the disagreement with the statement *School has been a waste of time*. When it comes to this statement, male students are more critical of school than female students, while simultaneously both male and female students in 3-year vocational upper-secondary education programmes are more critical than students in other programmes.

In statements about the usefulness of schools in general, female students' responses were more positive than those of male students. In questions that relate specifically to learning mathematics, the situation is reversed: there are generally more male students that agree with the usefulness of learning mathematics in school for future professional life and career, with these differences being particularly pronounced in gymnasium programmes. The degrees of agreement with the statements about the importance of learning mathematics are slightly lower compared with the statements about the usefulness of education in general; roughly speaking, the percentages are between a half and three-quarters of female students or male students. Among the statements that relate to the importance of learning mathematics, the highest percentage of students agreed with the statement about their parents being convinced of the importance of mathematics knowledge for their career (about 80%), while the percentage was slightly lower for statements about what they themselves are convinced of.

**Table 3:** Percentages of students in Year 1 of upper-secondary education programmes in terms of their agreement with statements about the importance of mathematics and academic work in general for their life in adulthood, profession and career

		Combined	Gymn - general	Gymn - technical	VTUSE	VUSE
Making an effort in mathematics is worth it because it will help me in the work that I want to do later on.	all	67 (0.9)	64 (1.8)	60 (2.6)	68 (1.6)	70 (1.7)
	female students	63 (1.4)	63 (2.3)	55 (3.8)	63 (2.3)	71 (3.3)
	male students	69 (1.3)	65 (2.8)	68 (3.4)	72 (2.2)	70 (1.9)
Learning mathematics is worthwhile for me because it will improve my career prospects.	all	73 (0.7)	75 (1.4)	70 (2.3)	73 (1.5)	70 (1.7)
	female students	71 (1.3)	74 (1.8)	66 (3.2)	70 (2.4)	70 (3.2)
	male students	74 (1.0)	76 (2.5)	74 (3.3)	76 (1.8)	70 (2.0)
Mathematics is an important subject for me because I need it for what I want to study later on.	all	62 (0.9)	62 (1.8)	61 (2.7)	65 (1.6)	57 (1.7)
	female students	57 (1.3)	57 (2.2)	53 (4.0)	57 (2.3)	56 (2.8)
	male students	67 (1.2)	69 (2.9)	70 (3.7)	72 (2.2)	57 (2.2)
I will learn many things in mathematics that will help me get a job.	all	62 (0.9)	60 (1.9)	55 (2.9)	64 (1.5)	66 (1.8)
	female students	59 (1.4)	58 (2.3)	51 (3.9)	58 (2.2)	68 (3.6)
	male students	66 (1.3)	63 (3.3)	61 (3.9)	69 (2.1)	65 (2.1)
My parents believe that mathematics is important for my career.	all	75 (0.8)	72 (1.8)	75 (2.3)	78 (1.3)	75 (1.7)
	female students	71 (1.4)	68 (2.5)	68 (3.6)	74 (2.1)	76 (3.2)
	male students	79 (1.1)	77 (2.7)	82 (2.5)	82 (1.6)	75 (1.9)
School has taught me things which could be useful in a job.	all	87 (0.6)	86 (1.1)	86 (2.1)	92 (0.7)	82 (1.3)
	female students	92 (0.9)	88 (1.7)	93 (1.9)	96 (0.8)	91 (1.7)
	male students	83 (0.8)	84 (1.7)	78 (3.6)	88 (1.2)	78 (1.6)
Trying hard at school will help me get a good job.	all	92 (0.5)	93 (0.9)	90 (1.6)	93 (0.8)	90 (1.1)
	female students	94 (0.7)	93 (1.2)	91 (2.1)	94 (1.0)	93 (1.6)
	male students	91 (0.8)	92 (1.6)	90 (2.5)	92 (1.3)	88 (1.5)
School has done little to prepare me for adult life when I leave school.	all	29 (0.9)	23 (1.7)	29 (2.2)	31 (1.4)	37 (1.8)
	female students	24 (1.2)	23 (2.1)	28 (3.7)	25 (1.8)	25 (2.9)
	male students	34 (1.1)	24 (2.4)	30 (2.7)	36 (2.1)	42 (1.9)
School has been a waste of time.	all	13 (0.6)	6 (0.8)	10 (1.8)	13 (1.0)	25 (1.5)
	female students	6 (0.7)	4 (1.0)	5 (2.0)	7 (1.2)	13 (2.6)
	male students	20 (0.8)	10 (1.6)	15 (3.2)	20 (1.5)	30 (1.8)

Note: *Gymn - general* are general and classical gymnasia programmes, *Gymn - technical* are technical gymnasium programmes, *VTUSE* are programmes of 4-year vocational technical upper-secondary education and *VUSE* are programmes of 3-year vocational upper-secondary education. Students in short-term vocational upper-secondary programmes (*STVUPSP*) did not provide responses to these questions.

Figures listed in brackets are standard errors.

Source: PISA, 2012.

As previously mentioned, in the international PISA 2012 data collection, *the index of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics* is derived from the statements *Making an effort in mathematics is worth it because it will help me in the work that I want to do later on*, *Learning mathematics is worthwhile for me because it will improve my career prospects*, *Mathematics is an important subject for me because I need it for what I want to study later on*

and *I will learn many things in mathematics that will help me get a job* in such a way that the mean of this index in all OECD countries equals 0 and dispersion (standard deviation) equals 1. This enables comparing the index value for individual countries directly with the OECD average in terms of whether the values are positive or negative. Table 4 shows the mean values of this index by Slovenian upper-secondary education programmes and by gender.

**Table 4:** Mean values of the index of *instrumental motivation for learning mathematics* from PISA 2012 for students of Year 1 of upper-secondary education programmes.

		Combined	Gymn - general	Gymn - technical	VTUSE	VUSE
<i>Index of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics</i>	all	-0,32 (0,02)	-0,32 (0,03)	-0,42 (0,05)	-0,30 (0,03)	-0,34 (0,03)
	female students	-0,41 (0,03)	-0,37 (0,04)	-0,57 (0,07)	-0,45 (0,05)	-0,29 (0,06)
	male students	-0,24 (0,02)	-0,23 (0,06)	-0,23 (0,08)	-0,17 (0,04)	-0,36 (0,04)

Note: *Gymn - general* are general and classical gymnasias programmes, *Gymn - technical* are technical gymnasium programmes, *VTUSE* are programmes of 4-year vocational technical upper-secondary education and *VUSE* are programmes of 3-year vocational upper-secondary education. Students in short-term vocational upper-secondary programmes (*STVUPSP*) did not provide responses to these questions.

Listed in brackets are standard errors.

Source: PISA, 2012.

Listed below are some of the initial observations. All values in the table are negative. This indicates that Slovenian students in Year 1 of upper-secondary school programmes expressed lower levels of motivation for learning mathematics in order to achieve better career prospects, choice of study and (or) profession than the average levels of such motivation of 15-year-old students in OECD countries. The international PISA 2012 report reveals that one of the countries with higher levels of such motivation is, for instance, Germany, and one of the countries with lower levels is, for instance, Austria (OECD, 2013). Low instrumental motivation for learning mathematics is especially noticeable in female students. In all programmes, other than the 3-year vocational upper-secondary education programmes, the index values for female students are lower than the index values for male students. A comparison between the genders is similar in most other OECD countries (*ibid.*), which is also the case when it comes to students' intrinsic motivation for learning mathematics (for which the data is collected by means of students' responses to the statements (i.e. whether they agree or disagree) such as *I like reading about maths*, *I look forward to maths lessons* etc. (*ibid.*)). An additional interesting detail noticeable in the results presented in Table 4 is that the expressed levels of motivation are similar in all groups of students by education programmes, and that in gymnasias they are not markedly higher than in 4-year vocational technical upper-secondary education programmes or in 3-year vocational upper-secondary education programmes.

An analysis was also made about the correlation between the index of *instrumental motivation for learning mathematics* and achievements in mathematics in PISA 2012. Table 5 reveals that the correlations for the specified group of students are generally positive but relatively low. The highest correlation between instrumental motivation for learning mathematics and achievements in mathematics was shown with a correlation coefficient of 0.25 in general and classical gymnasias programmes. In 3-year vocational upper-secondary education programmes this correlation is not evident, whereas in 4-year vocational-technical

upper secondary education programmes this correlation has been observed in male students, but not in female students.

**Table 5:** The correlation between the *index of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics* and achievements in mathematics in PISA 2012 for students of Year 1 of upper-secondary school education programmes.

		Combined	Gymn - general	Gymn - Technical	VTUSE	VUSE
Correlation between the <i>index of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics</i> and achievements in mathematics	all	0,12 (0,02)	0,24 (0,03)	0,23 (0,05)	0,15 (0,03)	0,01 (0,04)
	female students	0,07 (0,03)	0,23 (0,04)	0,20 (0,07)	0,00 (0,05)	-0,05 (0,08)
	male students	0,15 (0,03)	0,23 (0,07)	0,17 (0,09)	0,21 (0,04)	0,04 (0,05)

Note: *Gymn - general* are general and classical gymnasias programmes, *Gymn - technical* are technical gymnasium programmes, *VTUSE* are programmes of 4-year vocational technical upper-secondary education and *VUSE* are programmes of 3-year vocational upper-secondary education. Students in short-term vocational upper-secondary programmes (*STVUPSP*) did not provide responses to these questions.

Figures listed in brackets are standard errors.

Source: PISA, 2012.

## Findings and Discussion

How students think about themselves and what they feel is an important indicator of their decision-making and actions when it comes to facing different situations (Bandura, 1977 in OECD, 2012). The key finding of the present analysis is that the majority of students in Slovenia find academic work, such as learning mathematics, to be important for their future life, career and profession. Approximately nine out of ten students agree with the usefulness of school in general, and a little less, although still the majority, with the usefulness of learning mathematics. The initial research question can therefore be replied to in the affirmative, i.e. in the sense that the vast majority of youths in Slovenia find academic learning and work to be helpful and useful for life in adulthood. The established difference in opinions about school in general, and about mathematics, seems logical. Some students value school as important for their future, while they do not attach much value to mathematics, but instead to other subjects and other dimensions of school life and work.

In her research into students' attitude to knowledge in which students are classified in four types of this attitude, A. Gril (2014) notes that the group that has expressed a positive view about useful or practical aspects of education consists of about one third of students that span evenly across all education programmes. However, from the results of this classification, it is not possible to conclude that in the other three groups there are no students who would express (at least partially) a positive view about pragmatic aspects of knowledge and education. The comparison with the results of this analysis might suggest that there probably are some, since the percentages of students who directly agreed with the statement about the usefulness of school in this study are much higher.

International comparisons that can be drawn from the PISA data are helpful in making further conclusions about the results obtained. Although most of the students expressed a positive view about the importance of mathematics for their future life, the levels of motivation of Slovenian students for learning mathematics in order to have better study and

career prospects are lower than the average levels of motivation in OECD countries. This can be taken as a basic premise that the Slovenian students' valuation of the importance of mathematics in the modern world and for life in adulthood could, and should, be improved. The findings about the shortcomings in the field of counselling work within education in Slovenia, which might contribute to an explanation for the observed lower levels of instrumental motivation, originate from the results of a study into the organisation of vocational and technical education in terms of providing information and counselling to students as regards career planning and management (Ministry of Education and Sport, 2011: 231, 232). The problems pointed out by the study were an inadequate and unsystematised number of hours devoted to counselling activities, failure to carry out counselling activities in the primary and secondary school curricula in terms of objectives, contents and methods, and inadequate qualifications of teachers and school counsellors for this field. The proposed solutions for lifelong career guidance include the proposal for introducing the contents aimed at acquiring career management skills into compulsory school subjects (ibid.: 260).

No significant differences were perceived between students in different upper-secondary education programmes as regards their opinions about the usefulness of schools and, specifically, of learning mathematics. This may be attributed to the fact that students involved in the study were only at the beginning of their upper-secondary education. In her comparisons between education programmes, A. Gril (2014: 98) notes that all four types of attitude to knowledge were expressed in all upper-secondary education programmes (as specified in the study), however, with varying frequencies; the most commonly expressed attitude in all programmes was the pragmatic attitude to knowledge. Although agreeing with statements about the usefulness of school and learning mathematics is, in this analysis, referred to as a pragmatic dimension of the attitude to knowledge (which is in this case not exclusive of other possible dimensions of the attitude to knowledge not researched in this analysis), it could, roughly speaking, be noted that the results of both studies point to a relatively high expression of the pragmatic dimension of the attitude to knowledge within the Slovenian upper-secondary education.

As for the differences between genders, A. Gril (ibid.) notes that the pragmatic attitude to knowledge is expressed evenly in both girls and boys. In the analysis presented in this chapter, some gender differences have been observed. The index of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics, as a summary of responses to the first four statements, is significantly lower for female students than for male students in all education programmes, with the exception of 3-year vocational upper-secondary education programmes. In terms of individual statements, the differences in the opinions between female students and male students are pronounced when it comes to the importance of learning mathematics for the desired profession and career and the perception of what parents think about it. Thus, for instance, in gymnasias and 4-year vocational-technical upper-secondary programmes, a generally lower percentage of female students compared to male students believe that it is worth making an effort in mathematics because the knowledge will come in handy in their desired profession and will help them towards better career prospects. Similarly, a lower percentage of female students compared to male students believe that their parents think mathematics is important for their careers. This may lead to the conclusion that a potentially significant deficit in non-cognitive results of the educational process is indicated here, despite the fact that in mathematics there are no significant differences in the achievements between



female students and male students (Table 2). Lower instrumental motivation of female students for learning mathematics compared to male students has, as previously pointed out, been perceived in other countries participating in PISA as well, however, this does not diminish the urgency to address the problem. The results of the analyses presented in this chapter suggest an additional deficit in parents' encouragement to their daughters for careers in which mathematics plays an important role.

The possibilities of improving the achievement of non-cognitive educational goals can also be perceived in the findings about youths' critical stance towards school. In all education programmes, male students are more critical of school than female students, as they are more in agreement with the statement that school was a waste of time. Here, too, parallels can be found with an observation made by A. Gril (2014: 98) that the unmotivated attitude to knowledge was more often expressed by male students. In the statement relating to a critical stance towards school, differences were also discovered between education programmes. The least critical of all are students in general and classical gymnasia, with the critical stance increasing in other programmes and reaching its highest level in 3-year vocational upper-secondary education programmes, where as many as a quarter of students believe school was a waste of time. The results are not surprising, however, for the success of further education of youths in all programmes, it is important for them to overcome or minimise their possible dislike of school (at least to a certain extent).

An analysis of the correlation between the *index of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics* and achievement in PISA 2012 mathematical literacy revealed that the correlation is only discovered in gymnasia and even there it is relatively low. Given that in terms of an international comparison the levels of this motivation in Slovenian students are low (Table 4), it can be said that, on average, only successful students in gymnasia exhibit higher levels of such motivation. This also leads to the conclusion that this is not a direct causal relationship, but (also) a case of retrocausality, where achievement in cognitive situations affects the motivation for learning, however, understandably, there are other factors playing an important role in achieving mathematical results (e.g. Lamb and Fullarton, 2001; Ma and Bradley, 2004; Pang and Rogers, 2013; Suan, 2014). The significance of other factors in Slovenian students seems to be supported by the results of a regression analysis in the PISA 2012 international report, which reveals that in Slovenian 15-year-old students the size of the impact of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics on their achievements is in the bottom third of OECD countries (OECD, 2013a: 289). However, this does not exclude the significance of instrumental motivation, which must be taken into consideration among factors behind the empowerment of students for life in adulthood and lifelong career guidance.

The limitations of the analysis in this chapter are in the limited scope of factors considered and, hence, only a partial picture of the situation and the necessity to increase the efforts to empower students on their career paths can be presented. For the purposes of further research, it would be important to investigate the correlation between the factor of instrumental motivation and other factors such as intrinsic motivation, perceived self-efficacy and the like, and to establish the correlation of these factors in a joint model used for interpreting the achievements. For a more complete picture, it would also be useful to consider additional international comparisons, in particular with those countries which Slovenia aims to have as role models when it comes to developing the guidelines for school counselling work. It is also

important to keep in mind that the comparisons presented apply to students who have only just started their upper-secondary education. Thus, the results mostly describe cumulative achievements in non-cognitive dimensions of primary and lower-secondary education in Slovenia.

## **Conclusion**

In planning counselling for students, it is necessary to pay attention to where they are starting from. In this chapter, the data from the latest PISA study, i.e. PISA 2012, was used to investigate how youths in Slovenia value academic learning and work, in particular learning mathematics, for their professional and career prospects in adulthood. The presented analyses provide a framework for deliberations about the entry-level population in upper-secondary education, and thereby about the options of improving background research as well as approaches to teaching and counselling in further education. This framework can be extended through the findings of the analyses focused on the curricula of primary/lower-secondary education (Sentočnik, 2012a) and gymnasias (Sentočnik, 2012b) in terms of lifelong career guidance, which suggest that in the curricula for mathematics and also other subjects not sufficient attention is paid to the contents aimed at the development of lifelong career guidance. Sentočnik notes that in the curriculum for primary/lower-secondary school mathematics some options for raising students' awareness of their mathematics-related skills, interests and talents are indicated. There is, however, nothing that would allow for the exploring of different professions and career planning and management (Sentočnik, 2012a: 38).

Some explanations for a relatively low level of instrumental motivation for learning mathematics among Slovenian 15-year-old students have also been suggested by the findings of regional seminars organised as part of the Career project (Štremfel et al., 2015). According to the participating counsellors from Slovenian primary and secondary schools, insufficient attention is devoted to the non-cognitive contents in Slovenian schools, mainly due to lack of time and the performance-oriented nature of Slovenian schools, which often neglect children's emotional and social development. Participants in these seminars also pointed out that an additional obstacle is posed by the lack of systemic regulation of the integration of otherwise important contents of students' personal and social development, which should span across all levels of primary and lower-secondary education and should relate to lifelong career guidance. Participants have emphasised that teachers often understand lifelong career guidance and their own role in its development too narrowly. The role of (all) teachers is crucial, as they are the ones that should integrate the contents of lifelong career guidance into their teaching and should make sure they stimulate the motivation for further advancement of knowledge in students who show an interest and aptitude for a particular subject. The role of counsellors in this would be to establish a framework of joint action of all teachers (ibid.).

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## **ACTIVE CLASSES AS SUPPORT TO CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPOWERMENT ON THEIR CAREER PATHS**

ALENKA GRIL

*The chapter presents the options of creating a stimulating learning environment and using appropriate teaching methods to promote personal and social development of all children and adolescents in school. This refers to active classes or participatory educational practices that allow all students active engagement and co-operation with their peers and teachers during lessons and other school activities. In the process of active learning, children and adolescents develop suitable personal and social competencies needed to successfully tackle any problems, insecurity and stressful circumstances in their own education and career paths, as well as in everyday life. The aim is to open up the school environment for identifying opportunities for individuals' empowerment and to encourage teachers' efforts to empower children and adolescents for autonomous creation of conditions for work and professional activities in the future.*

*Key words: active classes, personal and social development, empowerment*

### **Introduction**

Rapid and dynamic changes in the present-day labour market call for individuals to constantly adjust their careers, for which adequate competencies, skills, attitudes and knowledge are required (Tristram, Watts, Sultana and Neary, 2013). The Council of the European Union defined individuals' expected capabilities, by means of which they are supposed to adapt to the changing requirements of the economy and the labour market in times of growing globalisation, in the Resolution on Better Integrating Lifelong Guidance into Lifelong Learning Strategies (2008). Lifelong career guidance is defined as a "continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions, and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used. Guidance covers a range of individual and collective activities relating to information-giving, counselling, competence assessment, support, and the teaching of decision-making and career management skills." (Council of the European Union, 2008: 2). In terms of political and economic expectations, individuals in EU Member States are thus required to make decisions about their occupations at several points in their lives, whereby they need to continuously adjust their own skills, knowledge and interests to the changing circumstances and needs of the labour market. While the future of the labour market and employment is uncertain, setting own targets for one's worklife and making career decisions (and related educational decisions) are, by definition, not finalised, and are becoming uncertain. Economically justified political strategies of the EU (of the Council of the EU, the European Parliament and the European Commission; in Council of the European

Union, 2008) also raise expectations and set standards in the field of education in the Member States, which is supposed to equip individuals with new skills for new types of work in a knowledge society, and facilitate the implementation of lifelong career guidance at all levels of the education system. In its country-specific recommendations to individual Member States, for instance Slovenia, aimed at achieving the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy, the European Commission proposes "to align education and training with labour market demands" (e.g. as part of further promotion of inter-company training centres), and to focus on "developing special interests and skills of pupils with the aim of improving their capacity to adapt to labour market demands" (e.g. by introducing new subjects in primary and lower-secondary education and by changing school legislation) (National Reform Programme 2014-2015: 28, 29). Therefore, the aim of implementing lifelong career guidance in primary and secondary education is to develop those competencies of children and adolescents that will allow them to effectively plan and make decisions about their own careers and enable them to flexibly adjust their knowledge and skills to the changing circumstances in the labour market.

What may seem a legitimate target in terms of the European economic policy is a cause of discomfort from the perspective of developmental psychology. Individuals' psychological development can be understood as a process of mastering specific developmental tasks in each stage of development, by means of which individuals develop their skills, knowledge and behaviours in order to more or less successfully adapt to their living environments (Havighurst, 1972). Developmental tasks are age-dependent and include a combination of specific requirements of the environment and expectations about individuals' functional abilities in a given period of life (*ibid.*). In adolescence, individuals are supposed to master eight individual developmental tasks: accepting one's physical self and using the body effectively, achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults, achieving a masculine or feminine adult social role, achieving new and more mature relations with peers of both sexes, accepting and adopting socially responsible behaviour, acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour, preparing for marriage and family life and selecting and preparing for an occupation (*ibid.*). As part of the last developmental task, adolescents are supposed to define their career goals and make education-related decisions about their chosen occupations. Children and adolescents are not yet economically active, they are not part of the labour market and their developmental task is not, and cannot be, defined by means of the economic requirements of the labour market. They are only just getting prepared for active working life, which means they have yet to develop competencies and skills, identify their interests, acquire knowledge, develop morality, values and personality based on which they will only, in early adulthood, be able to make autonomous decisions about their occupations and plan their careers. The choice of profession is a process that starts in childhood, takes place more intensely in adolescence and early adulthood, during gradual development of one's own occupation-related conceptions of oneself (Super, 1984, in Zupančič, 2004): awareness of one's own interests and abilities and learning about real employment opportunities (crystallisation of vocational conception of oneself in middle adolescence), narrowing down occupational choices and deciding on a suitable education (specification of vocational conception of oneself in late adolescence), testing occupational decisions after completed education as part of first jobs (implementation of vocational conception of oneself in the period of transition to adulthood), deciding on a suitable professional career and gaining real work experience in one's chosen profession (stabilisation

of vocational conception of oneself in early adulthood) and, finally, consolidation of professional identity in the process of promotion in a specific working career and achieving a higher professional status (in the second half of early adulthood). Occupational decisions in adolescence remain largely undefined and are mainly related to learning about one's own abilities and interests and to decisions about education that will lead to individuals' desired profession. Therefore, the author believes that integrating lifelong career guidance in primary and secondary education, with the aim of allowing individuals to take decisions on their own career and taking into account the needs of the changing labour market (as defined by the aforementioned economic policy strategies), is an impetuous decision considering the developmental tasks and the principles of children's and adolescents' psychological development (cf. a discussion on conceptual dilemmas in the chapter by Polona Kelava in this monograph).

Developmentally appropriate educational objectives related to lifelong career guidance could be focused on the acquisition of a broad spectrum of knowledge and the development of various competencies and skills in adolescents, on encouragement of their interests in different areas of knowledge in relation to the world of work and everyday life. Endeavours should also be focused on developing adolescents' personal identity and value orientations, whereby it is important to strengthen those individuals' personal abilities that will allow them to plan their own goals, make decisions and steer their own activities towards the selected goals, as this will make it possible for them to actualise lifelong career guidance in adulthood and make career choices in accordance with labour market demands. This involves strengthening individuals' ability to deal with uncertainty proactively and to efficiently act in high-risk life circumstances, such as those that can be predicted for the labour market in the future based on the situation today.

Such individuals' abilities are, in literature from the field of developmental psychology, described with the term resilience. »People, who turn out well despite difficulties that would normally be expected to throw their development or their mental health in to pathological pathways, are commonly said to show 'resilience'. Resilience is not merely an individual's characteristic, but conceptually refers to a combination of severe risk experiences and relatively positive developmental outcomes in spite of these experiences« (Meadows, 2010: 275). It is »multidimensional and can include many different aspects of the individual and many different physiological processes« (ibid.: 276). Resilience changes in line with individuals' psychological development as, in each stage of development, individuals develop further during the process of mastering various developmental tasks. Successful completion of developmental tasks in a specific field foretells success in future developmental tasks in both the same and other fields of development. Failure to complete developmental tasks in multiple fields in a particular developmental stage can cause further consequences, leading to problems in various adjustment-related fields in the future. Resilience is developed under a simultaneous influence of a number of different risk and protective factors within individuals and in the outside environment, while their impacts are mutually enhanced. Therefore, interventions aimed at successful mastering of age-appropriate developmental tasks can be used to foster preventive effects for behavioural and emotional problems (ibid.: 276–279).

Studies into resilience in children have revealed (an overview in Meadows, 2010) that the key individual protective factors that enable children and adolescents to efficiently deal with problems, manage stress and to suitably complete developmental tasks are as follows: the



ability of *self-regulation*, both in terms of emotions and cognition as well as behaviour; the so-called executive functions or cognitive control, which is reflected in the *ability to plan* and *control* behaviour directed towards goals, impulse control, emotion regulation, control of problem-solving process; *temperament traits*, of which especially positive emotionality, approach and sociability are associated with resilience; *intelligence*; *experience in mastery* that promotes the development of beliefs about one's own effectiveness in dealing with problems and managing stress; *stress management strategies*. Of key importance in the development of these skills and personality traits are protective factors in a social context. At an interpersonal level, the key protective factors include interpersonal relationships with *parents* (e.g. warmth, support and acceptance) (in Meadows, 2010) and *teachers*, as part of which it is especially important to provide children with the feedback that they are capable of persevering and making progress, and also for the efforts made to yield results (in Roeser, Peck and Nasir, 2006); also of major importance for the development of resilience in children are valuable experiences with *peers*, especially friendship and getting a feeling of acceptance, inclusion and belonging to a group, which are all essential in shaping children's self-concept and identity and in strengthening their self-respect (in Daniel and Wassell, 2002).

Therefore, studies into children's resilience suggest that the protective factors of successful adjustment to living conditions are numerous and varied, and that they operate at several levels simultaneously, both at the level of individuals as well as outside of it, in interpersonal relationships within different social groups and institutions, and in a wider social environment. It would therefore be advisable to set up intervention programmes aimed at developing and strengthening individuals' personal competencies by including as many diverse factors as possible and encouraging their mutual interactive effects. In a school-type environment it is, for instance, possible to foster children's and adolescents' development by strengthening the social support networks that they are surrounded with - connecting with peers, adults, social organisations and institutions - and by strengthening young people's potential competencies, skills and personality traits (Daniel and Wassell, 2002). The school context makes for a suitable environment to promote personal and social development of all children and adolescents, as it is one of the most important protective factors in the development of resilience, especially in underprivileged children who are at risk of failure and dropping out of education (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012).

Since the concept of resilience implies individuals' passive, inactive attitude in coping with problems in their environment (an explanation provided in the chapter by Igor Bijuklić in this monograph), the author proposes introducing the concept of empowerment (which facilitates a proactive relationship with the environment) to refer to educational incentives aimed at strengthening individuals' competencies to deal with uncertainty. In this context, it is suggested that primary and secondary education should be provided with conditions for empowering individuals for active, independent lives, and to plan appropriate teaching strategies oriented towards strengthening children's and adolescents' personal abilities in the cognitive, emotional and social fields. At a later time in their lives, this will facilitate autonomous planning, decision-making and accomplishment on their career paths and the ability to cope with high-risk situations and uncertainty in their everyday lives.

## **The Theoretical Framework of Empowerment of Children and Adolescents within Schools**

If the aim is for the school to empower children and adolescents for a proactive life and for coping with uncertainty, it is necessary to provide a supportive learning environment, where children and adolescents would have the opportunity to gain relevant mastery-related experience, based on which they would strengthen the belief about their own efficiency and intrinsic motivation for learning, develop interests, and build a wide range of knowledge. At the same time, they would also have the opportunity to develop problem-solving skills, strategies of self-regulation of emotions, thinking and behaviour, and stress management strategies. It is necessary to create an environment that will prove positive in developing children's and adolescents' personal identity, their self-concept (academic and social) and self-respect, strengthen social networks and foster the development of social skills.

When planning development incentives, it is necessary to take into account the interactive effects of the various social contexts on children's development – in accordance with the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), at the level of interpersonal relationships in microsystems (such as family, friends, peers, school, neighbourhood, associations), at mesosystem level (in relationships and interconnections between microsystems - between schools, family, social organisations and institutions in the local area) and at macrosystem level (the socio-political systems dictate the system of economic, cultural and educational institutions that communicate the established social norms and values, beliefs and ideologies and determine what is the desirable, expected and acceptable behaviour for the people in a certain community). The effects of social environments have a hierarchical structure (Small and Supple, 2001): to start with, a sufficient number of different environments (microsystem effects) is needed, so they can interconnect in sufficient numbers (mesosystem effects), only then can the macrosystem effects appear within a community. Interventions should be focused on first-order effects (a sufficient number of environments) and second-order effects (integration of environments, communication, consistency and relevance), based on which third-order effects (social trust, community identity, social cohesion and collective efficiency) will be able to develop in the community.

According to this model, the school as a developmental context can be understood primarily as a microsystem, wherein individual children or adolescents enter into interpersonal relationships with peers and adults – teachers, who help shape children's or adolescents' personalities and social behaviour through their own model behaviour, expectations and incentives, by guiding and steering their learning and by providing feedback. At the same time, the school is also a place to connect with families and other institutions within the local environment, which through mutual communication cause mesosystem effects on the development of individuals. However, the school can also be understood as an educational institution that - with its typical organisational structure - defines the possible roles and social positions, by means of which it steers social relations and, through its curriculum and educational aims, communicates to children and adolescents the prevailing social norms and ideologies, and thus impacts children's development at a macrosystem level.

Children's engagement in the school environment takes place at several nested levels and is associated with positive learning and social outcomes (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012): 1) *engagement with school* as a prosocial institution (as well as in other social organisations,

cultural and educational institutions and youth organisations) promotes positive development and protects children from risk behaviours, delinquency and substance abuse; 2) *engagement in school* (in school activities and extracurricular pursuits) promotes students' completion and graduation and protects against absenteeism and dropouts; 3) *engagement in the classroom* (active participation in classes and learning), which is an essential prerequisite of learning (as skills and knowledge are developed only through one's activities), forms daily experiences in school (psychological and social), contributes to the development of competence and connection to peers and teachers, while significantly contributing to students' academic development (adjusted coping with difficulties, challenges and negative experiences; the development of intrinsic motivation and self-regulated learning, positive academic self-concepts); 4) *engagement with learning activities* (active learning) constitutes a motivational context of relationships between teachers and students and promotes learning, overcoming difficulties and successful adjustment.

Positive developmental outcomes of students' engagement in the classroom and in school can be explained within the self-system model of motivational development (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012), based on the self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985). According to this theoretical model, individuals are intrinsically motivated, are curious by nature, love to learn and they internalise their knowledge, habits and values of the environment. When the social context or activities address basic human needs, individuals are engaged in an active and constructive manner. Basic human needs are the needs for relatedness, competence and autonomy. The school environment affects students' active engagement through supporting or hindering experiences that students gain about themselves in being connected to school, as being capable of success and as autonomous or self-determined individuals. From these experiences, children cumulatively construct their own respective self-concepts. This is not merely a momentary self-perception, but a lasting belief that shapes the current reality and steers actions. *Relatedness* refers to the need to experience oneself as being connected to others and is one of the basic mental processes of attachment. In school, relatedness is reflected through the feeling of belonging to the school and is associated with several indicators of motivation, active engagement and adjustment (in Skinner and Pitzer, 2012). *Competence* refers to the need to experience oneself as being efficient in interactions with the social and physical environments and is one of the basic mental processes of control. The perception of self-efficacy, competencies, learning competencies and control constitute robust predictors of students' active engagement and learning, as well as their academic performance (ibid.). *Autonomy* refers to the need to express the original self and the need to experience self as the source of actions and is one of the basic mental processes of self-determination. Students with a greater sense of autonomy in school (in defining the goals for which they are intrinsically motivated when it comes to learning) show higher degrees of active engagement during lessons, satisfaction, persistence, learning and achievements (ibid.).

The self-system model of motivational development (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012) emphasises the significance of support interactions with teachers, peers and parents, and of the intrinsically interesting school work. The quality of interactions between teachers and students is dependent on the teaching attentiveness and warmth (which supports the experiences of relatedness), the optimal structure (which promotes competence) and the support for autonomy (which promotes self-determination motivation). Also of key importance for children's positive development is friendship with their peers – both in and

outside of school - who impact motivation, behaviour and learning performance in school (in Skinner and Pitzer, 2012). Parenting practices as a mediator affect students' learning behaviour in school by shaping their active engagement in classes, their intrinsic motivation, willingness to take up challenges, evaluation and dedication to school, as well as enthusiasm, satisfaction and interest in school work (ibid.).

An especially important determinant of motivation and students' engagement is the nature of learning tasks in the classroom (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012). Active participation, engagement and effort promote the tasks that are practical, require thinking, are project-based, relevant, progressive and cross-curricularly integrated, thereby generating intrinsic motivation, interest in, and love of, learning. The tasks that call for autonomous learning are supposed to be logical, important and worthy of individuals' effort. By relating to the real life outside of school, they provide students with a feeling of purpose and control over learning.

The self-system model of motivational development assumes (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012) that the school context enables learners variously to satisfy basic psychological needs (by providing warmth/engagement, structure and support to autonomy). Based on these experiences, students construct their own personal process systems which are organised around the motivation of relatedness, competence and autonomy. Personal process systems provide a motivational foundation for engagement, or non-involvement, in learning activities. Constructive engagement should be a key mechanism, based on which motivational processes can contribute to learning and achievements.

At the same time, engagement is reciprocally linked to the responses of teachers, parents and peers. Students' motivation, which is reflected through engagement, in fact encourages social partners to respond. Some studies into the effects of students' engagement on teachers' responsiveness thus suggest that greater engagement of pre-school children encourages the development of closer relations with educators, stronger support of teachers in teaching, or teachers allowing greater autonomy to pupils in primary and lower-secondary education (in Skinner and Pitzer, 2012). The effects of children's engagement-related behaviours are also associated with the responsiveness of parents (ibid.); for instance, parents react to rebellious, unresponsive, uninterested and uncooperative children by withdrawing their own participation or with greater control (they exercise their power or punish children). Similarly, the degree of children's engagement in school is also associated with the degree of engagement typical of their respective peer groups (ibid.); children becoming part of a certain peer groups is, at least partly, based on engagement at school.

Support interactions with teachers, parents and peers contribute to children's positive self-perception, which promotes their involvement in interesting and meaningful school activities and encourages learning and skill development. Highly successful involvement and achievements consequently enhance students' positive self-perception, elicit further support of teachers and parents, and enable students to join the networks of involved peers and friends. In contrast, interpersonal interactions that involve no support or include perceiving oneself as unwanted, incompetent or under pressure at school, lead to a lack of engagement, which reduces the effectiveness of learning and achievement. Lack of relatedness and failure, consequently reduces students' self-esteem and may lead to teachers' or parents' withdrawal of support or increased penalising, while steering children towards joining less active friends and peer groups.

## Engaging Teaching Practice or Active Classes

Engaging teaching practice or active classes are the development of a system of processes that continuously promote and maintain the emotional, intellectual and behavioural activity of students (Jabari, 2013). Active classes refer to the activities and the involvement of students in the educational process both at an emotional and cognitive level, and at a behavioural level (Appleton, Chrisenton and Furlong, 2008).<sup>30</sup>

*Emotional involvement* (psychological engagement) refers to the relatedness that students experience in the classroom and is largely dependent on the relationships of teachers to students (Jabari, 2013). It is expressed as the degree of perceived warmth, care and affection in a learning environment, the degree of perceived closeness to the people at school, perception of oneself as a worthy member of the school community, the joy of being in school, as well as identification with the school or a sense of belonging to the school. In students it is directly exhibited as enthusiasm, enjoyment and satisfaction in school (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012).

*Cognitive activity* is the degree to which students wish to psychologically invest the necessary "mental energy" in learning (Jabari, 2013). It is expressed in their understanding of the importance of specific tasks and persistence in complicated, or more difficult-to-understand, tasks that require a higher level of cognitive activity, or perseverance in learning after having experienced failure. It is directly exhibited as attention, concentration, focus while learning, motivation, interest, thinking, understanding, mastery, searching for problem-solving strategies, attainment of goals and willing participation (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012).

*Behavioural activity* relates to students' behavioural patterns in school and includes their willingness to attend lessons on a certain subject, initiative in completing and focusing on tasks, time spent on tasks, invested effort, persistence and responsiveness to the teacher, doing homework, attendance at school and attentively following lessons (Jabari, 2013). During classes, it is directly exhibited as diligence, persistence, initiative, asking questions, engagement, responsiveness and completing tasks (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012).

The cornerstone of active classes is developing an *inclusive classroom and school climate*, expressed through affection, warmth, relatedness, mutual help and care, which will ensure involvement, relatedness and active participation of all students in the classroom and in other school activities (Jabari, 2013). Thus, promotion of the values of attentiveness, prosocial behaviour and the learning-oriented approach in interpersonal relationships in school (in classrooms) builds *learning communities* (Watkins, 2005). In such communities, attention is devoted both to social relations and learning processes, in other words, learning is based on constructing knowledge with others. Knowledge (individual and shared) is the product of social processes.

Students' active engagement in school work originates in their sense of *belonging*, which has also been indicated by the conducted studies (an overview in Watkins, 2005). The feeling of belonging has an important impact on many dimensions of motivation, dedication and persistence in difficult school tasks. Students with a greater sense of belonging to the school receive higher grades, are characterised by a strong internal locus of control, and have a

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<sup>30</sup> Some authors add a fourth component to the three components of active engagement in the classroom (emotional, behavioural, cognitive), i.e. responsiveness to the challenges relating to the use of strategies for coping with problems, especially with complex situations or perceived failure (Klem and Connell, 2004).

stronger sense that success depends on themselves and less so on others. The effect of belonging to a school community can be strongest in schools with a high share of economically disadvantaged students. This effect is often permanent, is transferred from primary and lower-secondary education to upper-secondary education and manifests itself in knowledge tests, learning diligence, social skills and less challenging behaviour.

The sense of belonging to the school and, consequently, students' greater engagement is more heavily influenced by peers and teachers than the school management and organisation (an overview of studies in Watkins, 2005). Therefore, the effects of students' engagement are greater in schools where a learning community is being developed in the classroom than in schools where only participation in extra-curricular activities is encouraged. In classes where a sense of community is developed and where students feel they belong, they are more actively engaged in selecting and learning, are more intrinsically motivated, have a higher sense of autonomy and express less risk behaviour.

Active classes have a co-operational structure which prevents feelings of isolation among students and encourages the development of social skills, while allowing a mutual exchange of ideas, information and learning support (Jabari, 2013). Support structures, such as the strategies of peer co-operation or teachers customize the plans for learning for different classes and individual students, encourage students to assume active roles during lessons and in managing learning. Thus, in classes that are constructed as learning communities, *leadership is shared*, which fosters the development of responsibility for learning and prosocial behaviour in all students (an overview of studies in Watkins, 2005). These classes promote inclusion, which means that the differences between students are not understood as a problem, on the contrary, the *expression of individuals' diversity* is encouraged, as are their contributions to the community. Encouraging co-operation among students, especially when *working in small groups*, leads to greater relatedness, participation and intrinsic motivation. Involvement and belonging to a community is encouraged by means of a key activity of *eliciting questions* from students and *discussions* in the classroom or in small groups. If this is the case, then the intellectual activity is high, both in terms of the type of questions and in terms of the learning process that follows, as well as in terms of the quality of the knowledge. When students start learning from one another, they can also *help one another during learning*. During co-operative learning, a shared *metacognition about the learning process* is developing: metacognitive awareness is developed, as is collective metacognition, which includes planning, regulation, monitoring and evaluation. The key feature of the learning community is thus built, i.e. a community that learns about its learning.

Active classes consist of *differentiated* and *individualised* instruction, and evaluation is a learning tool, which increases the chance of students' success (Jabari, 2013). Students' personal life is a key element of this teaching practice: the structure of classes must allow students to set their own learning paths. Teachers should adapt the general educational experiences depending on the specific interests, questions, preferences and potential of each student. The process of planning, preparation and content presentation is focused on creating conditions for the participation of all students. Establishing an engaging teaching practice minimises the level of boredom and apathy by developing a continuously evolving, *student-centred pedagogy*. This motivates students intrinsically and *connects learning with everyday experiences*. Teachers thus structure learning around critically meaningful ideas, questions and information, give meaning to the learning content individually, adapt it and the teaching

methods to individuals, their life experiences, interests and knowledge, and allow for the planning of individual learning paths and goals. This involves co-developing a complex learning environment, which includes *a cross-curricularly integrated* and project-based curriculum.

Active classes call for *a reflective teaching practice* and *teachers'* clearly expressed *expectations* about success, as well as *feedback* to the students (Jabari, 2013). Reflective practice encourages teachers to refine and improve their teaching, and students to reflect on their strategies and learning techniques, thus encouraging self-regulated learning and self-control over learning. Besides the reflective practices, support structures that promote students' engagement in active classes and the development of their learning and social competencies include positive instead of punitive behavioral supports and making sure students *have a voice* and are given the freedom of *choice*. When students are able to participate in school in meaningful ways, they have a sense of empowerment rather than alienation (ibid.). This catalyses the ability for self-regulation and accepting personal responsibility for one's own actions. Suitably organised lessons can give students a greater sense of meaningfulness and personal commitment, and allow the development of personal competencies.

### **Proposals for Implementing Active Classes into the Guidelines for the Work of School Counselling Services**

The current Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary and secondary education (1999) define two areas of the counselling service's activities separately, i.e. personal and social development, and career development (vocational guidance). The author believes that it is possible to interconnect both areas of activity, i.e. to strengthen adolescents' career development indirectly by fostering their personal and social development, and to empower them for informed planning and decision-making on their own career paths.

Given the fact that it is possible to develop a stimulating learning environment for the empowerment of all students only through integrated activities of all teachers and other education practitioners within a school, the author suggests changes to the work of the school counselling service in the sense of simultaneous intervention-oriented activities at several levels, i.e. with individual students, specific "risk groups" of students (members of ethnic minorities, underachievers, students from socially discouraging environments, from single-parent families etc.), with individual classes, at school level and with teachers. Efforts should be made to develop pupils' and students' personal integrity, a positive self-concept and self-respect, to which the counselling service in primary and lower-secondary education already devotes much of its activity (Štremfel et al., 2015). It is also necessary to strengthen students' beliefs about their own effectiveness, develop strategies of self-regulation of emotions, thinking and behaviour, and to systematically expand the social support network within school (and beyond its boundaries). In some schools within primary and lower-secondary education, school counsellors are already working on developing students' planning and decision-making skills in individual or group programmes (ibid.). However, it is also necessary to raise the awareness of teachers about the importance of encouraging all pupils

and students to acquire a wide range of knowledge that will become meaningful in everyday life (also in terms of socioeconomic concepts).

These objectives in the field of adolescents' personal and social development, which are at the same time safeguard mechanisms for coping with stress, can be achieved by systematic and targeted promotion and by ensuring the participation of all students in the learning process and in school activities. It is necessary to develop an inclusive climate, both in individual classes and in school, build learning communities, introduce active learning methods, promote co-operative learning and develop strategies of self-regulated learning. Based on these mechanisms, teaching and school life will provide adolescent students with positive experiences for the development of competencies, autonomy and relatedness and foster the empowerment of their inner strengths to actively meet the challenges of the future. When it comes to developing an engaging teaching practice, the school counselling service could assume the role of a support structure for teachers in school.

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## **EMPOWERING TEACHERS FOR CAREER GUIDANCE OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

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*In the current social situation, developing the skills necessary for career guidance of children and adolescents primarily involves developing the ability to make sense of the wealth of information that is available everywhere. Instead of providing children and adolescents with additional or better information about occupations and education, teachers - as significant adults – should, in this context, help them acquire the competencies and skills that place the information in a proper context. It is only possible to make sense of the information on the basis of developed social and emotional competencies that students can develop with the support of significant adults (parents, teachers, educators), specifically on the basis of teaching and learning these competencies, and on the basis of a process of transferring emotions, experiences, opinions and principles. As teachers have indicated a certain level of uncertainty in relation to the development of social and emotional competencies, it would, for the purposes of developing social and emotional competencies as a foundation for the development of children's and adolescents' career management skills, be advisable to provide the support of counselling services.*

*Key words: teachers, counselling service, career guidance, emotional and social learning*

### **Introduction**

Within the contemporary conception of developing lifelong career management skills, it is important for students to acquire these skills continuously during the course of their formal education. As a result of the need to produce quick responses to unpredictable situations and challenges, social conditions and employers require individuals to possess not only traditional knowledge, but also resilience, i.e. the ability to rapidly adapt and actively search for new solutions and new knowledge.

For a number of years, education and employment policies, both at national and EU levels, have, as the cornerstone of the development of responses to contemporary situations, also been pointing out that the important factors in all key competencies related to the field of education are critical thinking, creativity, initiative behaviour, problem-solving, risk assessment, decision-making and constructive emotion management. Even within the European Council, the task force responsible for employment in 2003 stressed the need for the competency to adapt to changes, the importance of integrating people into the labour market and the key role of lifelong learning (Report of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union of 18.12.2006, the OJ, No. 394/10). However, in Slovenia, at implementational level this was included only to a lesser extent. These competencies are directly related to career management skills, since individuals can, based on these competencies, build a clear picture of their career-related goals, and thus demonstrate and prove their competencies and co-operate with many different types of individuals. According

to a definition from the Employment Service of Slovenia "lifelong career guidance allows managing the paths of life in such a way that one is aware of these skills and competencies and knows how to use them" (Employment Service of Slovenia, 2012: 9). The competency-based approach is therefore fully related to the concept of integrated learning and teaching where the focus is on dealing with interdisciplinary problems.

Thus, an integrated concept of learning and teaching in its essence comprises a wide variety of factors and key points that, in different periods, occupy various important roles for individuals and for developing universal social characteristics. The possibility that has proven to be much more likely was that an integrated approach will result in longer lasting effects on students' opinions and behaviour in relation to various issues as opposed to the programmes that address individual issues more narrowly (for instance only by teaching a certain learning content). In his overview of various programmes of social and emotional learning in schools, Durlak (1995) pointed out that the programmes that cover the entire school environment are considerably more effective than the programmes that are integrated only in the curriculum.

An integrated approach thus provides for the inclusion of the development of various competencies, which is evident within the education system both from the concepts of aims and expected achievements, as well as teaching recommendations. In the Slovenian education system it is, in principle, possible to detect the tendencies to incorporate an integrated approach and the tendencies to develop key skills such as decision-making, the ability to adapt to change and others. However, more detailed analyses (Ivanuš Grmek et al., 2009) also indicate substantial deficits in this field. Notwithstanding the basic premises of the curricular reform (National Curriculum Council, 1996), whose specified aims include promotion of a coherent physical and mental (cognitive, emotional, social and other types of) development of individuals, this is, in executive documents at a national level (in curricula, legislation), at school level (in Annual Working Plans) and at the level of teachers (in their annual and individual lesson plans), for the most part not noticeable.

In relation to the curricula, M. Ivanuš Grmek et al. (2009) have noticed the predominance of cognitive goals, whereas non-cognitive ones are in the minority and are more common in art-related subjects and in a cross-curricular subject (library and information studies), however, only when it comes to general goals. The curricula lack goals from the field of education and there could certainly also be more goals related to creativity, learning to learn and emotional development (ibid.). When it comes to the guidelines for further development listed in the White Paper (2011), promotion of emotional and social development is likewise noticeable only in terms of principles and is aimed only at solving the problems that arise in this field. It is therefore also not possible to talk about a systematic approach to the development of this field and, given the above, a question arises about what may be the implications of the foregoing for the development of career management skills of Slovenian children and adolescents. They are not systematically familiarised with these skills and competencies during the formal process of education, which points to a serious failure to form cohesiveness with potential employers who expect individuals entering the labour market to possess such (and many other) skills, knowledge and competencies.

Existing literature, mainly from the USA (e.g. Zins et al, 2007; Vorhaus, 2010), provides clear evidence on how the integrated approach, the development of social and emotional competencies and creation of welfare have a wide range of educational and social impacts, for instance, a better learning and job performance, improved behavioural patterns, increased

inclusive orientation, social capital and awareness of oneself, which is also linked to successful planning and managing one's own career path. The fact is that systematic empirical research in this field in Slovenia is underdeveloped (e.g. Kozina, 2013), in particular research into the connections between social and emotional competencies, their development within the education process and lifelong career guidance.

Given that the connections between these fields have not been studied, teachers mostly do not acquire the relevant knowledge to master these fields. Most teacher training is in fact focused on the teaching of individual subjects and broadening the knowledge in a particular subject area (cf. Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, 2014), while teachers have expressed a great need for education in other areas, e.g. in dealing with disciplinary and behavioural problems (Vršnik Perše et al., 2012; Ivanuš Grmek et al., 2007).

An integrated approach that involves different actors and different fields can be taken into consideration not only when it comes to planning work, but also in evaluating the completed work and in determining the quality of the entire system. The dynamic model of educational effectiveness (Creemers and Kyriakides, 2013) thus takes into account the four levels (student, teacher or classroom, school, and system levels) and each of these covers a variety of factors and the effects of them. Each level is supposedly directly or indirectly linked with students' achievements, while the possibility of identifying the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and meta-cognitive achievements of students is also pointed out. The differences here could supposedly be largely explained with the primary processes at class or teacher level, while the model itself omits the effects of the teachers' context. To this end, the model was upgraded (see Vršnik Perše, 2014) and thus explains the factors at student level and at class or classroom level also through non-cognitive processes related to the educational process (expectations, actions etc.).

In terms of the factors related to non-cognitive processes, teachers during their professional development acquire the necessary knowledge and competencies only to a lesser extent and may therefore develop a number of concerns regarding the work in the field of non-cognitive processes. In the absence of support of the entire education system and of each individual institution, it is definitely easier to retreat into inaction in this field instead of placing oneself in a visible position, especially if one is unsure about the adequacy of own competencies and actions.

### **Developing Children's Emotional and Social Competencies as Part of the Development of Career Management Skills**

The behaviour and views of significant adults (i.e. in the environment of primary socialisation: of parents or guardians; in the environment of secondary socialisation: of educators or teachers) are important factors that determine how effectively children will learn numerous competencies, including social and emotional competencies related to career management skills.

As significant adults, teachers, throughout the education process, are an integral part of the development of children's and adolescents' personality, and can thus make an important contribution to their personal development and to the development of strategies for prevention

and resolution of problems in school or at a later time in life (Masten et al., 2009), and can also significantly contribute to children's decisions about their own career paths.

Adults' behaviour and views are a means of transmitting competencies; this takes place through direct teaching and learning, through quality relationships and also through the methods of managing schools and the relationships within schools.

In a study conducted by J. Gordon and K. Turner (2001), the authors pointed out that young people often do not follow the example of adults regarding a healthy lifestyle, however, they clearly express that educational professionals in schools need to represent a role model of good interpersonal relationships and need to exhibit respect, calmness and kindness.

It is from these significant adults (parents, teachers etc.) that children and adolescents often, and increasingly, learn the competencies which, due to the way of life nowadays (the internet, virtual worlds, social networks etc.), they acquire less often during socialising and play; they do however need them to be able deal with everyday situations.

This is not a matter of children needing better or more information about a particular topic, such as career management, but they mainly need help with how to obtain information and how to make sense of the information depending on the knowledge about themselves and also the circumstances related to social characteristics, occupations and others (Kuijpers, 2011).

In addition to lifelong resilience, social and emotional competencies can, according to the research presented below, also be manifested through students' achievement, reduced dropouts from the education system and employment prospects after completed education, which are directly related to individuals' career management skills.

By means of a meta-analysis, Durlak et al. (2011) analysed 213 social-emotional learning programmes designed for schools and established that, in comparison with the control group, the children who were enrolled in these programmes showed significantly better social and emotional skills, views, behaviour and learning characteristics, which was reflected in higher learning outcomes by eleven percentile points. In another study, A. A. Lipnevich and Roberts (2012) point out a number of non-cognitive factors significantly associated with the education process and achievements, such as accuracy, conscientiousness, social skills, control of emotions, learning habits and views. They also underline an even more important link between non-cognitive competencies perceived in childhood and adolescence, and during the period when the living environment expands beyond the school, and academic achievement. In relation to this, they highlight the correlations between non-cognitive competencies and long-term unemployment and low income.

Social and emotional competencies can therefore be manifested immediately - indirectly for instance through improved academic performance, or at anytime in the future - indirectly for instance through a shorter job seeking period or other skills necessary for career management.

### **The Role of Teachers in the Development of Children's Career Management Skills**

Contemporary literature has provided the basis for a number of discussions and definitions of characteristics and competencies at teacher level that are supposedly part of the characteristics of the contemporary education process and that define teachers' work. The definition that

seems to be the most comprehensive identifies five key areas of teacher competencies (Peklaj, 2006):

- a) effective teaching;
- b) lifelong learning;
- c) guidance and communication;
- d) knowledge testing and assessment, student progress monitoring and
- e) wider professional competencies.

The key competencies defined in such a way thus expand expectations beyond the traditional characteristics of lessons and teachers' teaching, however, only one rather non-specific group of competencies remains defined outside of this context, the so-called wider professional competencies. In comparison with the traditional, teaching quality-related competencies (such as effective teaching, guidance and communication, knowledge testing and assessment), the role of wider professional competencies is still minor. Indirectly, these competencies are to a lesser extent also communicated to students, who thus do not receive the key components required for effective career management skills.

On the other hand, the European Commission defined teacher competencies (see Razdevšek Pučko, 2004) as:

- a) competence to use new methods of work in the classroom;
- b) qualification for new tasks and work outside of the classroom - in school and with social partners;
- c) ability to develop new competencies and new knowledge in students;
- d) developing own professionalism;
- e) the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

At a wider social level, the focus is therefore on not only acquiring a certain teacher competency for performing the teaching profession, but also on acquiring the ability for teaching how to develop competencies. Teaching how to develop competencies certainly requires not only gaining the knowledge from this field, but is also characterised by a wider context, linked to the transmission of knowledge to students.

It also seems reasonable to argue that an important factor that determines how effectively children will actually learn the wider competencies related to lifelong career management, such as emotional and social competence, is the behaviour and the attitude of children's teachers and guardians. The transmission of emotional and social competencies is expressed through this behaviour and relationship (also) during direct teaching, as well as through the quality of relationships and through the ways in which the school operates. Teachers and guardians are quite distinctly their role models in this field (Weare and Gray, 2003).

To allow relevant competencies and also their meaning to be transmitted through the transfer, teachers must be convinced of the importance of this field and of the importance of social and emotional learning, however, they are often themselves in need of being educated in this field. In relation to this, their own needs must be taken into consideration, or else the aim will be missed, which may worsen the situation. If teachers do not feel that their own emotional needs have been fulfilled, they often pass on this view to the students, at least indirectly, and are then unable to adequately support the process of social and emotional learning in students.

Learning social and emotional competencies is always characterised by procedural learning. Procedural learning is defined within the process-development strategy, which

presupposes the existence of a democratic society (Kelly, 1989). Within this strategy, the goals are defined, however, not in as many details as in the learning-oriented strategy, but as principles and values that constitute the criterion for the selection of teaching contents and methods. In this case, the importance lies in the process of acquiring knowledge and the development of students as complete persons, not only in the cognitive, but also in the social-moral and skill-related fields (Ivanuš Grmek et al., 2009).

This strategy is expressed also through emphasising the development of learning to learn as a key competency necessary for a successful life and functioning in a knowledge society (European Commission, 2004). In addition to intrinsic motivation, it is in relation to learning and problem-solving also necessary to build a positive self-concept of pupils or students, a positive attitude to oneself, to knowledge and learning, and a sense of achievement resulting from the effort made (Jelenc, 2007).

A positive self-concept, and therewith also resilience and flexibility, can thus only be developed with suitable support from significant adults. A number of authors (Bernard, 1998; Brooks and Goldstein, 2003; Henderson, 2007) note that the most crucial aspect for children in terms of promotion of their resilience is a strong relationship with an adult, and in school such adult persons are teachers. The premise can also be illustrated by interpreting the conclusions based on the regional seminars part of the project Career (Štremfel et al., 2015), where the participating counsellors assessed that the role of teachers is of key importance for implementing the activities related to lifelong career guidance (the reason being their daily contact with students, mutual trust, associations with subject areas). They also argued that for successful implementation of these activities it is important that they are included in everyday activities within all subjects, and that concerted action of all actors is of key importance.

These competencies are crucial for teachers not only because of the possibility of improving students' approaches to learning, but also for the teachers' own well-being. P. A. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) believe that teachers with better social and emotional competencies are less likely to experience burnout as they are capable of more effective work with demanding students, which is a common cause of burnout.

The national evaluation study Teacher Professional Development in Vocational Education and Training (Vršnik Perše et al., 2012) has revealed that, in their own opinion, teachers were most successful in developing the competencies related to communication and interpersonal relationships on the basis of their own practices and experiences (52.5%), by means of self-education (18.4%) and through informal co-operation (participation in projects, in-class observation etc.) – in third place (12.7%). Own practice is by all means a welcome source of experiences, which enable learning, however, other people's reflections would certainly constitute an additional opportunity for effective learning in the social and emotional fields.

### **The Linking and Advisory Roles of the Counselling Service**

The part of role models and the models of proper emotional and social behaviour is therefore of crucial importance for the development of this field in children and the part of a role model can only be assumed by a person who feels self-confident in a certain area. Teachers also find it difficult to assume responsibility for developing non-cognitive (social and emotional

competencies), as they are already burdened with having to achieve certain binding standards of knowledge.

Studies conducted in Slovenia (Kiswarday, 2011) indicate that teachers otherwise feel quite qualified for developing students' social competencies ( $M = 4.03$  on a scale of 1-5) and also for resolving conflicts ( $M = 3.98$  on a scale of 1-5). Results of the Kruskal-Wallis test have also revealed that there are statistically significant differences between individual teaching staff members in terms of their professional profile in assessing these two factors related to self-assessment of competence. These results also indicate significantly greater and more integrated involvement of primary education teachers in the (teaching, education-related, social) life of their classes, in comparison with teachers who teach at lower-secondary level (*ibid.*). Teachers therefore need support in upgrading and developing these competencies, whereby the focus on this would be particularly important for lower- and upper-secondary level teachers who, during their formal undergraduate studies, obtain less pedagogical-psychological knowledge and thus simultaneously develop the competencies in this field to a lesser extent.

Thus, developing socio-emotional competencies within the education system should not be centred only on one population (for instance students, teachers or counsellors), but the focus ought to be on the transferability of these competencies among individual system factors.

At a national level, a systematic approach to integration can be analysed mainly in terms of the documents that provide the educational staff with basic work-related guidance, i.e. Programme guidelines for the work of individual class teacher assemblies and classes in primary and secondary education and halls of residence (2005), Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary/lower-secondary education (2008), Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in upper-secondary education (2008), Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in kindergartens (2008). In individual documents, the contents that refer to the development of social and emotional competencies that can contribute to more appropriate choices within individuals' career management are rather diverse.

Programme guidelines for the work of individual class teacher assemblies and classes in primary and secondary education and halls of residence (2005) do not mention the development of social and emotional competencies in relation to the development of career management skills. However, in sections that elaborate on the essential characteristics, it is nevertheless possible to notice some of these elements within the definitions of methods of work with classes, as the following is stated: "we enable experiential learning, which is based on the promotion of intrinsic motivation, on facilitation of students' participation in activity planning and organising, on concretisation of plans, on endeavours for a whole person to learn (learning which involves thinking, emotions and behaviour), on allowing a free formation of students' responses to a certain situation, on respect for diversity and on promotion of personal development and change" (*ibid.*: 13). In regard to the competencies of class teachers, it is further stated "awareness of the responsibility for educational work, which includes active care for students' personal and social development" (*ibid.*: 15). It is interesting to note that among the activities of the entire class teacher assembly and class, the document also lists "vocational education as a planned programme of activities, which promotes students' vocational and educational development" (*ibid.*: 11) and also defines the aims and the ways of implementing vocational education at class level; however, in practice this is mostly



implemented only in the context of specific target activities aimed at familiarisation with professions and education opportunities at the next level of the education system, or in transition from one level to another.

In the programme guidelines for the work of counselling services at different levels of the education system, the work of counselling services is defined as co-operation with all participants (i.e. children, parents, teachers and others), including in terms of physical, personal (cognitive and emotional) and social development, as well as schooling and vocational guidance (or accepting children to nursery or primary school and their transition to primary school). In the field of vocational guidance, the Programme guidelines for the work of the counselling services in primary/lower-secondary education (2008), even specify the so-called minimum standard of services that the counselling service is supposed to provide in this field. In each listed field of work of the school counselling service, it is also pointed out that it is supposed to involve working with students, teachers, parents, the administration and external institutions. Vocational guidance is defined as "work with students, teachers, parents and the school administration with the aim of helping students choose and implement their respective educational and professional paths" (ibid.: 23). Integration is also highlighted in the definition according to which vocational education is in the context of regular classes (as part of other school subjects) provided by all teachers, as well as by class teachers and counsellors within individual class teacher assemblies (ibid.). The guidelines also define "the counselling and consultative work with students, teachers and parents in terms of general characteristics of the physical, personal (cognitive and emotional), and social development" (ibid.: 21). However, while counselling and consultative work with teachers is mainly expected at the level of concrete activities related to students (such as organisation, co-ordination or delivery of lectures and workshops for teachers on the characteristics of a normal physical, personal and social development and the characteristics of students with such problems), it does not encompass the development of personal and social competencies of teachers and the development of competencies for the promotion of social and emotional learning in students.

It may be noted that the terminology is not in line with contemporary guidelines and should therefore be improved, as the change of the term 'vocational guidance' into 'career guidance' would gradually result in a changed understanding of this process: from acquisition of additional information and knowledge on occupations into a process-oriented process (defined within the constructivist paradigm) of giving sense to the information that is in this social context accessible to everyone at any time. More recent documents (e.g. Ministry of Education and Sport, 2011) are already based on updating the terminology, however, a traditional approach to the development of career paths is still noticeable in this respect.

A prerequisite for successful work in terms of empowerment of teachers to develop children's social and emotional competencies (and to promote their career management skills during the development of these competencies) is undoubtedly the coherence of all actors and documents, teamwork and an interdisciplinary approach at national level and at the level of schools, however, at the same time this constitutes the biggest challenge of today's society. This is possible primarily by means of implementing explicit programmes of social and emotional learning at all levels of the education system. At school level, it is the school counselling service that is, within the school setting, most skilled in transmitting the knowledge from this field to teachers, who in their daily practice pass it on to students, but must also link these contents directly and indirectly with the concepts related to children's and

adolescents' successful path of life, which certainly also depends on successful lifelong career management.

## Conclusion

In general, the entire education system and the guidelines would be expected to develop towards greater cohesion and coherence; this development would be expected to occur in general and specifically also in terms of the development of lifelong career guidance and the skills that contribute to career management.

M. Kuijpers et al. (2011) defined career competencies as the ability to reflect upon one's own competencies and motives, work exploration, the competency of co-ordinated decision-making based on ability, motivation and other factors, and last but not least, networking. Developing these competencies thus constitutes higher-order learning and is directly related to individuals' social and emotional competencies which signify the ability for personal potentials in the fields of thought and emotions to be effectively expressed through behaviour in emotionally and socially challenging situations (Goleman et al., 2002).

However, acquisition of these competences and skills is only possible by adopting a cohesive approach. Cohesion of individual contents, which we aim to include in the guidelines, is associated with the cohesion of the concepts of counselling teachers, encouraging personal (cognitive and emotional) and social development, with the inclusion of the concept of teachers' personal and social competence, and combining them with the concepts related to lifelong career guidance and career management skills.

These documents do contain references to vocational education or career guidance and the development of students' social and emotional competencies, however, what is lacking is the association between these contents and an emphasis on the counselling service's counselling and consultative work with teachers who are in turn, in their daily contact with students, then able to more effectively use and promote the transmission of competencies to students.

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## PARENTS AS ADULTS WITH A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S CAREER PATHS

TINA RUTAR LEBAN

*Various theories and empirical studies highlight the importance of the relationship between children and parents for the development of children's careers. Family factors that are most significantly associated with successful career development are a form of attachment to parents, low level/frequency of conflicts in the relationship with parents, suitable separation from parents (in particular mothers) during adolescence, encouraging expression of feelings and exposing problems within a family etc. What adolescents want most from their parents during a career-related decision-making process is emotional support, advice and for parents to accept their decisions. In working with parents in the field of children's career guidance, the focus of counsellors in Slovenian primary and lower-secondary education is mainly on providing information about enrolment options and procedures. To raise parents' awareness about the importance of their role in the development of their children's careers in a more systematic and planned way, it would be necessary to support school counsellors - both in terms of organisation and content - in developing and implementing a systematic programme for raising parents' awareness and providing them with information that has, in various studies, turned out to be most effective in fostering family support for children's career development.*

*Key words: lifelong career guidance, impact of family on career development, cooperation with parents*

### Introduction

The development and exploration of career-related aspirations and goals is one of the important developmental tasks that children need to master in adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Ryan and Deci, 2002; Super, 1957). Theories that describe the development of individuals' careers as one of the significant factors of impact on career and individuals' lifelong career choices deal with different aspects of individuals' elementary family. Parents, as children's primary role models, have a profound impact on children's lives and this impact is also visible when it comes to adolescents' choice of career (Bratcher, 1982). With their model of attitude to work and their beliefs regarding individual professions, parents provide children with a context for thinking about their professional paths. Parents' prejudices, preferences, aspirations, ambitions, opinions, fears and bad experiences inadvertently affect children's thinking and their choice of career. Their elementary family provides individuals with financial and emotional support in developing their career and also imparts career-related values. The family holds expectations about children's career paths and sets targets that children are supposed to achieve. By setting an example, and with their attitude to their children, parents help shape children's self-concept, which also has a significant impact on the development of individuals' career paths (Crites, 1962; Super, 1957).

## **Theories of Career Development and the Impact of Family on Individuals' Lifelong Career Choices**

The impact of the elementary family on the development of individuals' career is the focus of a number of different theories. Career development theories assume that the elementary family shapes individuals' values, interests and needs, and thus impacts their career choices. Super's Theory (Super, 1957) highlights the importance of individuals' self-concept in shaping their career interests, values and decisions. Similarly, Crites (1962) points out that parents' career orientation is reflected in children's interests and, consequently, co-shapes children's career-related decisions. A theory by A. Roe (Roe and Seligman, 1964) is centred on the relationship between genetic factors and environmental factors of education in the elementary family. The interaction between genetic and environmental factors co-shapes individuals' personalities and is also significant in shaping their career-related behaviour. L. Gottfredson (1996) highlights the importance of sexual typification of occupations, subjective notions about the reputation of a certain occupation, and perceptions of individuals' inclinations (and their primary environment) in early childhood as the key elements of education that impact the choice of profession at a later time. She has developed a cognitive map of occupations, based on the generally accepted stereotypes that people have of occupations in terms of the gender type (whether an occupation is perceived as typically male or typically female), their prominence in society (what socioeconomic status is attributed to a particular occupation in society) and the areas of work (in accordance with Holland's (1985) definition of occupational types).

Some researchers in this field have attempted to establish significant correlations in the attachment relationship or in the process of adolescents' becoming independent from their elementary family (e.g. Blustein, Prezioso and Schultheiss, 1995; Lee and Hughey, 2001). The researchers assumed that the way adolescents are attached to their parents can either support or hinder the process of exploring their career opportunities, which has been highlighted as an important step in career-related decisions and an important developmental task in adolescence (Ketterson and Blustein, 1997; Lee and Hughey, 2001). Adolescents who have developed a secure attachment to their parents explore different career paths more intensely, whereby they are supported by a sense of cohesion and security within their respective elementary family (Blustein et al., 1995).

Systemic theories of family emphasise the importance of all family relationships for individuals' career development. They assume that career decisions are closely linked to other adolescents developmental tasks, such as developing identity and psychological separation from the elementary family (Lopez and Andrews, 1987). Excessive involvement or dysfunctional relationships between parents and adolescents can inhibit the process of adolescents' independence and are reflected in career-related indecisiveness (Grotevant and Cooper, 1988).

These theories discuss the impact of the elementary family on individuals' lifelong career development from different angles, but mostly highlight similar family factors as those that have the greatest impact on individuals' careers, i.e. a suitable self-concept, positive interpersonal relationships, a sense of security, adequate autonomy and independence in adolescence.

## **Results of Empirical Studies into the Association between Factors of Elementary Family and Individuals' Career Development**

A number of studies into the association between family factors and individuals' career development are based on the attachment theory, ideas of adolescents' individualisation and psychological separation from the elementary family, systemic theory of family, or a combination of all these theories. Various authors have at least partially confirmed the hypothesis that a secure attachment to parents facilitates adolescents' process of exploring possible career paths and predicts their greater involvement and activity in the development of their own careers (e.g. Felsman and Blustein, 1999; Ketterson and Blustein, 1997; Lee and Hughey, 2001).

Various researchers in this field have focused their studies into the associations between family factors and individuals' career development on various aspects of career choices and career development and used them to measure the foregoing associations. One of the commonly used measures is career indecision. In various studies, the hypothesis was examined that career path decisions are easier to make for those individuals who are securely attached to their parents, but are at the same time sufficiently autonomous (e.g. Blustein, Walbridge, Friedlander and Palladino, 1991; Kinnier, Brigman and Noble, 1990; Tokar, Withrow, Hall and Moradi, 2003). The results of these studies suggest that adolescents' secure attachment to parents, a lower degree of conflict in the relationship between adolescents and their parents, absence of adolescents' feelings of guilt towards parents, appropriate psychological separation from the mother, and a higher degree of psychological connection with the father, are associated with adolescents' greater career determination and decisiveness. The results also show a high complexity of the impact of the elementary family on individuals' career development.

The second construct or measure of individuals' career development that was included in numerous studies into the impact of family on career development was perceived career decision-making self-efficacy and career search self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) defines self-efficacy as individuals' subjective beliefs about their own competencies to perform a certain task or a specific behaviour. Hargrove, M. G. Creagh and Burgess (2002) report that individuals whose elementary family emphasised the importance of expressing emotions and pointing out problems, the importance of achievements, and were focused on intellectual and cultural activities, were characterised by greater career self-efficacy. In the study, orientation towards intellectual and cultural activities was defined as the degree of family members' interest in political, intellectual and cultural activities in the immediate and wider environments (Whiston, 1996).

An important insight into the associations between the factors of elementary family and individuals' career development is also provided by some qualitative studies of this field. These offer an insight into the subjective experiencing of individuals - adolescents who are in the process of their own career search or a broader career development. The studies allow participants to use their own words to describe their views about the impact of the family on their career development, and thus reveal contents which quantitative data, in the form of a selection of the answers provided in questionnaires, do not cover. The samples of some of these studies consisted only of adolescents, and others included their parents. The studies were mostly conducted by means of semi-structured interviews with adolescents, or

adolescents and their parents in the form of conversations among them. D. E. P. Schultheiss, H. Kress, A. J. Manzi and J. M. Glasscock (2001) questioned young adults about their beliefs concerning the role of family relationships in adolescents' career development. The most significant family factor which, according to participants, influences the development of adolescents' careers is the emotional support provided by the family – the parents. The results of similar studies indicate that, in the opinion of adolescents and young adults, the most significant family factors that support adolescents' career development include encouragement, guidance, counselling and parents accepting adolescents' career choices. H. K. Paa and E. H. McWhirter (2000) asked adolescents aged on average 14.7 years to rank the (environmental) factors that significantly impact the development of their careers. Ranked first, and thus evaluated as the most important factor, were parents. These qualitative studies provide direct information about participants' views and support researchers' theses about the elementary family playing a very important role in the development of individuals' career.

Some researchers also focused their studies on researching the effectiveness of different career development-related intervention methods and models that involved parents, or parents and adolescents. S. Palmer and Cochran (1988) looked into the effectiveness of one such programme, which included both parents and adolescents, both of whom, during the course of the programme, attended various workshops, training programmes, lectures etc. The results of the study indicated that parents are most efficient in promoting the development of their children's career when they are part of a programme that guides them through the process in a very structured way.

In a wider career-related context in relation to the factors of the elementary family, some studies examined the impact of family on adolescents' education and career aspirations. A significant factor highlighted in these studies in association with the elementary family was parents' involvement in the process of children's education. Study results have indicated that a greater involvement of parents in their children's academic paths is associated with children's higher educational aspirations and greater confidence in their own abilities (Garg, Kauppi, Lewko and Urajnik, 2002; Juang, 2002). R. Garg et al. (2002) found parents' involvement to be a more important predictor of children's educational aspirations than the family's socio-economic status.

## **A Review of Studies and the Situation in Slovenia**

In Slovenia, no in-depth research into the effects of the elementary family's psychological factors on adolescents' career development has been conducted. However, various studies have been carried out that examined some of the family dynamics factors which have, in the previously mentioned foreign studies, proven to be significant in predicting the career development and career decisions of adolescents from these families.

In addition to adolescents' achievements in reading and scientific literacies, PISA 2006 also investigated the relationship of Slovenian adolescents with parents. The study results, which were collected on a sample of 6,595 15-year-olds, have shown that Slovenian 15-year-olds on average appraise their parents' relationship towards them as favourable. Eighty percent of 15-year-olds state that their parents are often, or very often, loving towards them. Approximately the same percentage of students also state that through their actions their



parents often show that they love them and that they can turn to their parents for help whenever they are in trouble. Slightly less than seventy percent of 15-year-olds replied that their parents often, or very often, praise them, and approximately sixty percent that parents often praise them in the presence of other people. In terms of the quality of relationships between children and parents, Slovenia is at the very top of European countries (Currie et al., 2004). A good relationship between adolescents and parents has also been indicated by the Youth 2010 study. According to the study data, 84.5 percent of all respondents assess their relationship with their mother as good or very good, whereas the percentage when it comes to the father is 76.4 percent. As many as 88.8 percent of respondents mostly or completely agree that their parents love them very much.

In terms of communication and children's participation (autonomy) in making important decisions, the results are likewise encouraging. Slightly more than 70 percent of respondents state that their parents frequently involve them in decisions about something that concerns them, about the same percentage state that their parents often, or very often, clarify their expectations towards them, and approximately 60 percent of 15-year-olds that parents listen to them even if they disagree with them. The results are consistent with the findings of previous studies conducted in Slovenia, which indicated that even in adolescence, children maintain a positive relationship with their parents (Puklek, 2001), that in most cases the relationship with parents in this period is not conflictual (Puklek Levpušček, 2001) and that parents also remain an important attachment figure for adolescents. The results of a Slovenian study (Puklek Levpušček, 2003) revealed that slightly more than 60 percent of 15-year-olds can be classified into the group with a moderate connection to their parents or with a highly harmonic relationship with parents. Two specific items of PISA 2006 data stand out in the sense of a less harmonious relationship with parents, i.e. that approximately 20 percent of 15-year-olds believe they cannot rely on the help of their parents when they are in trouble, and that about same percentage of respondents almost never, or only sometimes, feel loved by their own parents. The results of another previous study conducted in Slovenia (ibid.) indicate that approximately 13 percent of 15-year-olds expressed a cold relationship with their parents, while about 26 percent of 15-year-olds were, by the study author, classified into the group with an ambivalent relationship with parents, which is consistent with the results obtained in PISA 2006. Adolescents who have a cold relationship with their parents report lower emotional support from parents and stricter parental psychological control than adolescents with other individualisation profiles (a moderate connection with parents, a highly harmonious relationship with parents, an ambivalent relationship with parents); in the relationship with parents, they feel that their autonomy is threatened and perceive their own learning effectiveness as significantly lower than adolescents in the other three profiles (ibid.).

In view of the previously described theoretical and empirical principles of the association between factors of elementary family and individuals' career decisions or career development, it might, based on PISA results and other specified findings, be possible to conclude that the family environment of Slovenian adolescents has, in terms of relationships within the family, proven to be supportive in their career development. Perhaps parents might, in this field, need nothing more than a planned guidance programme that would provide them with further support in promoting the career development of their adolescent children.

The Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary and lower-secondary education (1999) include a recommendation concerning the organisation of at least

two educational or presentation meetings (in the final three-year cycle of children's education) for parents on the topic of career (vocational) guidance. During consultations for counsellors in schools within primary and lower-secondary education that were conducted in a number of towns around Slovenia as part of the project Career, the participating counsellors pointed out that in the foregoing meetings with parents the focus was mainly on providing information about the pupils' options for further education and informing parents about enrolment procedures for upper-secondary education. Within the framework of their duties, counsellors do not find any additional room for more extensive work with parents in promoting children's career development. During individual consultations with parents and children, they usually run out of time to make any in-depth analyses and provide parents with advice in terms of supporting their children's career development. They also report that parents are less interested in acquiring additional knowledge in relation to the promotion of their children's career development. Parents are, according to the counsellors' observations, mostly interested in obtaining information on the enrolment procedures and options, whereas if they are offered the opportunity to be provided with a wider scope of information regarding children's career development as part of lectures, few parents generally attend such events (Štremfel et al., 2015).

### **Proposals for Improving Support for Adolescents' Lifelong Career Development Depending on Family Factors**

Career development is certainly one of the important aspects of one's life, therefore it should be suitably supported and its optimum effectiveness should be facilitated depending on the characteristics of individuals' overall personal development. School is an institution that is in daily contact with all adolescents during the period of early adolescence, when career development begins. In working with adolescents, the school is also in daily contact with their parents, and is thus probably the most influential institution where parents can be presented with a means of enabling their children the best possible development of their career paths. The most convincing message about the significance of career development for parents would certainly be a more noticeable integration of career development, or of a broader concept of personal development, in the school curriculum. A school subject with a central aim of personal development that would, within school from Year 1 onwards, be dedicated to pupils learning about themselves, their peculiarities, knowledge, skills, interests and aspirations, and would, in the final three year-cycle, be expanded and also more centred around learning and looking into adolescents' career aspirations and goals, would clearly communicate the importance of the development of this field for individuals' life to parents and the wider social environment. During lessons, children should be given time to get to know and develop themselves, which is something that they, according to counsellors in schools within primary and lower-secondary education, are lacking. In answering the questions about the career development-related activities that they would want to do with pupils more frequently and to a larger extent, the counsellors have, during the consultations organised as part of the project Career, mostly pointed out systematic activities to support children's personal development, self-realisation etc. Both children and parents would, in the context of this particular school subject, become aware of the importance of personal and career development for individuals'

lives and would, in terms of importance, place it alongside the knowledge of mathematics, the Slovenian language and other school subjects. Indirectly, parents would, through their children, also become familiar with the contents of the subject. In the lower years of primary education (and sometimes even later), most parents follow the learning content that their children learn in school to at least some degree, help the children learn, do homework and prepare various school projects. This type of parental participation could also be an opportunity for teachers of such a specific school subject, as parents would be involved in following children's personal and career development. In view of the previously described findings of studies into the impact of family factors on the development of individuals' career path, it would be advisable to also think about the means of collaboration between the school counselling service and parents. As indicated in some studies (e.g. Palmer and Cochran, 1988), for parents, the models of education on the development of children's career turned out to be most effective when they were systematic and structured. In developing and implementing such models of education for parents, counsellors in Slovenian schools could also be aided by experts from other institutions that deal with career development, such as employment services, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) etc. Quality programmes aimed at raising parents' awareness about the importance of career development, the impact of family relationships on children's career development, and the possible forms of support for their children's career development within the family would, at the level of the entire society, contribute to better informed career development of adolescents and young adults.

## **Conclusion**

In adolescence, developmental tasks include career planning and development of a career path. Theories of adolescence pay special attention to this task (Erikson, 1966). During the process of career development, adolescents need to become more aware of, and identify, their interests and competencies, align them with the opportunities offered by the labour market, and gradually develop them into career preferences (Super, Savickas and Super 1996). The task of adults who steer children's development, i.e. both parents and teachers, as well as school counsellors and also decision-makers who shape state educational policies and other experts in the field of career guidance, is to provide children with conditions under which they will be able to perform the developmental task as well as they can. The main task of parents in this regard is to provide adolescents with emotional support, advise them if necessary and ultimately support their career choices. The task of the school and the state in this context is to allow sufficient time and opportunities within the education system to this development task, which is an important part of personal development. The task of the school and the state is also, during the course of this process, to provide support and advice to parents who need either help or only some guidance. To raise the awareness of parents about the importance of their role in children's career development in a more systematic and planned way, it would be necessary to support counsellors – both in terms of organisation and contents – in developing and implementing a systematic programme aimed at raising parents' awareness and educating them. In different studies, only systematic educational programmes for parents have, in fact, proved to be effective in encouraging family support to children's career development. To be

able to prepare a structured and systematic educational programme for parents, it is necessary to have a clear vision and a developed strategy both at a state level as well as at the level of individual schools.

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## CONCLUSION

### CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON STUDENTS' CAREER, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AS A CHALLENGE IN DEVELOPING EDUCATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

URŠKA ŠTREMPEL AND MIHA LOVŠIN

The scientific monograph presents diverse views, approaches and challenges in relation to the implementation of lifelong career guidance in contemporary society, at European and national levels. Some distinctive perspectives on conceptual perception of lifelong career guidance in contemporary society are presented, as are a variety of approaches that may - based on scientific analyses of data acquired as part of international comparative assessment studies and other education-related studies - prove a valuable contribution to successful implementation of lifelong career guidance, although they remain largely underdeveloped or overlooked in the Slovenian educational space. The focus is primarily on the connection between career, personal and social development of children and adolescents. The main aim of the monograph was to elaborate perspectives and approaches relevant in terms of different scientific disciplines, while also endeavouring for these perspectives and approaches to possibly serve as a platform for deriving practical implications for the development of education policies and practices presented in the latter part of the Conclusion.<sup>31</sup> Special attention was devoted to the practical implications of the key findings presented in the monograph chapters for improving the Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in primary and lower-secondary education in the sections on Vocational Guidance and Personal and Social Development, the Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services in upper-secondary education in the sections on Vocational Guidance and Counselling for Personal and Social development, as well as to preparing other operational documents, contents, and activities that might contribute to successful implementation of lifelong career guidance in Slovenian primary and secondary education.

Transparency and coherence of goals are the key factors in the successful implementation of public policies, which stakeholders in the field of certain public policy are to follow (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984). Of key importance in inter-sectorial policies, such as lifelong career guidance, is for these goals to be harmonised across individual sectors (general education, vocational education, university education, adult education, employment, social inclusion) that are involved in its development and implementation.<sup>32</sup>

A brief overview of strategic, legal and operational documents in the field of education in the Introduction reveals an inconsistent definition of lifelong career guidance in the Slovenian

<sup>31</sup> D. Gravina and Lovšin (2012) point out that the success of implementation of lifelong career guidance depends on a number of interrelated factors. Although the manner of its implementation, as expected, depends heavily on the cultural and social context and the traditions of individual countries, they underline four aspects based on which it is possible to shed light on its successful implementation. The relationship between the key findings of individual monograph chapters and these aspects are presented in the latter part of the Conclusion.

<sup>32</sup> Hooley (2014: 22) points out that the participation of different sectors in the implementation of lifelong career guidance can be ensured in different ways: by establishing a national co-ordination body; by developing a national lifelong career guidance strategy; by establishing a service that guarantees the development and implementation of lifelong career guidance at a national level.

educational space, both in terms of terminology use and its contents and goals. A lack of coherence at the level of policy and other operational documents relating to this field in Slovenia is also reflected in an inconsistent perception of lifelong career guidance at the level of education practices. The description of contents which counsellors deal with, and associate with lifelong career guidance (Štremfel et al., 2015), indicates that there is a connection between the contents of students' personal and social development and their career development. This mostly involves contents that focus on self-awareness, development of students' personality traits and identification of strengths required for a certain profession and, to a lesser extent, on the acquisition of decision-making skills, transition skills and flexibility in following one's career path in a contemporary labour market. Thus, the highly diverse understanding of the contents of lifelong career guidance in education practices does not fully and consistently encompass all of its contemporary concepts – career management skills. Lack of terminological and conceptual clarity in understanding the concepts related to lifelong career guidance is also reflected in the diverse goals pursued by counsellors in implementing it in primary and lower-secondary education. An obstacle to successful implementation of lifelong career guidance commonly pointed out by counsellors is lack of (uniform) goals of actors at a school level (management, teachers, counsellors, students, parents) and at a wider system level.

In the first monograph chapter, Miha Lovšin notes that although there are several projects and their accompanying career guidance activities in the Slovenian educational space that address important questions of contemporary society this field is not systematically regulated as a whole. The Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services, that would contain modern career guidance concepts, have significant connecting potential in solving current social challenges and should therefore be devoted special attention.<sup>33</sup> As has previously been pointed out, clarity and coherence of strategic, legislative and operational documents are prerequisites for successful implementation of public policies; in updating the Programme guidelines for the work of counselling services it is therefore deemed advisable to ensure their coherence by means of strategic documents (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2007; 2011) in those sections that relate to suitable conceptual understanding and the content of lifelong career guidance, as well as to the definition of the role the counselling service plays in it. Since these strategic documents summarise the definitions of lifelong career guidance of the Council of the EU (2004), in reference to which some authors (e.g. Bengtsson, 2011; Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2012) have previously pointed out that they allow a particular understanding of the significance of lifelong career guidance in contemporary society, the need for a suitable conceptual understanding of these definitions in the Slovenian educational space has proven to be of particular relevance. Simplified acceptance of

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<sup>33</sup> T. Bezić (2014) believes that if lifelong career guidance is not integrated into various educational activities within schools, no substantial improvements or modernisation will be achieved in this field. The school-development documents prescribed by acts and regulations, wherein the objectives and activities from the field of lifelong career guidance could be integrated, are, in her opinion, as follows: a) development and operational plans for school work; b) annual school work plans and education plans; c) teachers' annual and individual lesson plans for compulsory and elective subjects; d) class work plans – class teachers, students and teachers; e) counselling services' annual work plans; f) implementation plans of activity days; g) implementation plans of all extra-curricular activities; h) plans of co-operation between schools and parents or the local or wider environment. Based on the findings of an analysis of lifelong career guidance implementation in primary/lower-secondary education (National Education Institute, 2012) she proposes the introduction of i) a plan/programme for implementation of career guidance at a school level.

definitions of lifelong career guidance developed at an EU level causes concern and brings to the forefront the need for an in-depth critical conceptual consideration of these definitions at an EU level, and the need to consider developing own definitions and understandings of lifelong career guidance at a national level. In doing so, it is advisable to rely on a wide range of understandings of lifelong career guidance, proceeding from theoretical frameworks and results of studies conducted so far.

Important starting points for such deliberations are, in the second chapter, highlighted by Igor Bijuklič, who points out the need to touch upon the empowerment of young people in a different way to that which is assumed by career guidance concepts. In his opinion the first step in doing so means no longer regarding people as merely adaptable individuals and empowering them to function on their own initiative and using their own discretion, which includes the ability to disrupt the dominant processes of what already exists or initiate something new. Another point noticeable in his deliberations is rejection of the singular treatment of people who supposedly compete with one another and are focused only on their own success. In short, this constitutes moving from 'people who are merely responding' to 'the ability to act' and from 'singular' to 'communal'. In the third chapter of the monograph, Polona Kelava points out that career empowerment may be an answer to the impermanence of professions and the labour market, to the volatility which young people have to deal with. For school counsellors, who bear their share of responsibility for preparing young people for their paths of life, it will, according to Kelava, be easier to work with young people and they will be more successful doing so if they are allowed to work on self-concept, independence, autonomy, responsibility, attitude and disposition, which will also facilitate making decisions about the choice of education for one's first profession, even though it may not be the last one.

Another aspect of successful implementation of public policies discussed in the monograph, with regard to the approaches of successful career guidance, represents coherence in actions of actors that implement public policies.<sup>34</sup> According to Slovenian legal and operational documents, in implementing lifelong career guidance, the counselling service must work with different actors at school level (with the management, teachers, parents) and from other sectors (the Employment Service of Slovenia). The importance of co-operation and co-ordinated activities of different actors for the successful support of children's and adolescents' career, personal and social development was also emphasised by counsellors as part of focus groups (Štremfel et al., 2015). In the monograph, this importance is illuminated in greater detail in two chapters. In Chapter 7, Tina Rutar Leban concludes that the focus of counsellors in Slovenian primary and lower-secondary level schools in working with parents in the field of children's career guidance is mainly on providing information about enrolment options and procedures. According to the described findings of research into the impact of family factors on the development of individuals' career paths, Rutar Leban believes it would be advisable to also give some thought to the means of collaboration between school counsellors and parents. As indicated by some previous studies, education models on the development of children's careers proved to be most effective for parents when they were systematic and structured. To raise parents' awareness about the importance of their role in the development of their

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<sup>34</sup> The European Commission (2001) highlights the importance of respecting the principles of openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and coherence for good (effective and democratic) implementation of public policies in the White Paper on European Governance.



children's career in a more systematic and planned way, it would therefore be necessary to support counsellors in developing and implementing such a systematic programme for raising awareness and educating parents both in terms of organisation as well as content. A well developed and organised programme for raising parents' awareness about the importance of career development, the impact of family relationships on children's career development, and the possible means of supporting children's career development within the family, would contribute to a more conscious career development of adolescents and young adults at the level of the entire society. In the sixth chapter of the monograph, Tina Vršnik Perše points out that different information (including information about the choice of school and profession) can be given meaning only on the basis of developed social and emotional competencies which students can develop with the support of their significant adults (parents, teachers, educators), i.e. based on the teaching and learning of these competencies and based on the transfer as a process of transferring emotions, experiences, views and principles. As teachers have, in relation to the development of social and emotional competencies in the Slovenian educational space, indicated a certain level of uncertainty, it would, for the purposes of developing social and emotional competencies as a foundation for the development of career management skills of children and adolescents, be advisable to provide the support of counselling services.

With regard to the co-operation of actors in successful implementation of lifelong career guidance at a wider systemic level it is necessary to also highlight the role of the scientific community and research. Watts and Sultana (2004: 111) point out that there is a great research gap when it comes to explaining the role that lifelong career guidance plays in individuals' personal development, as well as when it comes to its contribution to social cohesion and economic efficiency of modern societies. Although some rare studies have revealed the positive effects of lifelong career guidance on the development of individuals and society as a whole, an especially crucial requirement demonstrated the need for conducting large-scale longitudinal studies in this field. In relation to this, Hooley (2014: 10, 11) emphasises the added value of plural and interdisciplinary research. Lifelong career guidance does not occupy its own central place in scientific studies and is as a topic (specifically) addressed as part of various scientific disciplines (educational sciences, psychology, sociology, organisational and economic sciences). In light of this and the endeavours of the European Commission (2007) to develop evidence-based education policies, it would be advisable to support the development of lifelong career guidance in the Slovenian educational space through some fundamental and applicative (interdisciplinary) research and enhanced co-operation of the scientific community with policy makers and practitioners, and also to devote more systematic attention to this field. At an EU level, these efforts are, to some extent, being realised by the ELGPN Network.

The importance of scientific research on career-related decisions of young people takes centre stage in the fourth chapter of the monograph. In relation to learning mathematics, Mojca Štraus notes that the vast majority of young people in Slovenia perceive school learning and work as beneficial and useful for life in adulthood, however, the levels of motivation of Slovenian students for learning mathematics with the aim of achieving better study and career opportunities are lower than the average levels of motivation in OECD countries. The author highlights the need for further research into the correlation between the factor of extrinsic motivation and other factors such as intrinsic motivation, perceived self-

efficiency and others, and establishes a correlation between these factors in a joint achievement interpretation model. Mojca Štraus highlights the benefits of additional international comparisons, particularly comparisons with those countries whose model Slovenia aspires to follow in developing the guidelines of school counselling work. It is important to use these types of studies as a means of revealing potential deficits in achieving non-cognitive educational goals, which facilitate improving the guidelines of school counselling work, both at a system level for the entire population of students, and in individual education programmes.

In the monograph, special attention was also devoted to a suitable (organisation- and content-related) context of implementation of lifelong career guidance and thus, career, personal and social development of children and adolescents in school. Counselling staff (in Štremfel et al., 2015) believe that insufficient attention is devoted to these contents, which results from the limited time and performance-orientated nature of Slovenian schools, which often disregard the emotional and social development of children. The contents of personal and social development as an integral part of lifelong career guidance are not completely overlooked in lifelong career guidance practices, however, they fail to include all contemporary concepts of career management skills. One of the obstacles is a lack of systemic organisation when it comes to integrating the contents of personal and social development across all levels of primary/lower-secondary education, and their connection to children's and adolescents' career development. A major challenge posed in this respect is a continuous exploration of these contents which shows a logical connection between the three-year cycles. Pupils are not systematically introduced to the contents of personal, social and career development in the first two three-year cycles of primary/lower-secondary education, therefore, during the third cycle it is often difficult to attract their attention and motivation for the contents of lifelong career guidance. The participating counsellors have noticed that in the final three-year cycle, pupils lack skills and terminology from this field. It would therefore also make sense to integrate and connect the contents of personal and social development with the field of lifelong career guidance in the revised programme guidelines for the work of counselling services.<sup>35</sup>

In the seventh chapter, Tina Rutar Leban points out that an appropriate approach at school level would be introducing a subject whose central aim is personal development. That subject would, within school from Year 1 onwards, be dedicated to learning about oneself, one's peculiarities, knowledge, skills, interests and aspirations and would, in the final three year-cycle, be expanded and also more centred around learning and looking into adolescents' career aspirations and goals, thereby clearly communicating the importance of the development of this field for individuals' life to parents and the wider social environment.

In the fifth chapter, Alenka Gril highlights that the objectives in the field of adolescents' personal and social development can be achieved through systematic and targeted promotion and participation of all students in the learning process and school activities: it is essential to

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<sup>35</sup> B. Rupar (2014) lists several possible approaches for a more intense integration of lifelong career guidance in the school environment, including a) career guidance as a cross-curricular content included in compulsory subjects; integration of aims and contents of different subjects; comprehensive, in-depth knowledge; b) achieving the aims of lifelong career guidance on the basis of activities in other subjects, for instance in civic education (lower-secondary education), in sociology and psychology (upper-secondary education), in class meetings; c) compulsory elective subjects in lower-secondary education and compulsory elective contents in upper-secondary education; d) a reinforced part of counsellors' programme.

develop an inclusive climate within individual classes and the school, and to build learning communities, to introduce active learning methods, to promote collaborative learning and develop self-regulated learning strategies. Based on these mechanisms, school classes and school life will provide adolescent pupils and students with positive experiences for the development of competencies, autonomy and the sense of belonging and encourage strengthening their internal resolve to actively face the challenges of the future. In developing an inclusive education practice, the counselling service could take on the role of a support structure for school teachers.

The findings of the monograph confirm the indications of the National Reform Programme (2013–2014), according to which career counselling in Slovenia should be provided with some quality content and be suitably integrated into the education system. The perspectives and approaches presented in the monograph constitute scientifically substantiated implications for upgrading and improving education policies and practices in individual segments of the implementation of lifelong career guidance, and provide a significant insight into the various aspects of its system regulation. By focusing on the contents of children's and adolescents' personal, social and career development, they are not the sole foundation for complete systemic regulation of this field, however, they do highlight diverse, yet significant, open challenges related to its regulation in the Slovenian educational space.

Modern concepts of lifelong career guidance listed in the definitions of EU institutions, emphasise the importance of connection of individuals' personal, social, and career development.<sup>36</sup> Due to diverse meanings of career development in the various theories, some authors (Bengtsson, 2011; Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2012) point out that in such definitions a particular understanding of the role of lifelong career guidance is noticeable as a mechanism for young people's adapting to the labour market, which casts aside education of autonomous and responsible citizens. As stated by Gaber (2008), in the past in Slovenia there was no adequate understanding of the contradictory and simultaneously reciprocal nature of instrumental (work-centred) education and non-instrumental (knowledge- and personal fulfilment-centred) education. In the future, it would therefore be necessary to develop education that is appropriate and mutually actualises both of these two dimensions and can be adapted to the requirements of the global labour market, while fully taking into account the experience and the knowledge that are of crucial importance for individuals' personal and social development. It seems that merely accepting European definitions without their conceptual reflections, or passively rejecting them because they do not correspond to the national context, is not the right path to take.

A major challenge with regard to the conceptual integration of lifelong career guidance into the Slovenian educational space remains how to suitably connect the personal, social and career development of children and adolescents and, thus, contribute to the search for the good in contemporary society.

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<sup>36</sup> Watts in Sultana (2004: 109, 110) note that there are three categories of policy objectives of lifelong career guidance: a) the objectives of learning, including the effectiveness of education and training systems and their connection to the labour market; b) the objectives of the labour market, including improving the relationship between supply and demand in the labour market and adapting to changes in the labour market, and c) the objectives of social justice, including equal opportunities and promotion of social inclusion. They point out that the challenge faced by all countries in implementing lifelong career guidance is how to achieve and maintain a balance between these objectives.

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