

Career Guidance and Counselling and Migration  
Challenges: the point of view of international scholars.  
ESVDC Webinar September 2022

---

**Minding the gap between rhetoric and practice when advocating  
for a 'human needs approach' to career counselling and  
guidance in a context of global crisis.**

Hazel Reid

Professor Emeritus, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

# Overview

---

- Wider global context
- Powerful discourses ‘at work’
- Empathic understanding
- Need for many and individual narratives
- Usefulness of narrative approaches in CGC
- Striving for social justice



# Mind your language

---

- Words are important, language is not neutral
- ‘Employability’, ‘adaptability’, ‘productivity’ : whose conservative discourse do these words/terms serve?

‘The neo-liberal state ... has to camouflage its democratic deficits by blaming individuals for their deficiencies, whether behavioural, moral or cultural.’ (Sultana, 2022)

- Such deficit discourses produce a litany of lacks and needs of the individual, moving attention away from the macro issue
- The ‘resilient’ refugee, migrant or asylum seeker

# Discourse: ways of thinking and acting

---

‘All that we are is the result of what we have thought. The mind is everything.  
What we think we become.’

Attributed to the Buddha

# A nuanced analysis of the causes of migration

---

- The lived experiences of refugee and migrant populations (Crawley et al, 2018)
- Convoluted and lengthy journeys
- 500 participants, total of 57 countries passed through
- Europe often not the original goal
- ‘The Stranger’s Case’: Sir Ian McKellen



# The messy swamps of practice

---

- CGC practice takes place in socio-economic, cultural, historical and political contexts
- Often feels situated in a kind of ‘no-man’s land’
- The context, the macro issues, is very wide indeed
- Engagement with humanitarian and environmental campaigns can only be engaged with if they make ‘the unknowable real and the invisible visible’ (Solnit, 2013)

# ‘A human needs approach’

---

‘I take open-mindedness to be a willingness to construe knowledge and values from multiple perspectives without loss of commitment to one’s own values. Open-mindedness is the keystone of what we call a democratic culture. We have learned, with much pain, that democratic culture is neither divinely ordained nor is it to be taken for granted as perennially durable. Like all cultures, it is premised upon values that generate distinctive ways of life and corresponding conceptions of reality... I take the constructivism of cultural psychology to be a profound expression of democratic culture. *It demands that we be conscious of how we come to our knowledge and as conscious as we can be about the values that lead us to our perspectives.*’ (my emphasis)

(Bruner, 1990:30)

# Empathy, bridging the gap

---

Photo (on the web for ever) deleted of young Syrian refugee, drowned in the sea and recovered from the beach by police officer in Turkey.

Removed for ethical reasons, and an empathic approach asks us to think, 'How would it feel to be that person?'. In this case, this little boy's parents, siblings, family.





# Empathy

---

- More than a skill
- Edward Titchner 1909
- Roots - Greek word for passion, suffering; from which we get pathos, pathology, sympathy
- Old English, path, trail, journey
- Narrative: a translation of the raw experience into a particular shape
- Our response: affective (emotional) and/or deliberative (rational)

# From the many to the individual, Alex's story

---

'I hesitate to write even the first line of my story. I would like to begin with "my name is so and so and I was born in such and such a time at such and such a place" but these three basic things are not easy to say. The date of birth on my passport is an educated guess and my name on it is not the one I was given at birth; as for the place, I know the name of my village and area but my country has changed name several times even within the space of my lifetime. My story is one where history, geography and politics combine to complicate what should be the simplest statements about when and where I was born.' (Ntung, 2013:1)



## How do we assess the usefulness and quality of narrative work? (Reid, 2018)

---

- Social science, historical and cultural perspectives
- Knowledge of relevant theory
- Recognition of context
- Different cultural traditions
- Collaboration with participants
- Engagement of the reader, user
- Clear analysis, rigorous, trustworthy
- Ethical issues addressed
- Evaluation of the impact of the work
- Lead to new questions
- Credible and productive
- Sense of what is real: verisimilitude

# Minding the gap, language, empathy and striving for social justice in CGC

---

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.

Desmond Tutu



# Thank you

- 
- Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
  - CMiNAR (2016-2019) *Teaching career counsellors of refugees, funded by EU Erasmus*. <https://www.cminar.eu/>
  - Crawley, H., Duvell, F., Jones, K., McMahon, S. and Sigona, N. (2018) *Unravelling Europe's 'Migration Crisis'. Journeys over land and sea*. University of Bristol: Policy Press.
  - Greenspan, H. (2010) *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors. Beyond Testimony* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.). St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House.
  - Ntung, A.M. (2013) with Chris Sanderson. *Not my worst day: a personal journey through violence in the Great Lakes region of Africa*. Lancashire, UK: EARS press.
  - Reid, H. (2018) Telling Tales. A transformative space for alternative discourses in research, pp 229-243. In S. Jackson, *Developing Transformative Spaces in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.
  - Reid, H. and West, L. (2018) Connecting big and intimate worlds. Using an auto/biographical research imagination in career guidance, pp 227-239. In T. Hooley, R.G. Sultana and R. Thomsen, *Career Guidance for Social Justice. Contesting Neoliberalism*. London: Routledge.
  - Schön, D.A. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner*. Brookfield, WI: Basic Books Inc.
  - Solnit, R. (2013) *The Faraway Nearby*. London: Granta Publications.
  - Sultana, R.G. (2014) Pessimisms of the intellect, optimisms of the will? Troubling the relationship between career guidance and social justice. *International Journal of Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 14: 5-19.
  - Sultana, R.G. (2022) Four 'dirty words' in career guidance: from common sense to good sense. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-022-09550-2>.