European Research Agenda in the Context of Career Guidance & Counselling
„Developing a reflexive research field“

Aims of the research agenda
Who defines what research shall focus on?
Freedom of research – romantic or functional?
Need of having a shared position?
Need for Reflexivity!

Goals of a research agenda

1. Providing a foundation for cooperation in innovative research
2. Promote research cooperation
3. Offering orientation for research-based training
4. Raising the profile of our discipline
5. Becoming more visible!
Reflexivity in the research field

Shared description of the research in the field of CGC

Emerging and pressuring problems in society, practice and science

Short introduction in the 6 subfields

- Based on the mapping of existing research and discussions in Padova (1st Summer School) and NICE Conference in Canterbury 2014
- Colleagues from the scientific board has written descriptions for the 6 sub fields of the research agenda
  - Individuals and Career (Laura Nota, Padova)
  - Counsellors and Professionalism (Valérie Cohen-Scali, Paris)
  - Evidence and Outcome (Jérôme Rossier, Lausanne)
  - Interventions and Processes (Peter Weber, Heidelberg & Rachel Mulvey, East London)
  - Organizational Context (Johannes Katsarov, Konstanz)
  - Societal Context (Rie Thomsen, Southern Denmark)
A process to develop a research agenda

Figure 2.2 Five Levels of Change

Scharmer, O. Theory U (2009)
Identified research topics for the agenda

- Career-related environment of individuals (society, economy, institutions)
- Career-related challenges of diverse citizens
- Professionalism and competence of career professionals
- Processes and interventions in career guidance and counselling
- Outcomes and effects of career guidance and counselling interventions
- Organization-related environment (society, economy, regulation, finance)
- Organization of career services (management + structures)
Upcoming publication:


Individuals and Career

Following aspects are highlighted:

- Individuals have to deal with fast change influencing their live and career (e.g. urbanization, aging population, migration, technology and fast change of knowledge, socio economic conditions)
- Relevance of theories that are able to capture complexity and multiple influences
- Career theory has to capture complexity and multiple changes in individuals lives including such integrating contextual knowledge into understanding of career problems
- Specific problems and challenges for individuals should be focuses (e.g. negative feelings, discomfort, depression)
Individuals and career

✧ Further development of career theories and concepts for career interventions (e.g. life design, career construction, systemic approaches) have to recognize and build upon this situation.
✧ To challenge and deconstruct the career term itself - “livelihood” or “decent work” open up relevant perspectives for research.
✧ Research on career and work should not longer be isolated from other life contexts (e.g. in terms of work-life-balance or changing work-values of the next generation).
✧ To investigate about groups of vulnerable people with special and often multiple needs.
✧ Technological aspects and new media should be taken into account as very influencing factors for the individuals career & life planning.

Counsellors and Professionalism

Following aspects are highlighted:
✧ Also the research question regarding professionalism and competence of practitioners is strongly linked to environmental change as
  • emerging „liquid structures“ of society
  • new demands for individuals in the world of work
  • development of internet and new technological
✧ This context causes a feeling of insecurity and uncertainty about the future and involves to change research paradigms and guidance interventions, and reconsider the skills and practices of career counselors.
Counsellors and professionalism

- **The relevance of different paradigms in practice**, i.e. vocational guidance, career counselling, coaching, advocating, construction.
- The adaptation of practitioners **needs of diverse target groups** and their life and career-perspectives research should.
- Identification of **professional skills used/needed in diverse formats of practice** (e.g. online and in social media, in community work or companies).
- Understanding the components of the **counsellors professional identity** and representations (including different levels of professionalism and voluntary work).

Evidence and Outcome

Following aspects are highlighted:

- Several meta-analyses have shown that vocational guidance, career counseling, and more generally **career interventions are effective**
- Very few studies can be found about **long-term effectiveness**, change processes, or with whom which type of intervention should be used, for example.
- Evidence and outcome research should go **deeper and broader into this issue**, e.g. measures for effects on psychological factors, on learning and behavior as well as for realized career steps are needed.
Evidence and outcomes

- **Fit to use instruments** for valid outcome measurement in practice
- Development of **large-scale, multi-centric, controlled trials**.
- **Qualitative and mixed method** approaches for better understanding of the “why” of effective.
- Studies to **investigate how change is „induced“** during counselling interventions.
- **Monitoring of process and input-factors** within outcome studies.
- Awareness of **different interest-/targetgroups interpreting results** (e.g. (self) critical discussion of concepts like „evidence“).

Interventions and Processes

Following aspects are highlighted:

- Career Guidance and Counselling are **very diverse and complex intervention processes** realized in diverse formats, one to one, in groups, face to face, over distance or integrated in social media environments
- Process research is about **observing and understanding what is happening within an intervention**
- One specific and crucial point in career guidance/counselling is the **interplay of career theory (what is a career, what is influencing careers) and appropriate interventions**
- In times of flexible, dynamic and risky and hybrid careers this question is **empirically crucial** for inventing new forms of interventions
Interventions and Processes

- Process-oriented empirical research should comprise more - *process-analyses* – what is happening within interventions? – what is reaching the clients?
- *Influencing factors on guidance and counselling processes* – what works, what makes the difference, what disturbs?
- Examination how methods like *assessment instruments, test and related measures, both qualitative and quantitative* are *integrated* in the work
- Inventing and experimenting with *new forms*, e.g. more non-rational forms of guidance and counselling

Organizational Context

Following aspects are highlighted:

- The organisation of career services, including their immediate *cultural* and *physical environment*, the *organisational goals*, services and available resources, as well as the organisational procedures, culture and structures, *play an important role in determining the quality, outcome and meaning of career guidance and counselling*.
- There is a need for *meso-level research which considers the setup and impact of career services* and the way they are *organised and managed*.
- The interrelation of organisational questions with research on the *quality, effectiveness* and/or outcomes of career interventions is obvious.
Organizational context

✧ Effectiveness of organisational processes, structures and leadership for different career interventions.
✧ The context, culture and social embeddedness of services (e.g. in different societies, political context, in companies or communities).
✧ Relevance and fit for purpose of different organizational designs (i.e. financial and legal conditions, privatization, social enterprises).
✧ Implementation of media and technology used for career interventions.
✧ Cooperation and networking, integration of services and conflicting interests within supplying organizations.

Societal Context

Following aspects are highlighted:

▪ C&G interventions are embedded into social contexts in diverse ways. The persons as well as the career guidance professionals, services and researchers are situated in specific social context locally and globally.

Following aspects and research themes have been collected:

▪ How does legislation impact on change (e.g. of institutions) and vice versa how do change in practices impact the legislation and policy development?
▪ What are the not intended effects of policy choices (in CGC and/or other policy areas) e.g. to the CGC professions? And what are the ways to affect policy development and the assessments methods used?
Societal context

- **Impact of political agendas**, economic drivers and political regulations/organization on guidance provision.
- Ways to **affect policy development** on regional, national, international level.
- **Professionalization strategies** for CGC by country, by regions, Europe and abroad, in parallel professions.
- Learning from contemporary **diagnosis of the societal context** – work and labour, different generations, lifestyles/milieus and life circumstances (for instance pre- and post-economic crises).
- Possibilities for **career interventions to impact on social change** (critically and understood as class, gender and race).

Perspectives

How can you use the research agenda?

- Inspiration – what can be **my focus** of research or practice?
- Reflection – how does „my own theme“ or “my practice” **contribute and interact** with the other perspectives?
- Reaction – debating of or **adding issues** to the agenda!

The agenda shall be open, dynamic, hybrid ... and hopefully evolving!
Further perspectives?
Your questions?

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