



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



- UNESCO Chair on
- Lifelong Guidance and Counseling,
- University of Wrocław
- Institute of Pedagogy



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Florence – 2015 June 4 & 5

*How can career and life designing interventions
contribute to a fair and sustainable development and
to the implementation of decent work over the world?*

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*How can career and life designing interventions contribute
to a fair and sustainable development
and to the implementation of decent work over the world?*

“*Life designing interventions*” = a broad category of interventions, which includes: vocational guidance, career education, career counseling, counseling for life design, etc.

Organization:

Key notes presentations:

Today at 11:00. Dr. Shyamal Majumdar (Head of UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre, Paris, France): *Guidance and counseling as a strategy to fulfill Post-2015 Agenda*

Tomorrow at 09:00. Pr. David Blustein (Boston College): *Which career and life designing interventions to develop decent work in a fair and sustainable world economy?*

Organization (continued):

Group discussions (in this room):

Today at 12:15. *Symposium* moderated by Pr. Marco Depolo (University of Bologna) & Annamaria Di Fabio: *From research to policy*

Today at 17:30. A *round table* moderated by Paola Binetti (Campus Biomedico University of Rome), Mario Fulcheri (AIP Clinical and Dynamics Psychology, University of Chieti) & Annamaria Di Fabio (AIP for Organizations): with different Italian colleagues involved in the field of career guidance and life design counselling in Italy will intervene.

Two series of workshops (this afternoon and tomorrow morning)

During these workshops, participants will work on either one of the two following questions:

- *How to train practitioners, implement research and build up interventions contributing to a fair and sustainable human development?*
- *How to train practitioners, implement research and build up interventions contributing to develop decent work all over the world?*

Organization (continued):

- Each workshop consists in a group of 12-15 participants with a moderator and a reporter.
- During these workshops, some participants will provide short presentations contributing to the debates of the group.
- *Our dream: that each workshop functions as a dialogue between participants and not as a series of lectures followed by a few questions.*

The reporters' role is to prepare a report and present it during the final session – tomorrow afternoon – about the major proposals, ideas, etc., developed during the workshop.

In particular: those implying to develop a work in common.

This conference's final session will include a presentation of the UNESCO chair 2016 conference in Wroclaw, Poland (June 6-8), by Dr. Violetta Podgorna, who is in charge of this chair's administrative manager.

Organization (continued)

This next year conference of the UNESCO Chair will be a part of the big event:
“Wroclaw - 2106 European Cultural Capital”

We indeed hope that the work we begin now will result in *the creation of networks of colleagues willing to develop some inquiries, tools, questionnaires, or new forms of interventions, etc., which could contribute to the solving of the big issue we deal with:*

*How can career and life designing interventions contribute
to a fair and sustainable development
and to the implementation of decent work over the world?*

If this dream comes true, we hope that *these networks of colleagues* – which would have been formed here – *will present their first results in a year from now at the Wroclaw conference.*

The lists of the participants in each workshop and its location are displayed in the program

In addition:

Two meetings are opened to anyone interested.

- About *an international research on the “meaning of work”*. It takes place *Saturday* at 9.00, in the Altana Room of the Department of Education and Psychology, University of Florence, via Laura 48.
- About the *creation of a UNESCO – UNITWIN networks of Universities* which want to build up an official partnership under the UNESCO auspices in the field of lifelong career counselling and education.
- The creation of such a network implies the writing of a common project and the filling out of applications which must be submitted to UNESCO by the authorities of the involved institutions and their state administration. This meeting takes place *tomorrow at 17:30, Aula Magna* of the Department of Education and Psychology, University of Florence, via Laura 48.

What might be the final purposes (or the ends) of the interventions for helping people to design their careers and lives?

Introduction

Different categories of factors play a role in the development of interventions for helping people to design their careers and lives.

One these factors are *the kinds of design issues of lives and careers that people face.*

These issues are themselves contingent on:

- *The societies' organization where they appear.*
- *The forms of labor organization and of youth socialization (education and training) that predominate in these societies.*

Therefore, people must face design issues of lives and careers that differ, according to the type of societies they live in and according to the most current forms of organization of labour and education, which exist in these societies.

A second category of factors play a role in the development of interventions for helping people to design their lives and careers:

It is *the importance given to scientific knowledge in their development.*

This importance can vary.

But, one generally thinks that it is better to construct some research questions on the basis of the design issues of lives and careers that people face and to produce scientific knowledge about the involved processes and factors.

This knowledge should result in the development of interventions that are more likely to reach their objectives.

The *definition of their objectives is another important category of factors that play a role in the development of the interventions for helping people design their lives and careers.*

Their general objective is easy to outline:

They aim at helping people to cope with the issues they face. As a consequence, their general objectives are to support them in this endeavor.

But when one wants to come to a more precise definition of these objectives, the problem becomes prickly.

Indeed:

- *The precise objectives of these interventions are contingent on the definition of their final or ultimate purposes.*

Therefore:

- *What might be the final purposes (or the ends) of the interventions for helping people to design their careers and lives?*

1. Objectives and final purposes

The *objectives* of these interventions are *to help clients to cope with the design issues of life and career they face*.

The *objectives* of such interventions are *to help clients cope with the design issues of life and career they face*.

Example: the general objective of vocational guidance in early 20th century – within the professional work system – was to help clients find the occupations or the professions that suited them best (to choose their vocation, Parsons, 1909).

But such a general objective can take different meanings, depending on how it is interpreted in the context of broader views – as the economic ones, the sociological ones, the anthropological ones, etc. – about the final purposes of such interventions.

CHOOSING A VOCATION

BY

FRANK PARSONS, Ph.D.

LATE DIRECTOR OF THE VOCATION BUREAU AND BREADWINNERS' INSTITUTE, CIVIC SERVICE HOUSE, BOSTON; AUTHOR OF "YOUTH AND THE WORLD," "THE CITY FOR THE PEOPLE," ETC., ETC.



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Thus, “*helping people find the occupations or professions that suit them*” can mean *helping them find their places in the world of work as it is currently organized and in the society as it functions*, with its current inequalities and differences between people.

According to this view, such interventions are intended to ensure an optimal industrial productivity within the context of an identical – or homologous – reproduction of the existing organizational and social structures.

Differently, *this same objective* of “helping people find the occupations or professions that suit them” *can be interpreted as helping them maximize their potentials so as to promote not only a better economic growth, but also a development of fairer societies and of new forms of work organizations*, which enable workers to develop their potential at work and fulfill themselves through their work.

The first type of ultimate purposes corresponds to *a socially conservative perspective, matching the belief that the current social and industrial organizations are the best possible ones.*

The second type corresponds to *a socially progressive view based on the belief that some deep social reforms are needed to enable everyone to live the lives they considered worth living.*

These two perspectives, I just evoked, gave rise to *intense ideological debates at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century, both in the United State and Europe* (Gysbers, 2010; Huteau & Lautrey, 1979).

Of course, *a support for either one of these views was not without consequences as to the nature of the vocational guidance interventions...*

Thus, *the conservative view led to the implementation of forms of guidance, which aimed at persuading the clients to stay in the social milieu where they were born.*

Example: Fernand Mauvezin, a major representative of the conservative current in France, summarized as follows – in a Handbook for guidance counselors - what he would say to a very brilliant, but lowly born young man who would dream to go to college:

“We told him: ‘Let's assume you'll succeed. You'll be a high-school teacher, or even a college professor. Your father and your mother will still be the crude peasants of your childhood. Most likely, your brothers and sisters will be servants. Despite all your care for them, they probably won't forget that you were given everything when they got nothing.

You will get married. As a tenured professor, you will probably marry an educated and rich girl. Won't you feel uneasy when you show her your birthplace and introduce her to your father, your mother, and all your kin of such a humble standing?

If you have a child, your wife probably won't let him play with his peasant cousins, whose rude manners could damage his beautiful clothes and teach him bad habits” (Mauvezin, quoted by Huteau, 2009).

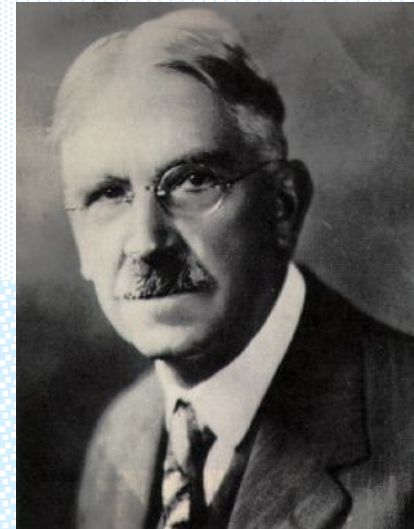
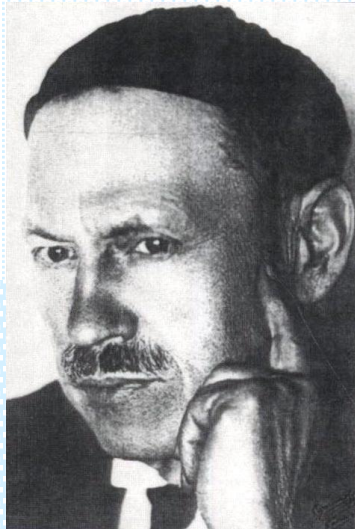


In contrast, social reformers developed interventions that aimed at stimulating in everyone a belief in a possible development of their potentialities so as to achieve something in life.

According to these reformer's views, such a personal development would result in a fairer society and a better life for everyone.

As a consequence, they ***campaigned for the development of education for all (especially a girls' access to school), for the development of better working conditions, for the implementation of a labor law, etc.***

Among these reformers were many scientific figures of the time such as Alfred Binet (left picture), Edouard Toulouse (middle left picture), Edouard Claparède, Faria de Vasconcelos (midel right picture), Adolfo Lima, John Dewey (right picture), Felix Adler, Edward L.Thorndike, G. Stanley Hall, etc.



2. What might be the final purposes (the “ends”) of the current interventions for helping people design their careers and lives?

Today, the major objectives of the current interventions for helping people to design their careers and lives are quite clear.

These interventions *mix in various proportions three broad objectives. These are to:*

- *(1) help people gather relevant information,*
- *(2) guide them in their employability development and to*
- *(3) counsel them for the design of their lives.*

But the topic of the final purposes of these interventions’ objectives is rarely (if ever?) debated...

It is as if we tend to consider nowadays, without really thinking about it, that the interventions for helping people to design their careers and lives have a dual final purpose: an economic one and a human one.

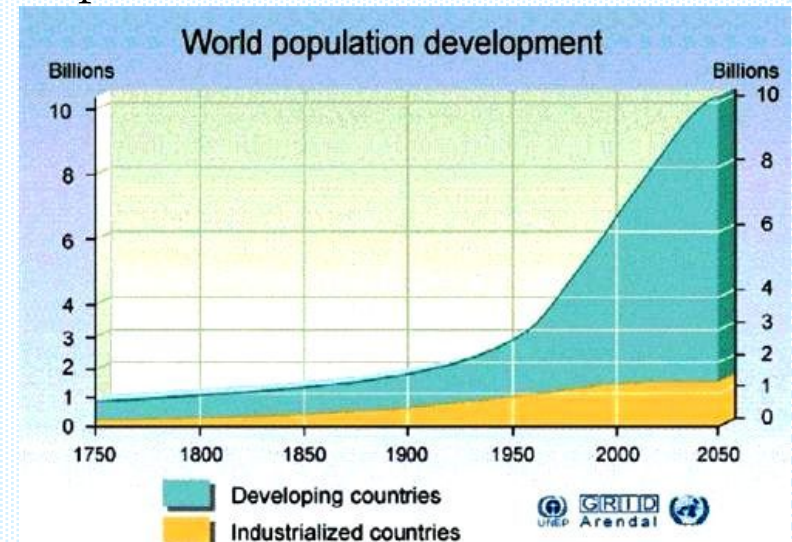
From the *economic* point of view, this purpose would be to *contribute to the growth of the industrial productivity by providing companies with an efficient and adapted workforce.*

From the *human* point of view, *these interventions' meaning would be that of helping people to lead a life they consider good*, that is to say, a life corresponding to their needs, their expectations and their major desires of self-fulfillment.

This “implicit definition” of the final purposes of these interventions is questionable.

It can be seen as insufficient, at a time *when mankind is facing many major challenges*. One can observe, for example:

- (1) *A significant growth in the world's population, combined with over-consumption, leading to a non-replenishment of most of the natural resources.*



A Non-Governmental Organization - “The global Footprint Network” - studies the mankind’s demand on the planet (its ecological footprint) against the nature’s biocapacity, i.e., its ability to replenish the planet’s resources and absorb waste, including CO₂.

They forged the concept of “*Earth Overshoot Day*”, which marks the date when mankind’s footprint in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year. *Earth Overshoot Day has moved from December 7th in 1990, to August 19th in 2014.*

Hum anity is facing m any m ajor challenges (continued):

- (2) *A considerable pollution of air, land and sea, in connection with global warming, rising seas, the disappearance of various natural species, a growing shortage of drinking water, etc.*

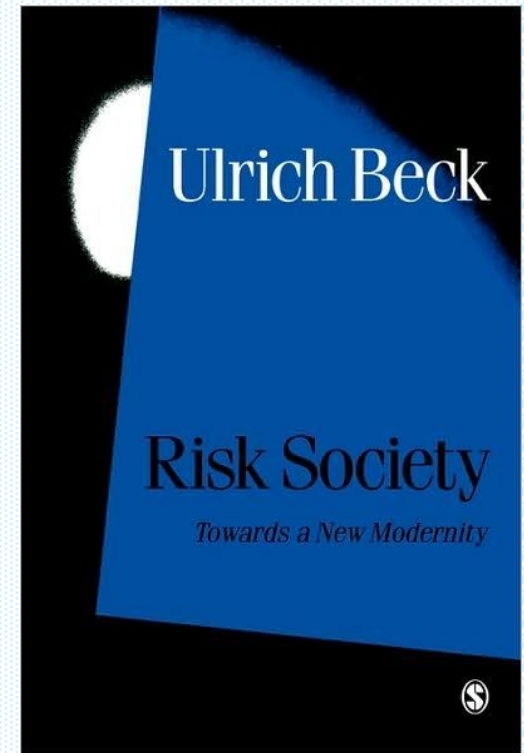


Humanity is facing many major challenges (continued):

- (3) *An increase in disaster risks: particularly of unexpected (and usually unpredictable) industrial ones.*

Below: Bhopal Union Carbide Disaster (1984).

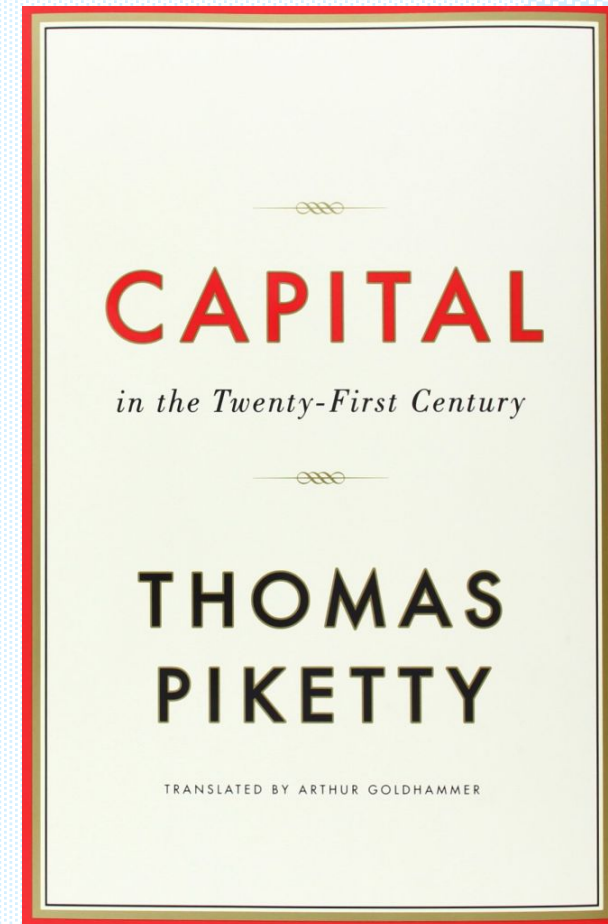
Officially: 7575 deaths (according to associations of victims: between 20000 and 25000)



Humanity is facing many major challenges (continued):

(4) *An increase in economic inequalities between the richest and poorest (Piketti, 2014).*

A research made by the OXFAM charity, quoted by “*The Guardian*” of January 19, 2015, showed “that the *share of the world’s wealth owned by the best-off 1% has increased from 44% in 2009 to 48% in 2014*, while *the least well-off 80% currently own just 5.5%*. Oxfam added that on current trends *the richest 1% would own more than 50% of the world’s wealth by 2016*” (Elliott, L. & Pilkington, E., 2015).

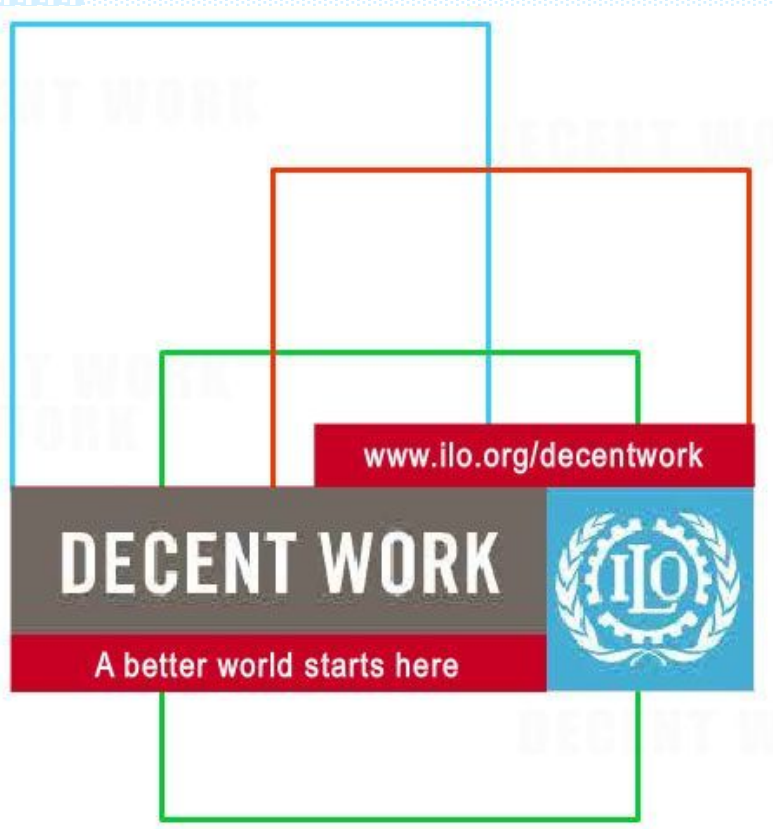


Humanity is facing many major challenges (continued):

(5) *An important deficit in “decent work”.*

The concept of “decent work” was developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) for defining the major characteristics of a labor that would allow people to live proper human lives.

Decent Work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men (ILO, 2001, 2008).



Humanity is facing many major challenges (continued):

(5) *An important deficit in “decent work”* (continued)

The ILO journal *World of Work* (No 56, April 2006) gave the following statistics for the year 2005: “*Half of the world’s workers – some 1.4 billion working poor – live with their families on less than US\$2 per day per person*” (p.13).

In 2013, the ILO has issued another report, the title of which speaks for itself: “*Global employment trends for youth 2013: A generation at risk*”. The title of its first chapter is even clearer: “Global youth employment crisis worsening”.

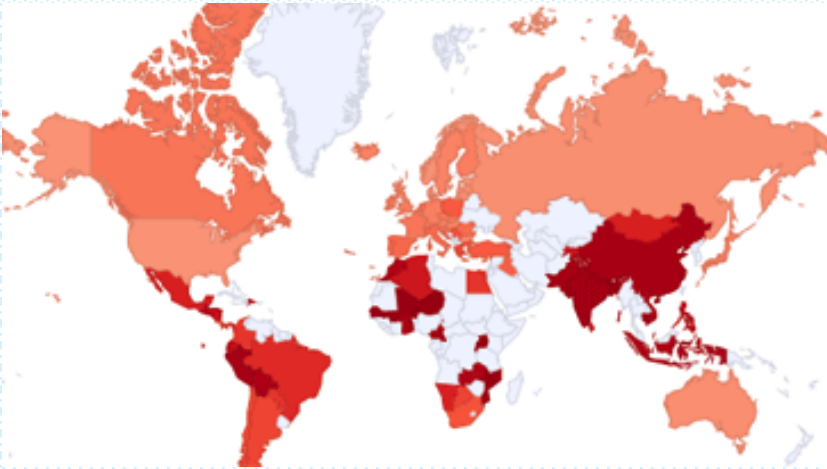
Now, *50% of the world population is under 28.4 years of age* (2009 statistics).



(5) *An important deficit in “decent work”* (continued)

“ILO warns of widespread insecurity in the global labour market” (19 May 2015)

How is the world of work changing? Are permanent contracts the norm or the exception? Discover the new World Employment and Social Outlook 2015 (WESO).



“Where are workers less likely to have a permanent contract? GENEVA (ILO News) – Only one quarter of workers worldwide is estimated to have a stable employment relationship, according to a new report by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

“The World Employment and Social Outlook 2015 (WESO) finds that, among countries with available data (covering 84 per cent of the global workforce), three quarters of workers are employed on temporary or short-term contracts, in informal jobs often without any contract, under own-account arrangements or in unpaid family jobs”.

(5) *An important deficit in “decent work”* (continued)

The concept of decent work appears very promising to observe the situation and current evolution of labour and work in our world.

But the ILO’s definition of “decent work” is perhaps too narrow ...

For example, it doesn’t take into account the more or less important impact on the environment of the different forms of organizations of labour.

According to the ILO definition that I have recalled, a work organization, which produces a lot a waste, which consumes a lot of natural resources, should not be seen as more indecent than another one, which would attain an equivalent result with less waste and less intake of natural resources, insofar as both of them meet in the same way the criteria of decent work as they were previously defined.

Therefore some other features might perhaps be added to the current definition of “decent work” as, for example, a concern for the impact of work on the natural resources.

Mankind needs to face now (at least) five kinds of problems:

- *A considerable growth in the world population and an over-consumption leading to a non-replenishment of most of the natural resources*
- *Pollution, global warming, rising seas, shortage of drinking water, etc.*
- *Increase in disasters' risks*
- *Increase in economic inequalities between the richest and poorest*
- *Important deficit in "decent work".*

These problems appear to be linked to each other. Solving one of them independently of the others seems impossible.

Some researchers have named "*Anthropocene epoch*" this current period in the development of the human species, when its influence on the Earth system became predominant.



The question arises *whether the human species can organize itself in view of directing its influence* or if, on the contrary, its influence being out of control, mankind is careening to its ruin, a ruin that it causes.

If such a control is possible, *shouldn't the final purpose* – of the interventions for helping people design their careers and lives – be that *of preparing them to organize themselves in view of taking collectively such a control?*



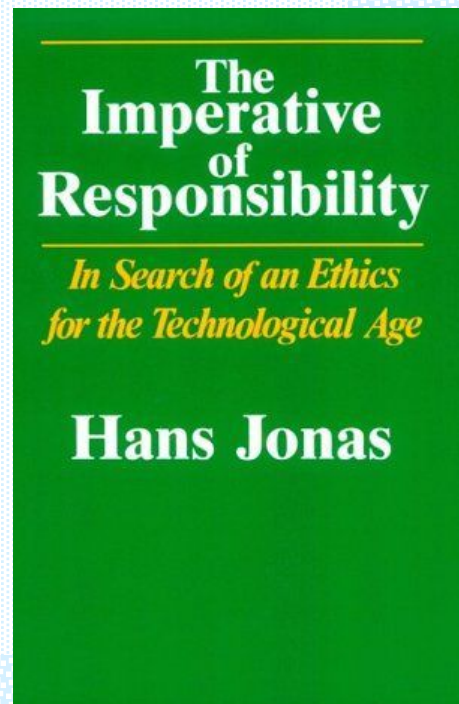
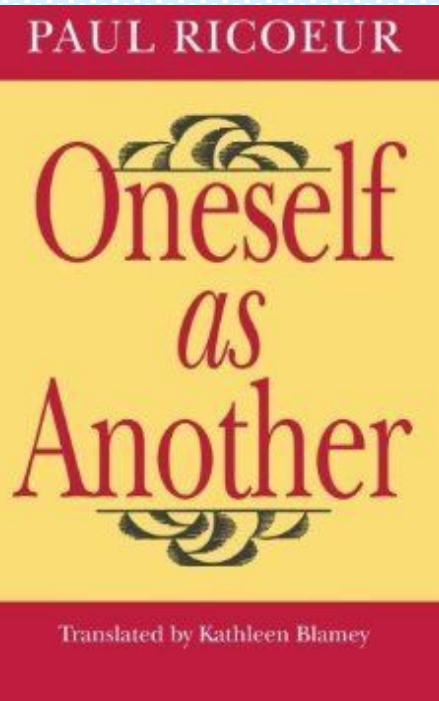
Indeed, *two considerations are always at the heart of such interventions:*

- About an *expected (personal or occupational) future* – a more or less distant one,
- About the *care about other people who count* or might become important in the client's future life.

Designing one's life and career means thinking about one's life's future with some other close people.

However, *such thinking may be more or less self-centered:*

- *Some people concentrate on what they see as their individual achievement, whatever the price might be for other people or for mankind as a whole.*
- Differently, *other people give more prominence to the concern for the lives of unknown people, to fair institutions and the future of a "truly human life on earth"* (to use the expressions by which Paul Ricoeur, 1992, and Hans Jonas, 1984, define the ethical intention).



Therefore...

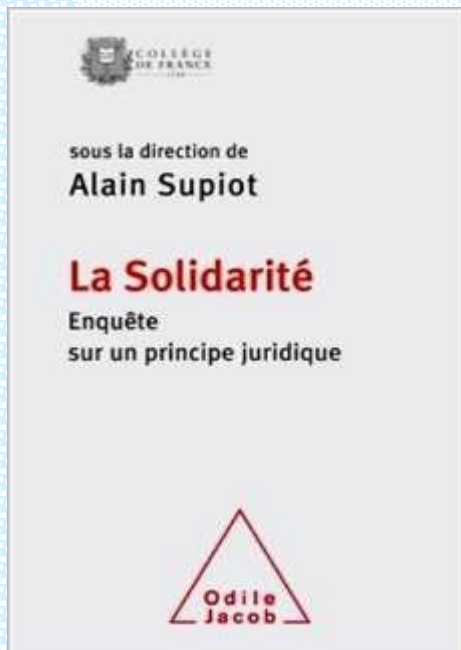
Should we encourage people – who think about the designing of their lives and careers – to engage in such ethical considerations?

Should the final purposes of such interventions (= their ends) be that of helping people to increase their collective control on the future of mankind?

Should this purpose be that of helping them to think of various ways to contribute to the disappearance of indecent work?

Shouldn't these interventions' objectives be those of helping people, who are relegated to the margins of the current work and trade systems, to organize themselves in view of developing together other kinds of work and trade systems?

Should the final purpose of these interventions be to develop the solidarity within and between the communities of people?



Answering such questions supposes tackling debates similar to those of the early 20th Century about the ultimate purposes (or “ends”) of vocational guidance.

That is to wonder again about *the definition of their objectives in connection with the meaning of these objectives in relevant broader contexts of interpretation and comprehension.*

Such broader contexts of interpretation and comprehension of the objectives of the interventions for life and career designing may include:

- *Economic ones and could include - or not - the issues of sustainable development and decent work,*
- *Sociological ones and could include - or not - the question of the construction of fairer societies giving the opportunity to everyone to best develop their capabilities* (to use the Amartya Sen's, 1999, concept),
- *Ethical ones and could include - or not - the question of the definition of the principles for minimal ethics having an universal value* and being more fundamental than the “ordinary goods” (to use the terminology of Charles Taylor) that is to say the principles by which the members of a community of thought – as a religion or a social collective – govern their existence.
- Etc.



If these issues – of a sustainable development, of an implementation of decent work, of a construction of fairer societies, of a development of each one's capabilities, etc. – would have a greater part in the interventions for helping people to design their lives and careers, this would result in changes in the nature of these interventions and in their concrete objectives.

One could imagine, for example:

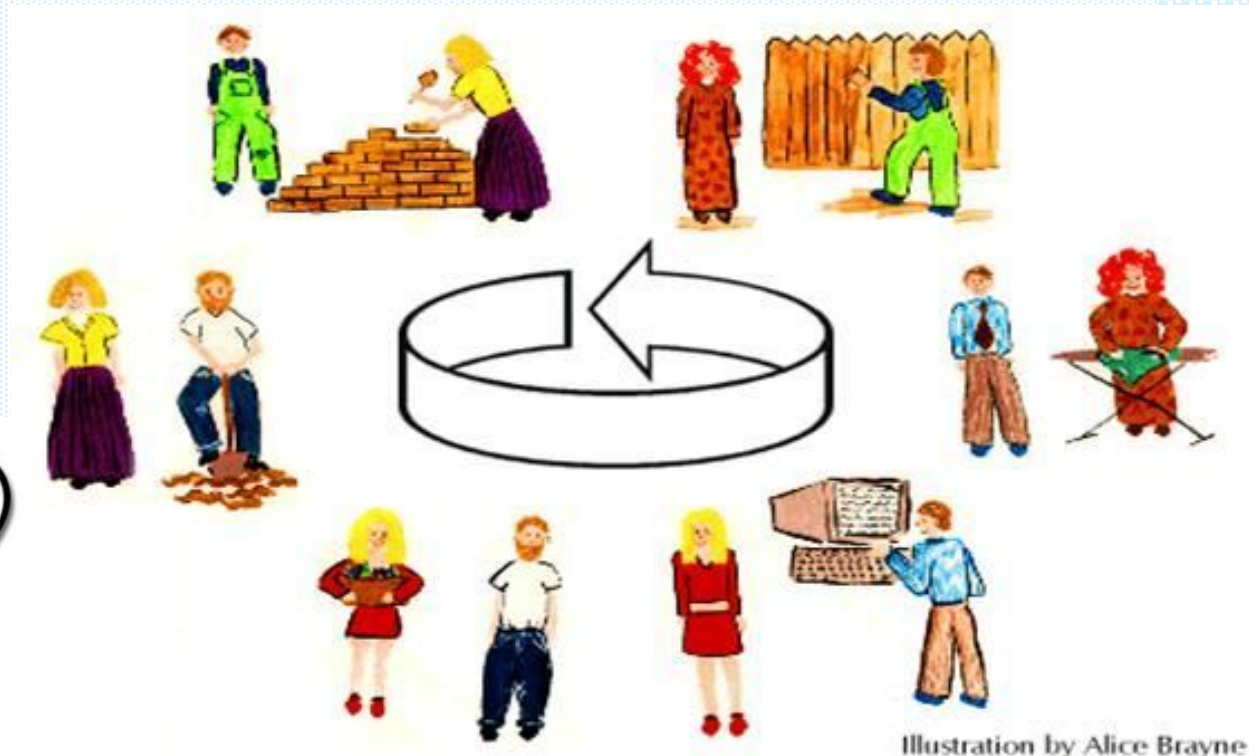
- That *career education workshops for high-school students might include a reflection on decent work and the ways to organize to gradually establish an international labor law guaranteeing rights to decent work for everyone.*
- That these *career education workshops might include discussions on the sustainable development and the ways to develop such a sustainable economy and some forms of labor organization promoting such development.*



One could imagine, for example:

- That *some interventions might be developed aiming to help people - notably deprived people - to create and develop some Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS; see: Laacher, 2002; Liatard & Lapon, 2005) of competencies and / or micro-companies in the sector of social and solidarity economy.*

Such interventions might take whatever form (career education workshops, counseling interviews, etc.) and target either adults or young people.



LETS

One could imagine many other interventions... Which ones?

Perhaps, we need first *to know more about the new forms of working* and, above all, *the new forms of exchanging their work that people create and develop...*

In such a case, we would need first to make some field observations, so as to use the efficient solutions invented by the networks people having succeeded in such developments to teach these solutions to some other people who could use them...

But a big part of our reflection might perhaps be devoted to the following issues:

Should the above mentioned issues - about the final purposes of the life-design interventions - have a greater part in the interventions for helping people to design their lives and careers?

Should the final purpose of these interventions be to develop the solidarity within and between the communities of people?

We believe that all these questions will be at the heart of our thoughts during these two days...

And we hope that *tomorrow afternoon we'll get some first answers to these questions.*

Moreover we dream of *a creation of some networks of colleagues* willing to develop some research, methods, tools, etc. *to contribute to a fair and sustainable development and to the implementation of decent work over the world...*



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Thank you for your attention!

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