

Edited by Mika Launikari and Sauli Puukari



Multicultural GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Theoretical Foundations and Best Practices in Europe



INSTITUTE FOR
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ



Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci

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Mika Launikari
Sauli Puukari
(Eds.)



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CIMO

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Foreword

One of the most influential trends in contemporary society is the mobility of populations between nations. There are many forces that lead people to move between countries, including voluntary migration, in which individuals make deliberate choices to seek out new ways of living. In contrast, involuntary migration describes the plight of individuals and families who are displaced from their home countries, often due to tumultuous conditions such as war, environmental conditions, or oppressive social and political practices. The circumstances that lead people to migrate might better be framed as a continuum of choice, because there are rarely entirely positive circumstances and ideal conditions. Regardless of the circumstances, immigrants and refugees face many issues of adjustment in a new country and the integration process is a major concern for the delivery of professional services.

Multicultural Guidance and Counselling – Theoretical Foundations and Best Practices in Europe provides readers with many windows from which to examine migration in the growing multicultural context. The overriding goal of this collection is to provide readers with theoretical frameworks and practical strategies for implementing guidance and counselling with people who are attempting to integrate into European society. Several of the authors address issues of globalisation from the perspective of human capital, reminding readers that globalisation is more than about products and services; globalisation is primarily about people. Readers are informed about the many adjustment issues that individuals face in entering educational environments and breaking into employment markets. A key window that is open refers to integration as a process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the host society.

Guidance and counselling roles are evolving to meet the needs of individuals who cross cultures. There are many challenges posed in preparing migrants, in preparing professionals, and in preparing educational and employment settings for the social inclusion of immigrants. However, the authors move the discussion from a problem focus to strategies for supporting individuals and for improving policies, programmes and services. The framework of multicultural counselling taken in the book provides

Nancy Arthur

readers with complimentary models and practical applications for working with individuals who are culturally diverse.

In light of global trends for mobility, readers will find it informative to read about multicultural counselling and guidance in a European context. As borders of trade, travel, and employment shift throughout the world, professionals need to be reflective about their own practices and ways to enhance their multicultural competencies. They also need to look outside of familiar contexts to better understand how theory and applications from other countries apply to local policies and practices. *Multicultural Guidance and Counselling – Theoretical Foundations and Best Practices in Europe* is a welcome addition to the professional literature. There are many unique contributions that can be used to inform the design and delivery of professional services within the European context and in other countries. The book also offers a window to the future where the collaboration of professionals from various sectors and between countries will be a critical force for impacting social change.

Nancy Arthur, Ph.D.
University of Calgary
Canada

Preface

Europe is today ethnically, religiously, linguistically and culturally a complex reality. It is home to millions of people from non-European backgrounds with connections and cultural influences from around the world. Therefore, an understanding of different cultures and how to communicate across them will be a great asset to all guidance counsellors working with diverse minority populations in Europe in the 21st century.

Most professional publications on multicultural guidance and counselling have been published in the United States and Canada, two countries with long traditions of migration and cultural diversity. Although multiculturalism is not a new phenomenon in Europe either, this is the first time ever that an initiative has been taken to produce a European handbook addressing multicultural guidance and counselling from theoretical and practical perspectives. This very publication *Multicultural Guidance and Counselling – Theoretical Foundations and Best Practices in Europe* is the result of the labours of experts from several European countries who share their scientific know-how and real-life experience with the readers. The handbook brings together in one volume some of the most insightful writings available on multicultural counselling in the fields of education, training and employment.

The publication has a two-fold function. In the first place, it is a handbook for guidance counsellors who work with migrant clients and who need additional information and advice on theories, methods and good practices of multicultural counselling. Secondly, it is targeted at trainers of guidance counsellors who can apply the contents and exercises of the handbook to their training programmes for developing multicultural awareness and skills among course participants. Additionally, human resources personnel in multinational and multicultural organisations can also benefit from the book.

The concept of culture is a very complex one including different levels and different perspectives. This book does not provide the reader with a coherent and consistent approach to the concept of culture throughout the book, yet it gives – sometimes

explicitly and sometimes implicitly – ideas on which the reader may construct his or her own relation to the concept of culture. Given the fact that the writers of this book represent different countries, and different fields of science, we choose not to “standardise” the definition of culture. Despite this the following aspects of culture could be seen as linking threads:

- Human beings are social beings who have developed cultures with both similarities and differences: similarities as well as differences should be noted in guidance and counselling.
- Culture surrounds us from the beginning of our life and we learn our “home” culture or cultures naturally in our everyday interactions; we are often unaware of our own culture and therefore becoming aware of the impact of one’s own culture is important.
- Learning our culture is not just passive assimilation, but we also construct the culture together with other human beings.

We consider all guidance and counselling to be multicultural in the sense that counsellors need to recognise that all of their clients bring their unique personal history and cultures (e.g. gender, social class, religion, language, etc.) into the guidance and counselling process. However, given the current challenges that immigration and multiculturalism pose to Europe and other parts of the world, the main emphasis in this book is on how to address the needs of cultural minorities in guidance and counselling.

In this book we do not want to emphasise differences between multicultural guidance and multicultural counselling. Guidance in a broad sense refers to “a range of processes designed to enable individuals to make informed choices and transitions related to their educational, vocational and personal development”, including activities such as informing, advising, counselling, assessing, enabling, advocating and giving feedback (Watts & Kidd 2000, 489). Guidance has often been associated with information having the key role in all guidance activities (e.g. Brown 1999). Counselling often refers to “deeper” processes where counsellors work together with their clients to help them solve their problems and make choices of their own. Sometimes a strict division has been made between guidance and counselling, often associated with forming professional organisations which strive for a certain professional identity, even though in many ways guidance and counselling should have interconnecting

links and complement each other (Watts & Kidd 2000, 492–494). We prefer to see guidance and counselling as “companions” working together to help people in multicultural societies. However, in most cases throughout the book the term *multicultural counselling* will be used instead of the “twin term” *multicultural guidance and counselling*.

We choose to use the term multicultural counselling because we think it expresses nicely that multiple cultures exist in Europe and also in other parts of the world. We think that the term reflects both the reality (there are several cultures) and the ideal - constructive and interaction-oriented co-existence of multiple cultures as a goal for Europe and the world. Other terms used for approximately the same purpose include, for example, cross-cultural (Pedersen 1985), transcultural (d’Ardenne & Mahtani 1989), culturally different (Sue & Sue 1990) and intercultural (Karem & Littlewood 1992). These approaches focus on culture and ethnicity, whereas some other approaches (see e.g. Pankhania 1996; Lago & Thompson 1996) have ‘race’ as a major element in counselling (for more see also Moodley 1999). Given the fact that ‘race’ is a controversial concept (see. e.g. Mio et al. 1999), we prefer the terminology related to culture and ethnicity in this book.

We, the editors, hope that all readers of this handbook will accept diversity, multiculturalism and respect of other human beings as important starting points in their private and professional lives.

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This handbook is the product of many European experts and scientists, all of whom have enthusiastically cooperated to bring their outstanding knowledge of multicultural counselling to a wider audience. Our sincere thanks go to all the authors of the publication for so willingly sharing their high quality expertise on these pages.

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It would be almost impossible to mention by name all those of you who have inspired us during the production process. But there can be no doubt that all of you to whom we have spoken about this publication have helped us with your valuable insights into multicultural counselling. Your help has been highly appreciated. Thank you.

30 January 2005

Mika Launikari
Editor
Helsinki, Finland

Sauli Puukari
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INTRODUCTION

I

The introduction will cover two broad topics: the European context for multicultural guidance and counselling and different meanings and contexts related to multicultural counselling. As the title of this book implies, it is especially targeted at European audiences, but it offers valuable insights for wider audiences as well. Multiculturalism is in many ways a global phenomenon in today's world. It also seems that in Western countries multiculturalism and multicultural counselling have been recognised as an important issue for a longer time in North America than in Europe. Kareem and Littlewood (1992), in their comparison of Britain and United States, attribute this to the explicit consideration of the United States to be a country of immigrants. As a result of this, research and development in multicultural counselling has been very active in North America. Therefore, relevant North American literature on the topic will be widely used along with European and other sources.

For the European reader this calls for active, critical reading and creative application of the ideas presented in this book to one's own operational context. It seems, though, that many of the broad ideas in multicultural counselling are transferable – with some caution – from one country to another. As in face-to-face and virtual contacts with people who are culturally different from us, open dialogue is needed to construct workable interpretations and guidelines for action. The same applies to this book and the reader. Finally, the personal thoughts of a European immigrant will end the Introduction part. We hope the personal perspectives of Antoinette Batumubwira will help the reader to set off on an interesting multicultural journey in a dialogue with this book and other fellow human beings, a dialogue that leads to a deeper understanding of the rich and complex dynamics of multiculturalism and multicultural guidance and counselling.



The European context for multicultural counselling

DIVERSITY IN EUROPE

The Europe of today consists of 44 independent countries with an overall population close to 728 million people, out of which the European Union with its 25 member states makes up 453 million citizens (Eurostat 2004; United Nations 2002). In 2000, there were altogether 56 million migrants in Europe. The largest migrant populations were recorded in Russia (13.26 million), Germany (7.35 million), Ukraine (6.95 million), France (6.28 million) and the UK (4.03 million) (Just & Korb 2003).

Europe has always been multiethnic and multicultural. It has through time evolved into an ethnically, culturally, religiously and linguistically highly diverse continent where many minority communities co-exist and interact daily with majority populations. However, the concept of culturally homogeneous nations created by European nationalist ideology in the 19th century is still very much alive in many countries and is central to the national identity of most Europeans. The ethnic minorities that have come to Europe in the 20th century have entered countries where national identity is closely intertwined with cultural identity (EIEM 2004).

But what is a minority actually? A generally accepted informal definition considers minorities to be non-dominant groups, not always numerically inferior to majorities, whose members possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics that differ from the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language (World Directory of Minorities 1997). Sometimes though, individual members of minorities may have lost their cultural, language or religious practices, making them indistinguishable from the majority on the basis of these criteria, but they still identify with their ethnic or national group.

The Roma are the biggest Paneuropean ethnic and cultural minority amounting to more than 12 million people (ERIO 2004), who live scattered across the territory of several countries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Russia, the former Yugoslavia). Unrecognised minorities in Europe are often denied access to economic, social and political development. Such almost total exclusion from society often describes the situation of the Roma, whose status is unstable in many European countries and who are often exposed to the majority's obsessive antigypsism and discriminatory attitude (ERIO 2004).

In many European countries there are minorities that have traditionally lived in the country for several centuries, often in a certain region. These examples include minorities such as the Sámi people in the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, and the Basques in France and Spain. A more recent development, as indicated in the European Commission document dealing with *Communication on Immigration, Integration and Employment* (Communication 2003), is that former European countries of emigration (e.g. Southern European countries and Ireland) have become countries of immigration. In the 1990s, these countries have received larger inward flows of migrants composed both of returning nationals and of non-nationals, most of whom are so-called third country nationals from outside of Europe and the European Union.

The actual linguistic diversity in Europe is a rich resource. According to the Euro-mosaic-study conducted by the European Commission in 1992–1993, there are altogether 77 autochthonic languages and 17 dialects spoken in Europe. The same study reveals that 23 out of the 48 existing European minority languages are in danger of disappearing. Europe is and will remain “a Babel” in the future, too. (Commission 1996.) It is also worth noting that some 76 million people in Europe make daily use of a language that is not the most widely spoken or the official language of the country they live in (Statistics Finland 2004a).

European identity has quite often been defined by religion, namely by Christianity in its Catholic and Protestant denominations. Through migrants, also other world religions, such as Islam as well as the traditional Asian religions Hinduism and Buddhism, have gained more foothold in Europe. Since the 11th September 2001, Europe has also witnessed a growing anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Some 88 million people in Europe are representatives of another religion than the majority religion of the country they reside in. For example, in France the muslim population amounts to more than 4.18 million or 7.1 % of the total population of

the country, in Bulgaria there are 940,000 muslims (11.8 % of the population) and in Macedonia 580,000 (28.3 %) (Statistics Finland 2004b.) According to the European Jewish Congress (EJC), there are 38 national Jewish communities in Europe with approx. 2.5 million Jews, that is, all the Jewish communities of the European Union as well as those of the Eastern European states, the largest of which are in Russia, Ukraine and Hungary (Statistics Finland 2004b).

ATTITUDES TOWARDS MINORITY GROUPS

The legal recognition of minorities and the subsequent respect of their rights contribute to peaceful coexistence in Europe. If racism, discrimination and xenophobia are to be eliminated, effective laws are not enough, but even more importantly the attitudes and behaviour of European citizens will have to change, too.

The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) conducted an opinion poll of some 16,000 citizens in the 15 European Union Member States in 2000 to find out what were the attitudes of Europeans towards ethnic minorities. Based on the results of the survey (see Thalhammer et al. 2001), four categories of attitudes could be established: *Actively tolerant*, *Intolerant*, *Passively tolerant*, and *Ambivalent*.

The category *Actively tolerant* makes up 21 % of the respondents. This group is not disturbed by the presence of minority groups and it believes that minority groups only enrich the society. The actively tolerant do not expect minorities to become assimilated and to give up their own culture. People in this category are opposed to repatriation of immigrants and they show the strongest support for anti-racism policies. The attitudes towards minorities of the group classified as *Intolerant* – 14 % of those polled – are the opposite of those in the actively tolerant category. The largest category *Passively tolerant* represents 39 % of the respondents. This group has generally positive attitudes towards minorities, whom they believe to enrich the society. However, this group does not support policies in favour of minorities. The rest of the respondents (26%) belong to the group *Ambivalent*, which desires the assimilation of minorities. Although this group thinks that minorities do not enrich society, it is not disturbed by their presence either. The ambivalent people do not support policies to combat racism, but they represent the group with the most potential to evolve if political decisions are taken in the area of fighting racism and xenophobia.

The survey by the EUMC also identified several socio-economic factors that shape attitudes towards minorities. A clear correlation was established between intolerant attitudes and the experience of unemployment or a downturn in the respondent's personal situation or socio-professional prospects. There was also a clear correlation in terms of education: the lower the level of education, the higher the level of intolerance expressed. As for a family profile, having a close relative who is a member of a minority group strongly reduces racist and xenophobic attitudes. Political party affiliation shapes attitudes with negative views towards minorities becoming more common as one moves from the left to the right of the political spectrum.

The Eurobarometer on Discrimination in Europe (Marsh & Sahin-Dikmen 2003) was initiated by the European Commission to find out more about people's attitudes towards discrimination. The Eurobarometer opinion poll focused on asking some 16,000 citizens in the EU15 about discrimination they may have experienced or seen at work, in education, in seeking housing or as a customer of retail or other services. For research purposes the meaning of discrimination was explained to all respondents as *treating differently, negatively and adversely people on grounds of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age and sexual orientation*.

According to this Eurobarometer opinion poll the most cited ground for discrimination was age (5 %) followed by racial or ethnic origin (3 %). The ground most cited for "witnessed discrimination" was racial or ethnic origin (22 %). When asking the respondents whether they thought that all groups – *people with ethnic origin, people with minority beliefs, physically disabled, people with learning difficulties, people under 25 and over 50, homosexuals* – would have equal opportunities in getting a job, training or promotion, the results were: the fourth most disadvantaged group – after people with learning difficulties, the physically disabled and people over 50 years – was ethnic minorities with 62% of the respondents thinking that they have less chance.

The Eurobarometer study also revealed that European citizens typically indicated that discrimination on any ground (*ethnicity, religion, physical disability, mental disability, age, sexual orientation*) is at least "usually wrong". EU citizens who thought discrimination against ethnic minorities was wrong, felt that other kinds of discrimination against other groups were wrong, too. Consistently across the European Union, the young, people with higher education, non-manually-employed and women were more likely to oppose discrimination, older male manual workers with little education less so.

The two surveys presented here are representative only for the 15 "old" European Union member states. Thus, we cannot possibly generalise the data generated

through these opinion polls to be valid for the rest of Europe. But the results of these surveys at least indicatively show the reader what kind of attitudes towards ethnic minorities and discrimination there are in some European countries.

MOTIVATION FOR MIGRATION

On the basis of United Nations' estimates, roughly 2 million people annually will migrate from the less developed to the more developed regions of the world until 2050. The net migration to Europe is estimated to total 578,800 people per annum during 2000–2050. This figure can be broken down as follows: Western Europe will receive 352,000, Southern Europe 145,500 and Northern Europe 156,800 new migrants per year, whereas Eastern Europe will lose 75,500 citizens annually to other parts of Europe and/or to other continents. Among the continents of origin, Asia will dominate until 2050 with roughly 1.2 million emigrating each year, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean with almost 510,000 and Africa with 330,000 yearly (Just & Korb 2003).

Why do people emigrate? The International Organisation for Migration distinguishes five pull and two push factors as explicit motivation for migration. Based on various micro-economic and micro-sociological concepts of migration, the pull factors are: better living conditions and income, other people's – such as family members' – experience with migration, good employment prospects and more individual freedom. The push factors are ethnic problems (war, conflict, ...) and economic conditions (famine, natural disaster, ...) in the country of origin (Krieger 2004). However, the pull and push factors should not be treated as 'all' or 'nothing' to explain migration; rarely it is that clear. Usually there can be a mix of losses and/or gains as motivation for migration, and this can vary due to perceptions and actual circumstances of family members.

From the individual migrant's perspective, it is to be emphasised that a decision to migrate always has long-term consequences for him/herself and his/her surroundings. Also the potential income gains (pull factors) in the new country have to be set against the costs of migration. These include direct costs for the job search, the move and the overall adjustment to the new environment (e.g. learning the language of the country). Also the social costs – intangible and hard to quantify – caused by separation from traditional family, uncertainty of finding employment or

accommodation, lack of societal and cultural networks, etc. are of paramount importance to a migrant. In addition, the greater the geographical distance between the countries of destination and origin, generally the higher the required investment in society-specific know-how, which makes integration into the new country more challenging (Just & Korb 2003).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY REGARDING DISCRIMINATION ON THE LABOUR MARKET

Article 13, paragraph 1, in the Treaty establishing the European Community (as amended by the Amsterdam and Nice Treaties) states that the European Community may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. In 2000, two groundbreaking Directives were adopted by the European Council with the aim of ensuring that everyone living in the European Union can benefit from effective legal protection against discrimination (Marsh & Sahin-Dikmen 2003).

The *Racial Equality Directive* bans direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and instructions to discriminate, on grounds of racial or ethnic origin. It covers employment, training, education, social security, healthcare, housing and access to goods and services. The *Employment Equality Directive* focuses on discrimination in employment, occupation and vocational training. It deals with direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment and instructions to discriminate, on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. It includes important provisions concerning reasonable accommodation, with a view to promoting access of persons with disabilities to employment and training (Commission 2004). The Member States are expected shortly to transpose these two Directives into their national legislation, e.g. in Finland the Act on Equal Treatment has been effective since February 2004.

In March 2000 at the Lisbon European Council the European Union defined a comprehensive 10-year strategy aimed at long-term economic growth, full employment, social cohesion and sustainable development. One of the aims of this Lisbon agenda is by 2010 to raise the employment levels of groups that are currently under-represented on the labour market (such as women, older workers, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and migrants). In addition to this, European Employment Guideline n:o 7 specifies that the EU member states will foster the integration of

people facing particular difficulties on the labour market, such as early school leavers, low-skilled workers, people with disabilities, immigrants, and ethnic minorities, by developing their employability, increasing job opportunities and preventing all forms of discrimination against them (Commission 2004).

The results of a European Union -wide survey *Migrants, Minorities and Employment: Exclusion, Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination in 15 European Union Member States* (EUMC 2003) include – among others – incidents and types of employment discrimination across the European Union. The report highlights that, despite signs of increasing diversity, national labour markets are still overly segmented along national and ethnic lines. Third country nationals are disproportionately often employed in low-skilled, low-paid professions (“3D jobs” -dirty, dangerous and demanding) and usually hold precarious employment positions. Immigrants and ethnic minorities from non-Western countries are typically confronted with much higher unemployment rates than the majority population. In some member states the unemployment rate of third country immigrants is three to four times the level of the national average (e.g. in Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands).

The report (EUMC 2003) shows that migrants and minorities are differently exposed to racism and discrimination in employment. Non-European (non-Western) migrants (e.g. Africans, Arabs, Pakistanis, Filipinos, Turks) and certain minority groups (e.g. Travellers, Roma, Muslims, Blacks) are more exposed than others. Migrant women face the risk of dual discrimination. However, only a small number of discrimination cases result in formal complaints and even fewer cases are brought to court in the member states. Additionally, the observed differences in wages, activity rates, employment and unemployment rates of migrants and minorities indicate persistent exclusion, disadvantage and even discrimination.

INTEGRATION POLICIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Acculturation means adaptation to a new culture and the process of change a person will have to go through to achieve this. Acculturation relates to a socio-cultural and psychological context and it concerns both those who come to a new culture (refugees, immigrants) and those who come into contact with them. Acculturation can take place in different ways. The ideal way of acculturation is integration, which means adaptation to a new culture in such a way that immigrants preserve their own

cultural characteristics. The other alternatives are assimilation, separation and marginalisation. In assimilation immigrants do not want to or are not allowed to preserve their own cultural identities. Separation can be defined as isolation from the predominant culture and emphasis on one's own cultural background. Marginalisation is the least desirable alternative of acculturation where immigrants live at the margins of the society without contacts to their own cultural/ethnic group or to the new cultural environment (Berry 1990).

The key objective of national integration policies in Europe is to develop a holistic approach which takes into account both the economic and social aspects of integration, as well as cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, citizenship, participation and political rights. Many European Union member states consider that their national integration policies have so far not been sufficiently effective. The obstacles to successful integration of arriving migrants and established ethnic minorities in the EU (and in other parts of Europe) still continue to exist, e.g. inadequate proficiency in the host country language is the most widespread problem among migrants, but unemployment, poor education and lack of formal skills are also seen as major barriers. Often many integration measures can serve a double purpose: they facilitate integration in the host country, but at the same time they prepare the individual for returning to his/her own country through education received and/or qualifications obtained while staying in the host country (Communication 2003).

Specific integration programmes are a central tool in the initial phase of integration. In the longer run the objective should be to enable migrants to access existing services that cater for their specific needs and support their purposeful integration and social cohesion. Integration should be a two-way process, which is based on mutual rights and reciprocal obligations of legally resident third-country nationals and the host society. The European countries should be able to guarantee that the formal rights of immigrants are respected so that they can fully participate in economic, social, cultural and civil life in their new home country. A further goal is that immigrants actively contribute to their own integration process and learn to respect the fundamental norms and values of the host society without having to relinquish their own identity (Communication 2003).

There are five important characteristics of the migration process that are crucial for immigration and integration policy development in European societies. These are the *volume* and *profile* of migrants, the *type* and *dynamics* of migration over time, and *regional distribution* in target areas (Krieger 2004). The immigration issue is al-

ready on the political agenda, especially as a result of the ageing of the society in most industrialised countries. As Europe tries to avoid undesired immigration, the early 21st century will probably be characterised in many countries by controlled migration in terms of the volume and profile of migrants. In particular, recruiting qualified labour as well as labour in growth sectors (health care, IT) from outside of Europe could become crucial for many European countries in the near future (Just & Korb 2003).

IMPLICATIONS FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) entails respect for the various identities, such as ethnic, national, religious or linguistic identities. Article 23 in the Human Rights Declaration acknowledges that *everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment*, and Article 26 emphasises that *everyone has the right to education*. These three Human Rights could be called the *Golden Principles* that should underpin all educational and vocational guidance that is given to migrants and ethnic minorities in their host country. A fourth principle for guidance counsellors working with migrants and other minorities could be to understand, internalise and respect Article 1 in the Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity (2001): *Culture takes diverse forms across time and space*.

The broader role of guidance and counselling of immigrants is to help them with integration and social cohesion. Labour market participation and a sufficiently high level of education are generally seen as a potential basis for income security, and therefore as instruments for fuller participation in the society, without continuous dependency on forms of public assistance (Entzinger & Biezeveld 2003). Additionally, to maximise the potential of migrants, it is vital to build upon the experience and qualifications that they already have with them when they arrive in the host country. This naturally requires professional recognition and proper assessment of formal and non-formal qualifications including diplomas (Communication 2003).

The Resolution on “Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Guidance throughout life in Europe” by the Council of the European Union (Resolution 2004) states that high-quality lifelong and lifewide guidance is a key compo-

nent of education, training and employability strategies to attain the strategic goal of Europe becoming the world's most dynamic knowledge-based society by 2010. Effective guidance is also seen as a way to promote social inclusion, social equity, gender equality and active citizenship by encouraging and supporting all individuals' participation in education and training and their choice of realistic and meaningful careers. Guidance services need to be available at times and in forms which will encourage all people to continue developing their skills and competencies.

In 2003 and 2004, international reviews of career guidance policies – that together cover 37 countries, 29 of which are European countries – have been released by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, CEDEFOP and the European Training Foundation. These reviews indicate among other things that in all countries policy-makers clearly regard career guidance as a public as well as a private good. The public-policy goals that career guidance services are expected to address, fall into three main categories: *learning goals*, *labour market goals* and *social equity goals* (including social cohesion and equal opportunities for all individuals). A few countries – Finland, Germany and Norway – indicated that career guidance is important in supporting the social integration of migrants and ethnic minorities (OECD 2004). In the new EU member states and candidate countries there does not yet seem to be much differentiated delivery of services that would permit a more effective response to the particular needs of specific groups, such as migrants and refugees (ETF 2003). However, the existence of refugee and immigrant groups who are not well integrated into the labour market or education has in some cases been a factor in the creation of new types of career guidance services, e.g. in Ireland (OECD 2004).

CONCLUSION

As a result of immigration, the racial and ethnic composition of many host countries is changing rapidly. These transformations obviously produce greater cultural diversity. However, national majority people may feel threatened by the increased presence of foreigners, who look and behave differently, speak an unintelligible language and worship alien gods. People may reject not only individual foreigners, but immigrants collectively, arguing that the host country's national "essence" and identity are being undermined. What to do in such a situation?

Maybe guidance counsellors, who are trained and experienced in counselling across cultures, could also have a stronger role to play in removing tension and increasing mutual understanding between majority and minority cultures in education and working life. Intermediary agents as well as change agents are definitely needed to facilitate interaction between mainstream and culturally diverse cultures already today, but even more so in the future. The authors of this publication are convinced that guidance counsellors have a key position in supporting immigrants' integration into society, and that they therefore should joyfully engage themselves with building bridges between different cultures.

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Multicultural counselling – Starting points and perspectives

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING – MEANINGS AND CONTEXTS

Our relation to and understanding of culture has a major impact on our worldview, the way we perceive the world and understand what it is to be a human being. As professionals of various fields in multicultural societies we have an obligation to become more aware of the ways culture affects us and how we affect culture together with our fellow human beings. Particularly professionals in the field of multicultural counselling need to develop their understanding of culture and its implications for counselling. Becoming a multicultural counsellor does not only mean gaining more knowledge of other cultures, but even more it means understanding the complex processes through which people become members of communities and societies and construct their worldviews, basic attitudes, values, norms, etc. (see e.g. Geertz 1973; Maruyama 1992; Seeley 2000).

Counsellors and other professionals need multicultural competencies in order to be better able to take into account cultural diversity of their clients. Perhaps the most well-known way in conceptualising multicultural counselling competencies is the one developed by Sue et. al (1992; 1996). They divide the multicultural competencies into three characteristics of a culturally competent counsellor: 1) awareness of his/her own assumptions, values and biases, 2) understanding of the worldview of a culturally different client, and 3) an ability to develop appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. Each of these characteristics include the following three dimensions: 1) beliefs and attitudes, 2) knowledge, and 3) skills. For more information refer to chapter 11 by Pia Nissilä and Marjatta Lairio.

What is culture? The classic definition by Herkovits (1948, 17) sees culture as that part of the environment that is created or shaped by human beings. Many other definitions place the main stress on those elements in culture which cannot be observed as clearly as the visible elements in our environment. Among the more comprehensive definitions of culture as it relates to multiculturalism is that of Pedersen (1991, 7), which includes the following elements:

- Demographic variables (e.g. age, sex, place of residence)
- Status variables (e.g. social, educational, economic)
- Affiliations (formal and informal)
- Ethnicographic variables (e.g. nationality, ethnicity, language, and religion)

This and other broad definitions of culture suggest that we are dealing with a complex phenomenon which is present in all counselling situations. So, what do the counsellors need to know and do in order to take into account the challenges posed by these cultural factors?

Often cited notions of the need for counsellors to become more aware of and sensitive toward cultural differences have also been criticised in that they are inadequate as such. A broader range of aspects should be taken into consideration in developing multicultural counselling. Differences in cultural backgrounds of counsellors and clients need to be approached and studied from multiple perspectives, as suggested e.g. by Sundberg and Sue (1989):

- mutual understanding of the purpose and expectations of counselling is required
- the intercultural understanding and communication skills of counsellors should be developed
- intercultural attitudes and skills need to be developed
- the external environments of clients should be understood and noted in the counselling process
- universal and culture-specific elements in counselling are distinguished and understood by the counsellor

We need to start by becoming more aware of our own personal history, the paths through which we have become who we are now; culture, or more precisely cultures, are major elements influencing our development here. Furthermore, the reciprocal nature of our relation to cultures is an important aspect in understanding the dynam-

ics of living in multicultural societies. Cultures do not just develop, people develop cultures and living in cultures develop people. These ongoing, never-ending reciprocal processes are very crucial to the counselling profession. Missing either perspective narrows our understanding. Who can understand all these important processes in order to take them into account in guidance and counselling? None of us – alone. We need other people to understand ourselves and our culture, and we can help other people better understand themselves and their culture. Together we can learn from each other and from each others' cultures and start constructing new elements in our cultures which lay down the foundation for a deeper mutual understanding and opportunities to develop something new which was not possible without the others. This is multicultural counselling at its best – to achieve this goal takes time and effort and the task will never be finished. There will always be more to be learned.

One important dimension, or continuum, in understanding the differences between cultures is individualism – collectivism, individualism being characteristic of many Western countries and collectivism of many Asian, African and Arabic countries. The meaning and relation of, for instance, “self” and “personal identity” is quite different depending on where on the dimension we are. As a result of this people perceive their roles and relations to other people and matters in different ways. Without understanding the differences in perceiving the world and one's place in it, it is very hard, if not impossible, to construct common understanding and goals between people coming from other ends of the continuum. (Dumont 1986; Taylor 1989). The existing broad generalisations regarding the characteristics of some worldwide cultural areas, such as African (Helms 1992), Native American (Locust 1990), Asian (Lee 1989; Gaw 1993), and Hispanic (Marin & Marin 1991; Marin 1994), may provide counsellors with some assistance in their navigation among cultural differences, assuming that the danger of overgeneralisations are kept in mind (see appendix 1). A number of chapters in this book will address the above perspectives (e.g. chapters 4, 8 and 10). Readers can then use the literature list to obtain more information on the topics and – even more importantly – reflect upon the topics and start building contact with people representing different cultures in order to develop their own multicultural competencies.

Multicultural counselling includes several different meanings depending on the context of use. First, the common and linking perspective is that multicultural counselling refers to supporting and helping activities where the counsellor/s and counsellee/s are different from each other in terms of ethnicity, race, culture, etc. (see e.g.

Herring 1997; Jackson 1995; Mio et al. 1999). Cultural difference, here, can have different meanings depending on the way it is interpreted (for more see various chapters of this book). The trend that emphasises cultural differences – particularly based on ethnicity or race – is often called as culture-specific (*emic*), whereas the trend that puts more stress on similarities is called universalistic trend (*etic*). Culture-specific perspective is needed in order to respond to cultural differences in such a way that people from other cultures can feel that they are noted and respected as people of their own culture of origin. Universalistic perspective reminds us that people from different cultures share similarities and that all counselling is multicultural in the sense that each individual has his/her own unique personal history and belongs to various cultures – cultures characterised e.g. by gender, social class, sexual orientation, political background, religion, etc. It seems quite clear that both basic perspectives (*emic and etic*) – in their extreme forms – can lead into one-sided understanding of multicultural counselling. Both of them provide important perspectives and a balance between them should be sought.

Secondly, multicultural counselling represents systematic attempts to deal with cultural diversity in counselling. In addition, multicultural counselling also refers to a theoretical force or theoretical trend, which can be seen as the most recent addition to the theoretical forces of counselling (e.g. Hackney & Cormier 1996, 4–8; Pedersen 1991; Sue, Ivey & Pedersen 1996 – see more in chapter 5). Finally, multicultural counselling implies the recognition of the major impact the culture has on us as human beings. Human existence as expressed in thoughts, values, behaviours, attitudes, etc. cannot be understood without considering us as members of larger communities, societies, and civilisations. Meanings and perceptions are constructed together with other people who belong to same and/or different cultures, the culture affects us and we affect the development of the culture together with other people.

The emergence of multicultural thinking in psychology that has traditionally been closely linked to counselling (counselling psychology) has gradually enriched the earlier culture-biased views of psychology (e.g. Sue et al. 1999; Christopher 2001). Also other fields of science that have a cooperative relation with counselling have integrated the idea of culture in their discourses. For instance, educational sciences have addressed this, for example, by developing multicultural education (see e.g. Banks & Lynch 1986; Häkkinen 1998). The increased understanding of the role and nature of culture within the counselling field and within the other fields of sciences linked with it, is of crucial importance because, if counsellors who engage in multicultural

counselling do not have proper understanding of multiculturalism, they may fail to help their clients or even worse, “help” them in a way which may even make their situation worse. This is a serious ethical problem rooted in the fact that many traditional theories used in counselling can be culturally biased, thus creating barriers in recognising the needs of clients who come from a different culture (see e.g. Hobson & Kanitz 1996).

Multiculturalism poses a great challenge to educators of counsellors in Europe and all other parts of the world. Many of the difficulties encountered are the same all over the world: Despite the call to the representatives of counselling and therapy, the majority of the professionals in the field seem to lack proper training in multicultural issues (e.g. Aponte & Aponte 2000). A number of studies dealing with the impact of multicultural counselling training have shown that relatively short training programmes can make positive changes in developing multicultural competencies (e.g. Arthur 2000). There are also important specific topics which should be addressed as part of these training programmes and courses depending on the objectives set; these topics include, for example, racism (Locke & Kisclica 1999) and substance abuse of specific minority groups (Reid & Kampfe 2000) and counselling of refugees (e.g. Bemak, Chi-Ying Chung & Pedersen 2003). Counselling refugees often involves encountering the stressful and traumatic experiences they have had in their past, which in many cases require special attention in the form of therapy and medical treatment (for more on this topic see chapter 17 by Sabine Charpentier in this book).

The topics of multicultural counselling presented in this book have relevance to corporate cultures, as well. Business world is rapidly internationalising, and therefore building good multicultural working environments for personnel coming from different cultures and developing positive multicultural interaction between branches and offices of an international enterprise or a network of companies, has become one of the key issues in organisational development. It is our hope that this book could inspire human resources personnel and business consultants to apply the presented ideas creatively to business environments. We think that e.g. the framework of ‘learning organisation’ (see Senge 1994: Senge et. al. 1996) might provide a fruitful, general basis for organisational learning processes which aim at well-organised and diversity-utilising networks.

Along with development of guidance and counselling training also a broader perspective on developing multicultural societies is needed. This is a common challenge, which requires cooperation of several parties both at national and international level.

Parties should include at least political decision makers and officials at ministry level, curriculum experts and educators, representatives of cultural minorities, national and international associations and professional organisations. Here, the representatives of counsellors and other professionals working with immigrants and other cultural minorities can do their part in advocating and influencing in their societies. It is important to start broadening our understanding of multicultural guidance and counselling by integrating social justice dimension into the more traditional interpretation of guidance and counselling. In general, it is important to note the importance of multiple alternative roles of counsellors in multicultural counselling. According to Atkinson et al. (1993) these roles include adviser, advocate, facilitator of indigenous support systems, facilitator of indigenous healing systems, consultant, change agent, counsellor, and psychotherapist.

BASIC ELEMENTS IN MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING RELATIONSHIPS

Many books and articles have discussed the requirements of a multicultural counsellor, one of the important reasons for this being that there is evidence suggesting that many ethnic-minority clients do not use counselling services or are dissatisfied with them due to inadequate attention to cultural differences and may therefore terminate their counselling prematurely (e.g. Bimrose & Bayne 1995; Lago & Thompson 1996). The desirable, general characteristics of all counsellors are a relevant starting point, particularly as it appears to be that general and multicultural counselling competencies may not be separated, as sometimes has been claimed (see Coleman 1998). These include, for example, caring as a core element (see Combs 1969; Kurpius 1986) and list of characteristics such as self-awareness, sensitivity toward cultural differences, ability to analyse one's own feelings, ability to act as a model to others, altruism, strong sense of ethics, ability to take responsibility for oneself and others, and ability to enhance the counsellee's individual growth (Brown & Screbalus 1996, 67).

How about the cultural background of the counsellor? A number of public services targeted at immigrants in different countries have hired professionally trained immigrants representing different cultural backgrounds to work with immigrant clients sharing a similar background. In many cases this striving for cultural homogeneity has worked well and helped, in particular, newly-arrived immigrants to start feeling at home more easily. However, it is not always possible to find a "cultural match". In

addition, Merali (1999) points out that even though in multicultural counselling a counsellor/client match in terms of similar cultural background is often favoured both in the theory and practice of multicultural counselling, the possible counsellor/client value conflicts can be resolved by a disclosure-based approach. Merali emphasises processes of free will and acculturation as a starting point for resolving the “mismatch” between the counsellor and client and applies the principles of Integrity in Relationships and Responsible Caring, as expressed in the Canadian Psychological Association’s ethical guidelines (for the current version refer to the website of CPA <http://www.cpa.ca/>) in navigating through the mismatch together with the client.

From the point of view of supporting immigrants’ adaptation to a new culture (see more in chapter 11) it may be of help to provide them – if possible – with an opportunity to first work with immigrant workers who have the same cultural background, but later on it could also benefit them to work with professionals who have a different cultural background in order to challenge them in a positive way to a learning process of making sense of the differences between their original and the new culture. Another perspective on counsellor/client match is addressed in studies dealing with ethnic minority clients’ preferences for ethnically similar vs. different counsellors. Coleman et al. (1995) conducted a meta-analysis of such studies and concluded that it was not simply the race or ethnicity of the minority clients which was associated with the counsellor preferences, but their state of ethnic identity development, acculturation, or cultural commitment that made the difference. Some of the aspects dealt with above will next be discussed from the perspective of multicultural counselling relationship.

Sodowsky et al. (1994) have divided so-called general multicultural competency into four sub-factors: multicultural awareness, multicultural knowledge, multicultural skills, and multicultural counselling relationship (for a discussion on the competencies, see chapter 11). The counselling relationship, in general, can be understood as the quality of the interaction between the counsellor and the client (Feltham & Dryden 1993) and traditionally it has often been conceptualised using the following theoretical concepts: transference and counter-transference (based mainly on psychoanalytic/psychodynamic theories), the authenticity of the relationship (based on humanistic theories) and the working alliance (e.g. Celso & Carter 1985, 1994; see also Tähkä 1993 for a comprehensive discussion on the topic, especially transference and counter-transference).

Transference refers to the – mostly unconscious – transfer of clients’ responses and feelings originally related to their earlier significant people towards the counsellor or therapist. Transference can also be related to transfer of responses and feelings toward the culture in the adaptation process to a new (different) culture. *Counter-transference* is used to describe counsellor’s responses to the client which are based on the counsellor’s past significant relationships (Lange 1974). Transference and counter-transference are useful conceptual tools for all counsellors and therapists to understand the dynamics (particularly emotional responses) encountered in counselling and therapy relationships. However, counsellors who do not have proper training or whose counselling relationships are short term should not delve into the unconscious layers of transference but concentrate on the other two dimensions in the counselling relationship: authenticity of the relationship and the working alliance.

Transference and counter-transference have some important implications in multicultural counselling. It is especially important that counsellors are aware of their cultural assumptions, which may include biased views, stereotypes and prejudices. Otherwise they may unconsciously (counter-transference) respond to their culturally diverse clients showing unintentional racism. Also the client may respond to the counsellor according to his/her past experiences with people representing the same culture as that of the counsellor and also he/she may have biased views of the culture. “What does the counsellor represent to the client?” and “what does the client represent to the counsellor?” are useful questions to keep in mind. It is also useful to note that transference and counter-transference often surface during the difficult phases of an adaptation process to a new culture – for more on the adaptation process refer to chapter 11 in this book. (see e.g. Ford, 1987; Pedersen 2003; Ridley 1995; Vontress 1974.)

The authenticity of the relationship was first addressed by Rogers (1957), after whom also other representatives of humanistic theories emphasised the meaning of authenticity, congruence and openness. In a comprehensive review of literature dealing with the topic Gelso and Carter (1985) concluded that especially the conditions of empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence facilitate effective counselling. From the point of view of multicultural counselling it seems evident that the authenticity of the relationship between the counsellor and the client is of utmost importance. Positive basic orientation and respect towards the multicultural client are at the core of the counselling, particularly at the beginning of the counselling. This element of “universal” or “basic” human relationship can be seen as a foundation for

successful multicultural counselling and it should be nurtured and cultivated during the whole counselling process. However, some complementary elements are needed around this core dimension of the multicultural counselling relationship.

The working (or therapeutic) alliance refers to the conscious dimension in the counselling relationship which is associated with attempts to clarify the questions which led the client to seek counselling, namely setting mutual goals, solving problems and finding paths to the future. According to Bordin (1975) working alliance consists of three elements: an emotional bond between the counsellor and client, an agreement on the goals of counselling, and an agreement on the tasks of counselling. Given that multicultural clients may sometimes lack experience of counselling services, or that the services in their country of origin may be different from those in the new country, it is important that the counsellor allocates time for talking about the purpose and the nature of counselling services and explains to the clients what possible other options for getting help there are, how the counselling process evolves and what type of approaches and methods can be used during it. It is also very important to explain that the counsellor and the client are supposed to work *together* to find solutions to the questions the client has. However, negotiating shared goals and collaborative processes is often a challenging task because of cultural differences. For instance, for a client from a collectivistic culture where authorities are highly respected, it may be very difficult to accept the idea of working collaboratively with the counsellor who represents an authority. A number of articles in this book address problems, which make it more difficult to maintain an effective working alliance, and we encourage the reader to use the information in developing better cultural understanding for enhancing the working alliance and also for avoiding cultural misunderstanding, which may create barriers to the working alliance.

A very important aspect in establishing a good counselling relationship is the role of the broader cultural context of the client. In many cases when clients come from a communal or collectivist cultural background, the relations to the family and to other significant members of the community become an important issue. As opposed to the one-to-one counselling discourses typical in Western countries, more extensive combinations of participants are often beneficial when dealing with topics where the role of the family and other community members is strong. Given the differences in family dynamics depending on the cultural background of the client, it is good for the counsellors to familiarise themselves with models and theories which deal with these cultural differences. During the past years a number of interesting works on these

topics have been published, including, for example, those dealing with considerations on the relationship between family, career, and culture (Evans et al. 2002), discussion on diversity issues in family work (Steigerwald 2003) and systematic development of a model for culturally competent family therapy (Ariel 1999).

While summarising the dynamics of multicultural counselling relationships, Ghoudhuri (2003, 30/32) points out that “in the counselling relationship, how the relationship is perceived, what importance it holds, its influence on the outcome of counselling, is all developed through the discourse of the participants. The social influence of the counsellor, the transferential issues of the client, the counsellor congruence, or the client’s ethnic preference, are all *dependent on how the counsellor and client have constructed the importance and particular meanings of such variables.*” [italics by the authors of this article]. In other words, through dialogue with the counsellor the client can create new meanings and thus rewrite his/her narrative, which may lead to new cognitive and affective experiences (White & Epston 1990). Also the ideas presented by Merali (1999; see above) suggest that we should avoid simplified and straightforward interpretations of the counsellor/client match based on cultural similarities. While the cultural similarities/differences as such may have a significant affect on multicultural counselling, the way the counsellor and the client build their working alliance in dialogue seems to be very important as well. Therefore, the counsellor would do well to pay attention to building the counselling relationship bearing in mind the complex dynamics embedded in the different factors affecting it.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This book itself represents diversity: people from several countries and from several different scientific backgrounds and operational environments have written it. The original basic structure of the book was developed by the editors and the editorial group to provide readers with an organised outline for constructing a good picture of multicultural counselling. Each chapter has its own specific function in the book and feedback was given to the writers accordingly. Yet, each writer or group of writers has their own perspectives and emphases in their articles.

The following represent the common starting points that were agreed upon with the authors of the articles:

- The general framework of the publication is based on the idea that by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. Since our learning takes place within communities and societies that share certain common cultural elements, almost all we learn is partly bound to the culture we live in. In order to be able to take perspectives of people from other cultures (note that cultural differences exist also within societies and communities!) we need to reflect on our own basic assumptions we have adopted. Through meeting people from other cultures and engaging ourselves in open dialogues with them and by gaining more knowledge of multiculturalism and multicultural counselling, we can gradually become more competent in multicultural counselling. This will take time and it is a never-ending, interesting and from time to time also a painful process, but worth the trouble!
- Ethics is in many ways at the core of multicultural counselling and therefore all the articles in this book contain discussion of an ethical nature. It is important to note that conceptions of a good life vary among people and cultures. Multiple perspectives on the concept of good life are important in the field of multicultural counselling. However, in order to be able to function, societies and nations need some common ethical principles or ground rules. Therefore relativism as such does not work. On the other hand, absolute principles and rules that can be based on religious thinking, which are interpreted in an overly strict way, may also lead to conflicts and disorder. A dialogical balance between different conceptions of good life is needed. Two chapters of the book (7 and 8) will specifically address questions with a strong emphasis on ethics and philosophy.
- Life course thinking and the supportive role of guidance and counselling in the lifelong learning process is one of the core perspectives in the book. In practice this means, for instance, that guidance and counselling are seen as an integral part of learning. The counselees should be the focus, instead of the system itself. However, in order to properly support their citizens throughout their lives, the systems level must also be considered (see the next point).
- Multiculturalism must be considered from multiple perspectives and levels in order to properly address the challenges of multicultural societies and the needs

for professional development among guidance and counselling personnel across the world. These perspectives include – among others – the following contexts: education and training, employment as well as the social and health sector. Other important aspects are cross-sectoral and multi-professional cooperation in helping immigrant and other clients with their choices regarding training, career, private life, etc. Delivery and organisation of guidance and counselling services in the societies must be developed, bearing in mind the special needs of immigrants and other culturally different minority groups. The complex processes of identity development of both immigrants and professionals working with them are also an important issue and should be considered as an integral part of the life course thinking mentioned earlier and of the development of guidance and counselling services. Multiple perspectives are included in all chapters of the book and some of the special challenges mentioned here are allocated a whole chapter.

After the Introduction, the book is organised as follows:

- Part II Conceptual and philosophical foundation
- Part III Multicultural approaches and methods
- Part IV Best practices in multicultural counselling in different contexts
- Part V Conclusion and future challenges

Part II lays the foundation common to all multicultural approaches, part III discusses the approaches and methods from a general perspective applicable to various contexts, whereas part IV goes more deeply into specific questions related to different contexts. Part V concludes the book and addresses future challenges.

It is our sincere hope that this book – although limited in scope – will inspire and encourage counsellors, counsellor educators, researchers, administrators and policy makers in developing the guidance and counselling services in Europe and elsewhere to meet the challenges of multiculturalism in the continuous search for common good.

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APPENDIX 1. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME MAJOR CULTURES

African cultures

According to Helms (1992) the following are characteristics of African cultures:

- *Spirituality* – belief that immaterial forces, particularly a Supreme Being, determine what happens in people's everyday life.
- *Harmony* – The self and one's surroundings are linked and are intended to work in synchrony.
- *Movement* – Personal conduct is organised through motion and movement
- *Affect-Mind-Body* – The person's emotions, mind, and body form an interconnected triad intended to function in equilibrium.
- *Communalism* – One's group and community determine to a great extent one's identity and the group is as important as one's self.
- *Expressiveness* – One's behavioural style and creative flair express one's unique personality.

Native American cultural characteristics

Locust (1990) suggests the following to be characteristics of the majority of Native American with a tribal affiliation:

- *A belief in a Supreme Creator*, who has a name, a personage, and often a place of residence. The Creator is seen as an omnipotent Spirit controlling all aspects of existence.
- *Humans are composed of spirit, mind and body*, the spirit being the most important since it is seen to define the essence of a person.
- *Plants and animals, like humans, are part of the spirit world.*
- *The spirit is immortal*, and immortality is circular having no beginning or ending. When the body dies, the spirit is free to move into another body or life, until it, after a series of birth-death processes, reaches perfection and returns to the Supreme Creator.
- *Wellness is equilibrium of spirit-mind-body* and illness is a disruption of the mind-body-spirit homeostasis.
- *Disbarmony of unwellness* in the spirit-mind-body triad is caused by suppressed, socially disengaging emotions (e.g. anger or fear) which are seen to cause physical or mental deterioration if spiritual energy is low. Illness or unwellness can result from natural or unnatural causes.

Cultural themes common to Asian ethnic groups

The following themes are seen as common to Asian ethnic groups according to Lee (1989; see also Gaw 1993):

- *Familism* – central role of the family, community, or group.
- *Socialisation takes place within the context of an extended family*, and family activities foster the development of a collectivistic consciousness.
- *Confucianism, Taoism, or Buddhism* is the philosophy by which one's ethics, social relationships, and the role within the community are defined.
- *Interdependence* in the way that the person is expected to function in harmony within his or her social context.
- *Hierarchical relationships* – one's obligation and duties to the group are defined by one's social role.
- *Respect for authority*.
- *Filial piety* – the parent-child bond is more critical than any other.
- *Emotions are expressed through actions rather than verbalisations*.
- *Males are valued more than females*
- *The mind and body are indivisible* in that mental illness or problems may be experienced psychosomatically.

Dimensions of Hispanic cultures

The following dimensions are seen consistently across the Hispanic cultures (Latin, Central and South America) according to Marin and Marin (1991) and Marin (1994):

- *Allocentrism* (collectivism) – personal interdependence characterised by sensitivity to the physical and social environment, empathic understanding of others' feelings, willingness to sacrifice one's own self-interest to benefit one's cultural group, and reliance on in-group or at-home cultural members for sustenance.
- *Simpatia* – a preference for conflict-free social relationships that protect the self-esteem and dignity of in-group members.
- *Respeto* (respect) – respect shown to people because of their status due to gender, age, and family role or position.
- *Espiritismo* – belief in traditional healing and health practices.
- *Marianismo* – a gender role in which the woman is expected to emulate the spirituality of the Virgin Mary and to bear the suffering inflicted upon her by the men in her life. She is also expected to be passive, dependent, and defined by her family and home.

- *Machismo* – the male gender role in which the man is expected to be the primary provider of the family. This role also permits the males to be chivalrous toward women and sexually accessible to many of them.



Antoinette Batumubwira

An immigrant's voice – Complexity of the client-counsellor relation

In this article the author, Ms Antoinette Batumubwira, who came to Finland as a refugee with her family in 2002, will briefly describe the experiences that she has had with Finnish authorities as well as share some viewpoints on what guidance and counselling experts should take into consideration while working with immigrants and refugees.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

During the last two years that I have been living in Finland, I have been a client of two institutions: the social services and the employment office. From both institutions I have had and still have a quality service. I have received normal counselling targeted at refugees arriving in Finland: the help of a social worker and an employment office employee.

As a refugee resettled in Finland from a first country of exile, my family and I have had a “smooth landing” in Finland. From the airport, we were taken directly to an apartment and the following day the essentials of the administrative questions were solved with the help of a social worker. We even had a visit at home where the social worker showed us how to use a stove, a fridge, the taps and other domestic appliances. I found that really funny, and it showed me that even though I have always used this type of equipment, the social worker assumed that I still needed to be trained.

At the first session with our social worker, we were told about our rights and how the financial support system would work. The social worker also told us that my husband and I could have separate meetings. I did not understand the reason for having separate meetings during which we would talk about practical family issues,

such as the monthly allowances. Concerning the monthly allowances, I have never understood how it is calculated, even though our social worker explained it several times. I gave up, so did my husband, and we replaced the time spent on that with more enriching discussions on our future in Finland. However, I have no doubt that the very complex and sophisticated way of calculating monthly allowances raises tensions in relations with the social worker. From my part, the relation established with the social worker was of the type “partnership”. My husband and I have been offered a real quality service. Nevertheless, I observed that as a woman I have received more attention than my husband, who has also noticed that difference. Though I do not complain, I think this can be another reason for tensions with a social worker. One must remember that when a family is helped by the social services it means that the parents, husband and wife, are not able to provide for the elementary domestic needs of their children. For a man from Africa this is already a trauma. Added to that, the Finnish guidance and counselling services seem to give priority to immigrant/refugee women, which is a delicate situation to be handled with care. Fortunately, having a tradition of permanent communication with my husband, we discussed the question and managed through “auto-counselling” to keep the family in balance.

My second experience as a client in counselling in Finland is with the public health nurse, who did my health check-up when I arrived. Knowing that people coming from Africa are usually requested to prove that their vaccinations are valid, my family and I took the precaution of updating all our vaccinations and had a complete health check-up (lung X-rays, HIV AIDS test, etc.). However, it took some time before the nurse accepted that our vaccination cards were valid proof and that we did not need to be vaccinated again. This small incident gave me the feeling that I might not be trusted immediately and that I would have to prove everything I said or presented. I was surprised that one could think that I could lie about a serious subject such as my health or my daughters’ health. Coming from a culture where one does not show feelings directly, my counsellor probably never noticed that I had been hurt.

The nurse had another role: to give me support and prevent any type of depression. She told me that I would see her on fixed dates, but I could ask for an appointment any time, if needed. I must confess that I was surprised by my attitude, I found myself resisting to talk about my problems. As she was insistent, during the second meeting I told her that I did not have any problems to tell her about at that moment. This was partly true, as my main problems were to learn Finnish and find a job. Given that she could not help me in that matter, we only talked about this question once.

Unfortunately she told me that the labour market was really bad for women of my age. I found her response not constructive and, moreover, discouraging. However, I participated in the scheduled sessions and I remember that we have had some good discussions on various subjects that had no direct relation with my personal problems.

Analysing now what happened two years earlier, I think that there was a huge misunderstanding. At that time I needed people who would tell me “you are fine, you are strong and you will succeed in this new country”. I probably relied more on my family to help me handle the problems I was supposed to share with the nurse. I was not prepared to go deep inside myself to share problems that I thought were not related to the concrete issues relevant to the moment. In this regard I was in the category of a client who expects immediate solutions to everyday life problems from the counsellor.

My experience as an immigrant client/jobseeker in the employment office is rather different. In this case the first meeting was aimed at setting up my integration plan. This meeting followed a number of rules that apply to any immigrant and therefore there is not much room for what I would call counselling. I was expecting too much from a service that was functioning in a very routine way. The format seems to me so rigid that even the advice for finding a future job is the same for any immigrant, irrespective of his/her qualifications. I was advised to orientate my training towards professions such as plumber, cleaner, electrician. However, I visited, and I am still visiting the office on a regular basis as it is required from any unemployed immigrant. Usually it is for advice on very technical questions that I go there: to show my residence permit, to inform that I have applied for a specific course, or to confirm that I am still unemployed.

I had a very high level of expectations from counselling in Finland. Once I managed to bring my expectations to a realistic level, I have really taken advantage of the services offered. During the last two years, I have tried to find out what is missing in the counselling, in my immediate family and my friends in Finland or outside Finland.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE CONCEPT “MULTICULTURAL”

The term “multicultural” has somehow replaced the word “multiracial” and sometimes cohabits with the word “multiethnic”. The meaning that the concept “multiculturalism” carries depends on the purpose of use. Even amongst professionals, like

sociologists, psychologists and other human sciences experts, the concept of multiculturalism causes debate.

Amongst average people, multiculturalism could mean: foreign culture, minority culture, different cultures, and immigrants' cultures. When a concept, such as socio-cultural policy, is promoted by decision makers, the word multicultural is a key word for a person of a minority culture to claim a service, a benefit, a specific type of support, to negotiate a place to fit into society at large.

I remember three young men aged between 18 and 30, born of an African father and Finnish mother, watching a TV commercial advertising the autumn clothing collection. Two top models, one black and the other white, were presenting the collection. Then, after a sarcastic laugh, they said "multiculturalism". What does "multiculturalism" bring to mind for them? What do people from a minority culture expect from "multiculturalism"?

In Finland, the country that I have observed the best in terms of integration of immigrants, activities aimed at promoting multiculturalism are too often perceived in terms of duality: Finnish culture on one side and other cultures on the other side. The minority cultures subdivide themselves into different groups according to ethnic or language background. Though this is multiculturalism, its expression is in a very partitioned system with very few cross-cultural bridges. Minority cultures function in parallel to the mainstream culture and therefore could reduce the capacity to participate in society at large.

In this article, as an immigrant, I would like to share some observations and my opinion on the client/counsellor relationship. Essentially, I describe how the client from a minority culture visualises and feels his/her position in the relation with the counsellor. I also suggest attitudes that counsellors could adopt with a view to creating good communication with their culturally diverse clients.

THE CLIENT'S VISION OF THE CLIENT-COUNSELLOR RELATION

One must first acknowledge that counselling in the Western formal way is not necessarily familiar to most of the immigrants. In many societies and cultures, psychological support is not formally offered. The family is the place where psychological problems are taken care of, though the term "psychology" or "counselling" is not specifically used. Therefore, the one-to-one discussion with a counsellor, in an of-

fice, at a specifically arranged time may be totally unfamiliar to the client. However the immigrant knows that he/she is in a new country where many things are different from what he/she is used to. The counselling will count amongst the other numerous things he/she has to adjust to. From the day he/she left his/her country, the immigrant is in a permanent "adjustment mode." What I would like to highlight is that the necessity to adjust for the client is a question of survival. The only question is; adjustment in which conditions and at what pace? Multicultural counselling counts among the crucial supports in the process of immigrant adjustment and integration in the new society.

In the client/counsellor relation, the client is the help seeker. He/she carries with him/her a personal history, including problems that have brought him/her to this place. This personal history also contains success and accomplishment that have constructed him/her. What does he/she disclose to the counsellor? How much trust can he/she put in this relationship? For the client, the counsellor is an official, part of the establishment. For many immigrants, the image of an office and an official asking questions has a bad connotation, and does not necessarily inspire trust. In some cases the suspicion towards the establishment is very strong. One friend of mine told me that each and every item of an immigrant's expenditure is scrutinised and reported to the social worker. There is an impression of being controlled all the time, as if "Big Brother" were watching immigrants. As a result, sometimes information related to the real problem is not made available to the counsellor, because the client does not want to "be in trouble" with the institution. Therefore, the client only opens up partially. The client discloses only information that he/she believes is relevant to solve immediate needs. When the immigrant seeks help, he/she is expecting solutions to his/her problems from the counsellor, or at least to get some proof that things are heading towards a solution. One must also remember that in contrast to Western society and culture, life is usually contemplated in the present, or the immediate future in the immigrant's culture. Long-term plans are not under the control of an individual, long-term vision is under control of a respected representation of authority. The authority could be God, the ancestors, etc... In the new socio-cultural context the client might rely on the powerful establishment, represented by the counsellor, for long-term plans.

I could say that the client's mind is in principle ready to cooperate, to compromise, to adjust, as he/she knows it is essential for the solution of his/her problems. In this regard I may say that the process of counselling starts on a positive note, the

willingness of the client. However, in practical terms the communication with the counsellor must take the complexity of the client into account.

At the moment of the first contact, the client may be asking him/herself:

- 1) How much does the counsellor know about me?
- 2) Does the counsellor really care about me?
- 3) What does the counsellor expect from me?

These are the answers the client could give to him/herself in the best-case scenario:

- How much does the counsellor know about me? The answer could be: the counsellor does not know anything about me, but I know I am a worthy person and I have a lot to share.
- Does the counsellor really care about me? The answer could be: the counsellor may not care about me, but he cares about my problems, he is the person in charge of solving them.
- What does the counsellor expect from me? The answer could be: the counsellor expects an open discussion from me and I am ready to give my opinion on potential solutions.

In the worst-case scenario the answers could be:

- The counsellor does not know anything about me, who I really am, where I am from, what I used to be. The counsellor can't understand my actual problems.
- The counsellor is an employee, I have problems, and his/her job is to receive people who have problems like me. I cannot expect much understanding.
- The counsellor is expecting me to talk about my problems and he/she will find solutions.

I believe that most of the cases are a mix of both scenarios.

Given the complexity of counselling a client of a different culture background, it appears important to clarify the process. The counsellor should try to establish the best possible conditions for efficient communication with the client. The first thing is to explain what counselling is.

THE COUNSELLOR'S POSITION IN THE COUNSELLOR-CLIENT RELATION

The counsellor is in a position of power, he/she is the help-provider. The counsellor is the professional and therefore one can be more demanding towards him/her. The counsellor carries a heavier responsibility in the relation with the client. However, the way of engaging in communication can be decisive in the creation of a shared responsibility with the client in a relation of partnership.

The counsellor needs to find the appropriate way to get to the heart of the problem of the client. In this regard, the counsellor should try to understand the client's worldview. As mentioned earlier, a concept like the past, the present and the future has a different influence on decisions, depending on the culture one belongs to. This assessment helps the counsellor to have an attitude of respect for the client culture. An attitude which gives the client more confidence, self-esteem, and a feeling that his/her culture and beliefs are acknowledged.

Given this positive context, the counsellor is in a better position to listen to the client's history. For the client, it is very important to have an interlocutor who connects with his/her experiences. In a way one could say that the counsellor put him/herself in the client's shoes. At this stage more understanding is built up, opening the way to trust. When trust is won, then a relation of "client-counsellor partnership" can begin.

When the optimal conditions have been created for appeased counselling sessions, tangible results are expected from the client. After each counselling session, the client leaves a comforting one-to-one dialogue and is confronted with the challenges of the "real world". The client expects to see, in practice, the immediate effects of the counselling in daily life. Just as someone brings back tablets from the doctor, the client needs advice from the counsellor which can help solve a specific current issue. The client's family and friends must notice the results of the "talking, talking" sessions. In this regard, the challenge facing the counsellor is to include in his/her approach aspects of the client's socio-economic situation, which is very often the trigger of the general "mal être" of the client.

As is often suggested, multicultural counselling would gain from being practised by a professional from the same ethnic, cultural, background or same country of origin as the client. In this case, the preliminary approach period is shortened, the counsellor is perceived as a member of the community which is in need of care and therefore he/she is trustworthy. However, depending on the circumstances that have

led the client to leave his/her country, especially in cases of refugees, sometimes a counsellor of the same country of origin would not be appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Multicultural counselling is very challenging for both the client and the counsellor. The client has to go a long way from suspicion to trust. When trust is achieved, the client expects tangible solutions that affect his/her daily life. The counsellor should explain upfront what counselling is, what the potential results are and clarify “the rules of the game”. The counsellor also needs to understand and be sensitive to the client’s culture.

ADDITIONAL READING MATERIALS

- Jay, G. December. 2002. *What is Multiculturalism?* Department of English. University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
- Okitikpi, T. 1999 *Intercultural Working: When Three Worlds Collide, Seminar on Social and Health Care Services for Migrants: Ethnic Empowerment and Cooperation*. University of Tampere, Finland.
- Batumubwira A. 2004. *Jokaisella on osuus kotouttamisprosessissa [The route towards integration, the share of everyone]*. Uudenmaan TE-keskuksen julkaisuja.

WEBSITES

- <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/sites/counseling.html>
- http://www.gla.ac.uk/rg/rg_multiculturalguidance_en.htm

CONCEPTUAL AND
PHILOSOPHICAL
FOUNDATION

II





Culture as a starting point and framework for guidance and counselling – Basic concepts and perspectives

INTRODUCTION

Culture is like blood: it flows in our body, but we do not usually see it; it keeps us alive as social beings, but we tend to forget about it; it shapes our living, but we are not normally aware of it. Both culture and blood are made of small cells that can only be distinguished with very accurate analytical devices. As soon as we are born, we start developing our culture which we share with all the members of our group. Our culture will affect and determine our behaviour during all phases of our life. As human beings, we can belong to various cultural groups and, thus, we organise our value system based on the various cultural patterns we identify with. Our shared culture(s) will remain embedded in our existence throughout our private and professional lives.

Guidance practitioners and counsellors working in the multicultural field are not exempted from these conceptual foundations, as they are human and social beings. Their own culture affects their professional performance and competence and filters their perception of the “others”, that is, foreigners and all people who belong to a culture different from their own. If the “others” are from a culture different from ours, we immediately, often unconsciously, perceive the differences to which we immediately, often unconsciously, react. Such a dynamic becomes part of our communication process, and obviously influences our relationships even as multicultural counsellors and our clients.

This chapter begins with an insight into the concept of culture in order to describe the basic dynamics of intercultural communication. It proceeds by presenting some of the most widely known cultural variables that form cultural models.

THE STARTING POINT

There are some basic concepts of multicultural relations that affect all professional spheres operating in an international dimension, whether abroad or at home, when dealing with people with a different cultural background.

Each group has its own social and cultural organisation, which also interacts with other groups. Trade, marriage, and war have always been the basic motivations for interrelations with other, different, people. Desires for knowledge, discovery, and curiosity have led many people to travel to see and describe what “is different from home”. Needs to seek better job opportunities also have a long history that goes back to at least the times of ancient Greece, when craftsmen travelled around to offer their professional skills in architecture, sculpture, painting, etc. Enlarging borders has always implied opening frontiers to the people who were part of the same society and shared the same political rulers and commercial influence. If culture is as old as human beings, intercultural communication is not younger.

Culture comprises knowledge, beliefs, art, morality, law, customs, and any other skill and habit acquired by human beings as members of a society (see, among others, Kroeber 1948). It is a learnt behaviour that we acquire from our parents, teachers, peers, and that we transfer on to our children, pupils, friends, etc. As we grow up, we are taught what is “right” and what is “wrong”, what is “bad” and what is “good”. We are rewarded when we do something “right” and “good”, and punished when we do something “wrong” and “bad”. This is how our behaviour is slowly shaped, determining what become our beliefs, morality, and law. In a word, culture defines *what* we do (knowledge, beliefs, art, etc.), *how* we do it (morality, law, custom), and *why* we do it (beliefs). A culture is a network shared by a group of people who identify themselves with that group. Through behavioural rules, habits, and traditions, they are tied and connected together. However, culture is not static; it is not like a monument that can stand for centuries or even millennia without changing its shape. It is dynamic and continuously adjusts to the current habits and fashions. Even if we are born in the same place and same house of our parents and grandparents, our cultures are not the same. Generation gaps underline how cultures constantly evolve.

People can clearly distinguish between their self, “us”, and “them”, everything else, the “others”. “We” comprises everything that is familiar and comfortable for us, the “others” are whatever we perceive as different from the usual, and thus unfamiliar and insecure. We tend to enclose ourselves in a protective sphere that identifies us

and separates us from the others through some degree of hostility. Such a laceration is a mental attitude that divides “us” from the “others”, creating an in-group (ours) and one or more out-groups (theirs). Foreigners are part of out-groups. They are necessary insofar as they define our in-group. But what are we to them? We are the out-group of their in-group. So, we are all part of in-groups and out-groups, just depending on which side we hold the mirror. If we face it, we see our image; if we turn it around, others will see their image.

Intercultural communication takes place every time we communicate with people from other groups that we recognise as different. It involves any form of communication with people with perceived cultural differences (Dodd 1991). Language is obviously the most evident feature. When we talk to people who do not speak our native language, we need to find different means of communication: a foreign language, if we both happen to know the same one; otherwise, we try to make ourselves understood through body language, with the help of a few sounds, or with the help of a mediator, or an interpreter. But language is not the only cultural difference. On the contrary, there are many others, such as the way we dress, the perfumes we use, the way we greet and look at each other, our concept of work and leisure time, punctuality, friendship, professionalism, physical contact, gender and age roles, and many, many more. If we ignore such differences, we cut off the potential channels of communication. Intercultural communication is a negotiation process of meanings between people of different cultures. We need to explain and make explicit what makes us do what we do. We need to disclose our protective membrane and reveal the rules of our social game, those that we have learnt from our in-group peers; at the same time, we need to learn the game that the others play. In so doing, we come to an agreement, by making concessions and refusals, on the best way to achieve the goal of our communication: understanding each other.

The perception of cultural differences influences our communication tendencies. Not only do we need to adapt our verbal means of communication (language), we also have to reset our entire frame of reference. Our values, thoughts, customs, and lifestyle are challenged as they are confronted with behaviours that do not correspond to ours. Others often do not do things the way we would do them. Thus, we fall into a state of uncertainty: we begin to understand that we cannot expect and anticipate their behaviour (Harris and Moran 2000). At that point, we no longer know what to do, we are even unsure about what is “right” to do. Consequently, a sense of anxiety can assail us. We feel in conflict with the others, who raise biases and

misunderstanding. As we get defensive, we can even become arrogant and hostile to the “others”. All of this is potentially “normal”, as it is mostly generated by our unconsciousness. However, all of this is condemned to failure in both the communication process and the professional relation. If we simply follow our unconscious reactions, personal biases, and cultural prejudices, we preclude any possibility to communicate, work, and interact with people from other cultures.

There is a way to facilitate intercultural relations. We need to bring our unconscious reactions to the surface of our conscious and rational control. Once we are aware that we first think that what – at first sight – seems to be a “wrong” behaviour is just “different” from ours, we start developing a critical approach to our own attitude towards cultural differences. We begin to discover other lifestyles and to find a rationale behind apparently “weird” habits. We learn to manage our reactions and others’ interactions. Cultural differences are not only perceivable between markedly different cultures. We do not need to go deep into the Amazon rainforests, or to Papua New Guinea, or the most exotic place that we think there is to find different cultural behaviours. They are present anywhere, in our work place, in our children’s classrooms, probably also on the bus we ride every day. To some extent, there are cultural differences even between people who speak the same language. Italians are different from Italian-speaking Swiss, French are different from Wallonians, Austrians are different from Germans, Welsh, Scottish, English and Irish are all different, and also different from Americans, Canadians, and all other English-speaking populations. Europe is probably the place in the world most exposed to face so many new challenges of multicultural management (see, for example, Simons 2000). Managing cultural differences is a key issue determining the success of any multinational organisation or institution.

Cultural variables are the different ways we do things in what our in-group recognises as proper. Some of us eat with knife and fork, others use chop sticks, others their right hand. There are proper manners to perform this task that are familiar to those who are part of the same groups or culture. If it can be considered impolite to eat with hands in a culture where people usually eat with knife and fork, it can be quite rude to place a knife on a table where people commonly use their right hand, as they often regard the knife as a weapon.

CULTURAL MODELS

There are innumerable cultural variables. Some of them are more distinguishable than others and can be grouped together in order to define recurrent behaviours shared by the people who belong to their same culture. Clusters of common cultural variables can be separated and compared in order to describe cultural models. Cultural variables and models are generic definitions of some of the most evident aspects of people's behaviours and beliefs within the infinite variability of human cultures and, for this reason, they should not be over-trusted. Nevertheless, they provide some useful tools and methods for understanding and explaining the main features of the various cultures different from our own, which is almost without exception the only one we can really know in depth. They can help people to approach those, perceived as foreigners, who belong to cultures other than their own, and therefore behave differently. Thus, they can be effective means for multicultural counsellors to acquire a general framework of their clients' cultural frames of mind.

Researchers on intercultural issues have identified various cultural dimensions that can provide some orientation in intercultural relations. They should be used as suggestions as to the most evident and describable variabilities in cultural differences. They are not meant to give assertive generalisations, but rather common trends of different people's characteristics. The most frequent ones are described in the following pages. Their main features are presented according to their variable values and consequent behaviours.

LEFT/RIGHT CULTURES

There are different ways to acquire and develop cultural values and behaviours. Usually people learn behavioural rules and practices in the place(s) where they live. If they are born in one place and move to another, as is the case of immigrants, they will bring some of their traditions with them, but also acquire new ones in the other place. Thus, cultural variables are not limited to the geographical location of the place or country of origin. Furthermore, individual differences play a very important role in the choice and implementation of the various cultural features. For this reason, cultural variables are not designated instructions, but are very arbitrary in nature and subject to historical changes as well as personal adaptations.

One of the simplest ways to discern cultural differences is to look at how people, in the various cultures, conceive the “left” and the “right”. In many European societies, the word meaning “left” also means “wicked”, “improper”, “dirty”, or “sinister”. Many cultures assign “impure” tasks to the left hand. In Catholic churches, women used to sit on the left side, and men on the right side of the church. The left is often associated with inversion, such as, for example, the (right) driving side in continental Europe or the Americas, or subversion, as in the case of politics. Some cultures can also define the left hand as the “hand of the devil”, juxtaposed to the right hand “of the angel”. Until recently, pupils using their left hand for writing were forbidden to do so and forced to use their right hand, even if they had a hard time in firmly hold any utensil with their right hand. At formal dinners, in many Western cultures, the most honourable guest is seated on the right of the host, usually the head (man) of the family.

There is no logical explanation for these habits and traditions. The only (weak) justification is that right-handed people are more numerous than left-handed ones. It is even hard to quantify the frequency of left-handedness in a historical perspective as, in the past, left-handed people were usually “corrected” when they were very young so that they may have a blurred memory of which was their originally preferred hand. Now some, but not all, cultures are more tolerant about it. Nevertheless, it remains as a tendency affecting values and meanings of certain actions.

As we have seen, the dichotomy left/right goes well beyond left-handedness or right-handedness (Ekman 1973; Taggart 1982). The use of one or the other hand has implied the entire conception of spatial orientation and social relations. Inside a ceremonial building or around an official table, the right side has a different use than the left one. Even left-handed people shake hands with their right hand because that is the usual custom. Far from expressing an opinion on the matter, we should just take this instance as an opportunity to think how much apparently simple and basically biologically determined orientations affect us. We are not aware of it, if we do not start thinking and noticing people’s habits.

In addition to the way we use and conceive our two different hands, there are different ways to use our senses, and different values we attribute to them.

VISUAL/AUDIO-TACTILE CULTURES

Sight, hearing and touching are not simply natural human faculties. They are also deeply involved in our perceptions and means of communication. In fact, another way to look at cultures distinguishes between those that have a stronger orientation towards visual messages and those who are more sensitive to audio-tactile stimulations. Nowadays, we usually learn by reading written texts, which means that we have developed a strong visual memory. In the past, when only a few people were literate, the remaining majority used to learn from tales, anecdotes, jokes, songs, allegories, fables, parables. Storytellers, parents, older relatives, spiritual clerks were in charge of transmitting knowledge, values and beliefs. These people easily developed their memory from hearing what they heard.

Marshall McLuhan (1962) differentiated between eye-dominated cultures and ear-dominated cultures, and associated the former with rationalism and detachment, and the latter with intuition and community. He argued that the natural human perception has for long been audio-tactile, employing all the senses in receiving messages. When the phonetic alphabet was adopted, it caused an over-development of the visual sense and a gradual under-development of the other senses. The abstract meaning of the words transcribed in written alphabetical symbols favoured a linear and rational way of thinking that was different from the other one, which required a mosaic and intuitive approach. In audio-tactile cultures, people learnt by hand copying, recitation and discussion, which require much time and personal involvement. On the other hand, mechanised printing facilitated and accelerated reading based on standardised printed characters. Such a standardised form of acquiring knowledge affected people's way of thinking. According to McLuhan (1962), it even stimulated a tendency for homogenisation and levelling of knowledge toward agreed and permanent views.

It is widely known that visual communication has become much stronger than audio means of communication in the modern Western world. It has also been demonstrated that a single image is able to deliver large amounts of information in a much shorter period of time than reading or hearing. This may be due to the fact that visual messages seemingly require less attention and concentration. Based on these premises, even economy has adjusted its marketing strategies, and the Western world has been dedicating thorough and expensive research to find the most effective means of translating products for sale into convincing visual messages.

There may be some general rules concerning the effects of visual images, such as shapes (for example, a triangular shape can more easily evoke hierarchy than a circle) and colours (red, for instance, may look more aggressive than grey). However, visual habits are not the same everywhere. This applies to marketing as well as any social relations, as the same sign may mean different things in different cultures. For example, a bride can be dressed in white in some cultures and in red in others. Or, when someone dies, mourning people wear white clothes in some cultures, and black in others.

To sum up, not only international brands must pay attention to the proper use of symbols and wording, seen in the fact that advertisements for the same products may be different according to the local habits, but also any interculturally competent professional should be aware of the power of visual and audio-tactile means of communication.

5-D MODEL

Cultural frameworks affect the behaviour, and thus the efficiency, of employees in multinational business corporations, as well as in international or multicultural organisations. In order to describe cultural differences in a rational and comprehensive way, different researchers have identified a variable number of cultural dimensions, and chosen those that they consider as most influential in people's lives.

Geert Hofstede (1980) carried out one of the earliest studies of this type. He interviewed over 100,000 people employed in the same company (IBM) from 72 different countries. He soon noticed that the same categories were applicable to contexts other than business management, including learning and teaching (1986). As a result, he initially identified four main cultural dimensions, then a fifth one (Hofstede & Bond 1988), that appeared to be common to all cultures, at all levels of professional responsibility (Hofstede 1991, 2001). These dimensions reflect specific cultural values and include: *power distance*, *uncertainty avoidance*, *individualism vs. collectivism*, *masculinity vs. femininity*, and *Confucian dynamism*. As Hofstede's model comprises five cultural dimensions, it has been called the 5-D Model.

Power distance is the distance between individuals at different levels of a hierarchy. This dimension does not only relate to the work place, but any social, political and economic relationship. It concerns the concept that people have towards others in a

higher or lower hierarchical position. Thus, it involves the varying degrees of respect, and all formalities involved with it, such as for example the conception that students have of their teachers, or children of their parents, or the political forms of decentralisation and centralisation, or the acceptance of social equalities, or the hierarchical organisation of companies. Some of the countries that scored highly on power distance in Hofstede's research were: Malaysia, Guatemala, Panama, the Philippines, and Mexico; those with small power distance were: Austria, Israel, Denmark, New Zealand, Ireland.

Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which people organise themselves and their activities in order to avoid uncertain or unexpected situations. The degree of tolerance of the unknown varies among cultures. Those who are very organised often panic when something goes "wrong"; others, seemingly less organised, can be more flexible in handling unexpected events. According to Hofstede, the methods to control uncertainty are mainly three: technology that is seen as protection for citizens from natural dangers and wars; juridical rules that keep human behaviour under control; and religion that transcends reality and human limitations. Some of the countries with high uncertainty avoidance were: Greece, Portugal, Guatemala, Uruguay, Belgium; those with low uncertainty avoidance were: Singapore, Jamaica, Denmark, Sweden, Hong Kong.

Individualism vs. collectivism concerns the relations between an individual and his or her community. In individualistic societies, individuals usually tend to look after themselves and their immediate family. Collectivistic societies have more tight social ties and form strong, cohesive in-groups. Their members look after each other with unquestioning loyalty to their in-group. Countries with high individualism were: the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands; countries with high collectivism were: Ecuador, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Indonesia.

Masculinity vs. femininity refers to the gender division of roles and values in societies. In masculinity-oriented cultures, gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are expected to be more modest, tender, and concerned with quality of life. On the other hand, in femininity-inclined cultures, there is not such a marked distinction in social gender roles. Either men or women can perform jobs and social roles that other cultures consider typical of males or females. As an example, in these cultures, women can more easily do "manly" jobs, such as driving taxis, or working as engineers, while men can do "womanly" duties, such as taking care of the family and household chores.

Masculinity-oriented countries are: Japan, Austria, Venezuela, Italy, Switzerland; femininity-oriented countries are: Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland.

Confucian dynamism is a cultural dimension that became evident when Hofstede worked in the Far East, where Confucius' teachings are common. He realised that some cultures have a long-term orientation characterised by persistence, thrift, and a strong sense of shame. Conversely, cultures with a short-term orientation are characterised by personal steadiness, stability and respect for traditions. People worry about protecting their "face" and reciprocation of greetings, favours and gifts. The concept of "saving face" refers to the formal means of preserving good reputation, dignity and prestige. Cultures with a long-term orientation are frequent in the Far East, but can also be found in other parts of the world, such as some African and Middle Eastern countries.

The 5-D Model has shaped much of the successive research in intercultural relations. Some of the other models that have been subsequently developed, such as the 6-Mental Images, or the 7-D Model described in the following pages, are further developments and revisions of Hofstede's original dimensions.

6 MENTAL IMAGES

As a development of Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions, societies can be divided into six main different mental frameworks that influence people's actions and behaviours. They have been termed as follows: *the contest model*, *the network model*, *the organisation as a family*, *the pyramidal organisation*, *the solar system*, and *the well-oiled machine*. They incorporate and group Hofstede's dimensions, in order to provide practical and up-to-date suggestions for the most common characteristics of people in the various countries (for further information, see www.itim.org).

The contest model implies that 'the winner takes all'. It is peculiar to highly competitive cultures, where power distance is low, individualism is high, masculinity is strong, and uncertainty avoidance is low. Anglo-Saxon cultures, including the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia and New Zealand, typify the contest model.

The network model is typically based on consensus. It is common in cultures where power distance is low and individualism is high, like in the previous model, but – in this case – femininity, and not masculinity, is strong. This model entails that every-

one, with any gender role, is supposed to be involved in decision-making processes. It is characteristic of the Scandinavian and Dutch cultures.

The organisation-as-a-family model is founded on the loyalty and hierarchy of its members. It features cultures where power distance is high and collectivism is also high. Masculinity is strong, being based on dominant paternalistic leaders. Its members have a strong sense of loyalty to their in-group. This model is exemplified by countries such as China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore.

The pyramidal organisation is similar to the previous one, being based on loyalty and hierarchy, but it also entails implicit order. It implies high power distance and collectivism, and stronger uncertainty avoidance. It symbolises much of Latin America (especially Brazil), Greece, Portugal, Russia, and Thailand.

The solar system defines those cultures with a powerful hierarchy and an impersonal bureaucracy. Like the pyramidal organisation, it relies on high power distance, but also on stronger individualism. It can be found in Belgium, France, Northern Italy, Spain, and French-speaking Switzerland.

The well-oiled machine comprises cultures with a strong emphasis on order. It features low power distance and high uncertainty avoidance. People from these cultures rigorously follow careful procedures and rules. Hierarchies are not too important for them. They are typical of Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and German-speaking Switzerland.

7-D MODEL

Fons Trompenaars (1994) revised Hofstede's 5-D Model, emphasising different theoretical hypotheses and methodological practices. While Hofstede based his premises on theories stemming from individual psychology and A. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, Trompenaars focused his perspective on social behaviours and relational orientations. Moreover, Trompenaars developed his model from interviews with several business companies (e.g., At&T, Heineken, Lotus, Motorola, Volvo), unlike Hofstede, who concentrated on a single company, and only took into account the viewpoints of managers and executives. Trompenaars interviewed employees at all employment levels. As a result, Trompenaars recognised three main cultural variables, one of them with five sub-categories, totalling seven dimensions,

hence called the 7-D Model. The first one is *relationships with people*, which includes *universalism vs. particularism*, *individualism vs. collectivism*, *affective vs. neutral*, *specific vs. diffuse*, and *achievement vs. ascription*; the other two cultural variables are *attitudes to time* and *attitudes to the environment*.

According to Trompenaars, *universalism* refers to the obligation to respect certain standards that are universally accepted and to treat all people in the same way. On the other hand, *particularism* is based on the evaluation of precise circumstances. In certain cultures, although there are fixed rules, people can often find reasons to break some of them, due to special given circumstances. Universalism, for example, is common in Switzerland, Canada, the USA, Sweden, Australia, the Netherlands; particularism occurs, among others, in Venezuela, Korea, Russia, China, India.

Individualism and *collectivism* relate to how people consider themselves. Individualistic cultures give more importance to individuals, whereas collectivistic ones put more emphasis on people as part of a group. Individualism is found, among others, in Israel, Canada, USA, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, Australia; collectivism, for example, in Egypt, Mexico, India, Japan, France, China.

People from cultures with a prevailing *affective* attitude openly express their feelings and show them also in their work place, while those with a *neutral* approach tend to be more objective and detached. Emotional cultures include Kuwait, Egypt, Spain, Russia, Argentina, France, Italy; neutral ones are, among others, Ethiopia, Japan, Hong Kong, China.

In some cultures, professional relationships are usually limited to the *specific* circumstance of the time and the place dedicated to the working environment; in others, they tend to be *diffuse*, that is, they involve colleagues' personal and private life. Specific attitudes recur in Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Canada, the USA; diffuse ones are found in China, Nigeria, Kuwait, Venezuela, Singapore, Korea.

Finally, the dimension of *achievement vs. ascription* distinguishes between cultures where people are evaluated on the basis of the results that they achieve, and those where they are considered according to their status and prestige ascribed to them. In the former case, individuals can be appreciated for what they do, in the latter they are acknowledged for what they are, together with their families and their personal histories. The former applies to Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Germany; and the latter to Egypt, Argentina, the Czech Republic, Korea, Poland, Japan, China, for example.

The second main cultural dimension suggested by Trompenaars is *attitudes to time*, which implies what consideration people have of past, present, and future time, and how they manage their time. In some cultures, the past is less important than the present or the future, such as for example in Japan and the USA; in others, the results of the past can to a great extent influence the present and the future, such as in France and Spain. A further distinction regards time management. Some people are used to doing one thing after another, and do not begin doing something else until they have completed the previous activity. These people are defined as sequential. They are common, for example, in the USA, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. On the other hand, there are others who tend to do several things at the same time and have a synchronic attitude to the management of their time, such as in Mexico, France, and Italy.

The third dimension concerns *attitudes to the environment*. Throughout history, there has been a change from the fear that nature could overcome human existence to the opposite threat that humankind may destroy nature. Some societies believe that they should control nature by developing a specific technology; others prefer to accept natural laws and forces, without trying to change them. The majority of those who believe it is worth trying to control nature are, for instance, from Brazil, Portugal, Hungary, Nigeria, and China; those who tend more to accept nature are from Japan, Egypt, Austria, Singapore, Sweden.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To sum up, people usually tend to distinguish between “us” and the “others”, and to separate them, the in-groups, from the others, the out-groups. This categorisation is a natural process of recognition of one’s identity. However, it should not be regarded as a static means of any kind of evaluation or judgement.

Cultural differences should not be ignored. They should be acknowledged, respected, and used as means of communication through the channels of intercultural communication, which requires negotiating meanings of cultural values and behaviours between different people. Successful experiences have indicated to explain and make explicit what we do, to reveal the rules of our social games, and to learn the games that the others play. In so doing, we come to an agreement, by making concessions and refusals, on the best way to communicate by understanding each other.

The recognition of the importance of cultural variables in both the professional and educational worlds is the most relevant advantage of cultural models. It should be kept in mind that cultural variables are quite arbitrary and, therefore, we should let go of our evaluative judgements, and instead use these concepts to facilitate communication and effective working relationships.

Different types of models have been discussed in order to show various perspectives of describing cultures in a simplified way. They could be used as a tool for foreigners to understand some characteristic elements of other cultures. By no means should they be viewed as a way to create generalisations and biases on scarcely known cultures. Instead, they aim at providing general cultural knowledge which can be used to form hypotheses and to cross-check with individual client experiences.

The various methods are presented with no particular order or intentional preference. There is no model that applies better than any other of them. All models are valuable tools and should be conscientiously used by multicultural counsellors and intercultural practitioners. Their use is not related to any specific cultural background or to any intellectual level of people. Although they were mainly created and have mostly been applied to the business world, they can be efficiently implemented with people in any social or economic position. Hofstede's model, for instance, has also been applied to the learning environment and has been successfully used in classrooms.

By using such models, professionals, counsellors, guidance practitioners, and educators have some orientation frameworks that can act as a starting point of their approach to intercultural relations with people from cultures they are not familiar with. Once they have identified the basic characteristics of "other" cultures, they can evaluate potential behaviours and consequences. Furthermore, such models help practitioners in the field of guidance and counselling to give advice and suggestions in a way that is most efficient and appropriate for their immigrant clients.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

- 1) How do potential conflicts occur due to cultural misunderstandings?
- 2) How can the cultural frameworks in the chapter help counsellors better understand their clients' behaviour?
- 3) Taking the various models of cultural dimensions, which dimensions do you think you personally belong to?
 - High/low power distance
 - Strong/weak uncertainty avoidance
 - Individualism/collectivism
 - Masculinity/femininity
 - Long-term/short-term orientation to time
 - Universalism/particularism
 - Individualism/collectivism
 - Affective/neutral
 - Specific/diffuse
 - Achievement/ascription
 - Sequential/synchronic
 - Nature controls humankind/humankind controls nature
- 4) Once you have defined your personal cultural characteristics, try to identify those of your client(s), and compare them with yours.

Case Study

Lucia goes to an information desk for foreigners in Germany to get the phone number of the human resources department of a chain of restaurants where she would like to apply for a job as waitress. As she does not speak German fluently, she asks for the help of her friend Victoria, who is also from Moldova, but speaks better German than her. Once they get the information they need, Victoria calls the human resources department of the company. The

person who answers understands Victoria, but seems to make fun of her and hangs up. Victoria tries again. The same person answers and hangs up again. Lucia and Victoria are quite frustrated and decide to ask a German colleague to make the phone call for them. She calls and soon obtains an appointment for an interview for Lucia.

Try to process the case study with the help of the following questions and then discuss your ideas in small groups before presenting them to a plenary session.

- What went wrong?
- What happened between Lucia and Victoria and the local people?
- How can language competency affect professional relations?
- Were there other variables, apart from language, that played a role in the relationships between the Germans and the Moldovans described in this case study?
- What advice should have been given to Lucia?
- Why did the staff of the human resources department not take Victoria seriously?

Some of the topics that could be discussed include the existence of prejudices against foreigners, which appear as soon as one speaks with a foreign accent (even when s/he knows the local language), and the encouragement of raising the awareness that counselling should not only involve immigrants, as they are only one end of the dynamic process. At the other end there are nationals, such as human resources personnel, who may also need to be trained on multicultural issues in order to effectively enhance training efforts.

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- For further information on Hofstede's list of national cultures and graphical explanations of his model see <http://www.itim.org>



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From early steps to a “fourth force” in counselling – Historical and current perspectives on the development of multicultural counselling

INTRODUCTION

The history of multicultural counselling is actually quite long, if counselling is understood broadly as a means to deal with cultural differences. As, for example, Jackson (1995) has noted “multiculturalism has an established history. For centuries, people of different cultural backgrounds have recognised the existence of problems associated with communicating with people from other cultural backgrounds (p. 4).” Furthermore, referring to Lateiner (1989), Jackson points out how an early figure in history and anthropology, Herodotus of Halicarnassus, had studied the history of the fifth-century wars between Persians and Greeks. Herodotus travelled widely and made interesting observations concerning cultural differences. This made him claim that “custom is stronger than law”. This and many other similar examples indicate clearly that in the history of humankind the existence of cultural diversity has been recognised and people have tried to find means to cope with it. However, as a theoretical and practical approach within modern guidance and counselling systems, multicultural counselling is still young, but getting stronger.

Given the fact that North America, the United States in particular, has had a strong impact on the development of guidance and counselling in Europe, it is important to discuss the historical perspectives using North American literature. The developments of multicultural counselling in North America have often been reflected in the developments in Europe. The review will not cover all important aspects of the history of multicultural counselling and is limited to literature in English. Regard-

less of all the limitations, we hope the review will help the reader to get a better understanding of how multicultural counselling has evolved and to recognise its connection to the developments in societies in general. It is important to understand that also the emergence of multicultural thinking in various sciences and helping professions can be understood as a part of more general developmental trends in our societies – without forgetting that new ideas always need individuals who are willing to commit themselves to presenting and facilitating the new ideas with enthusiasm and persistence.

The current phase in the development of multicultural counselling, often referred to as a “fourth force in counselling”, will be discussed more thoroughly to provide the reader with a broader perspective on multicultural counselling as a theory trend, a “force” in counselling. This phase is not yet established, but it is gradually taking shape and creating discussion in our societies. At the end of the chapter we will discuss briefly how the societal framework should be considered as we apply theories of counselling in the specific structures of our countries.

EARLY STAGES OF MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING IN MODERN SOCIETY

The history of multicultural (cross-cultural) counselling and psychotherapy in the United States is a long one compared to the majority of other countries (e.g. Copeland 1983). According to Aubrey (1977) the roots of the guidance and counselling movement in the United States can be traced back to the early 20th century when it was almost exclusively focused on vocational guidance. Later on psychological counselling came into existence as well. Although some vocational counsellors tried to find ways to address the vocational needs of ethnic minorities in the USA, during the first decades of the 20th century minorities were often excluded due to discrimination and prejudice and the perspectives on cultural background were limited. The American Counselling Association (ACA) was officially established in 1952 under the name of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (Herr, 1985; Jackson 1995).

During the 1940s and 1950s, African-Americans and other minorities were also a very small minority in the counselling movement. These early stages of multicultural counselling witnessed segregation, racism and prejudice, and the goal of guidance and counselling targeted at minorities concentrated on assimilation of the minorities into mainstream American society (Copeland 1983; Jackson 1995). Gradually, during the

1950s a number of articles were published on issues related to the role of culture in counselling and attention was paid to the difficulties in helping minorities (see e.g. Davidson et al. 1950; Mussen 1953; Siegman 1958).

An important European figure in the field of guidance and counselling, Hans Hoxter, founded the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) with his colleagues in 1951. He also established and acted as a president of the International Roundtable for the Advancement of Counselling (IRT-AC). He was born in Frankfurt, Germany, from where he moved to France, and later, in 1935, to England. Before his death at the age of 93, he was involved in many ways in helping people and facilitating guidance and counselling. Ivey (2003) pointed out that Hans Hoxter was among the first persons to acknowledge the importance of cross-cultural and multicultural counselling. His influence in the development of guidance and counselling in the world, especially in Europe (Britain in particular) (see Inskipp & Johns 2003; Watts 2003), and in United States (see Herr 2003) is widely recognised.

Considering the development of multicultural counselling in Europe from a more general perspective it is important to note that the establishment of guidance and counselling services as a planned and organised activity is related to late industrialisation, and an important boost for the development of these services was given by the social and work force related challenges confronted after the Second World War. In a way, Europe mirrored the developments in the USA in that the systematic development of guidance services was first related to work placement-oriented activities targeted especially at young people. The counselling services were used to address the social problems in post-war Europe. During the 1950s many European countries gradually adopted ideas from the American-born guidance movement. It is also worth noting that, for example, in the UK the early stages of counselling were related to the historical development of responding to social problems by using experts, many of whom had a more or less psychotherapeutically oriented approach. This may partly explain why sometimes counselling has misleadingly been understood as an extension of psychotherapy (McLeod 1998). In some other European countries, such as in Finland, the development of guidance and counselling services has been less based on psychology and psychotherapies. Given all these historical processes, Europe should not be regarded as a coherent region in terms of how the guidance and counselling services have developed, even though nowadays the European Union has launched initiatives for harmonising some macro-level systems in its member countries (see e.g.

Killeen & Kidd 1996; Dryden, Mearns & Thorne 2000; Resolution 2004; Watts & Kidd 2000; see also Popova 2003).

If the 1950s saw the slow birth of the multicultural counselling movement in the USA, then the 1960s could be seen as the decade of its infancy (Jackson 1995, 8). The civil rights movement and the passage of the Civil Rights act in 1964 had a strong impact on the development of multicultural counselling in the sense that it created space for a broader understanding of cultural differences that recognised the rights of different groups in society. At that time the goals of counselling started to change from assimilation to recognition and appreciation of cultural differences (Cope-land 1983). Furthermore, as Jackson (1995) notes, the 1960s were important also in the sense that research on multicultural issues in counselling became more active. A number of researchers, such as Wrenn (1962), Peterson (1967), Reed (1964) and Vontress (1967, 1969), paid attention to the needs of the “culturally different” and “culturally disadvantaged”. These and other similar contributions paved the way for studies on multicultural counselling in the 1970s. These events started slowly to affect Europe as well.

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING BECOMES AN IMPORTANT ISSUE IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING (1970s AND 1980s)

During the 1970s interest in multicultural counselling and related issues grew and the number of research studies and articles increased substantially in the USA. The roots of multicultural counselling lie partly in changes of psychology, where gradually a more critical understanding of the limitations of traditional Western psychology with its culture-bounded history emerged (see Robinson & Morris 2000). Among the first influential authors taking this critical perspective were Sue & Sue (1971) and Vontress (1971). While the term *minority counselling* was frequently used during the 1960s, the 1970s brought in the terms often used also today: *cross-cultural and multicultural counselling* (Jackson 1995, 10–11). These changes in terminology were later reflected in the names of professional organisations, as well. For instance the Association for Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance (ANWC), established during the 1970s, later changed its name to the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) (see Parker & Myers 1991).

D’Andrea and Daniels (1995) discuss the development of multicultural counselling in terms of changes in professional organisations and point out how during the 1970s and 1980s the active supporters of multicultural counselling were influencing those organisations in order to promote a more profound recognition of multicultural counselling. One particular concern was the lack of such training programmes that included multicultural issues as an important part of the training. At the end of the 1970s only about 1 % of the counselling psychology training programmes in the USA required courses in multicultural counselling (McFadden & Wilson 1977), whereas at the beginning of the 1990’s already 89 % of the counselling psychology programmes offered a multicultural-oriented course (Hills & Strozier 1992). It also seems important for the development of multicultural counselling that socio-political thinking in the society recognises the needs of cultural and other minorities in order to make the necessary changes happen (D’Andrea & Daniels 1995; Katz 1985).

A selection of comprehensive publications on multicultural counselling appeared during the 1970s and especially during the 1980s including, e.g. Pedersen et al. (1976), Pedersen (1987), Marsela & Pedersen (1987), and Sue (1981). There were also many other influential writings on the role of culture on human development at that time (e.g. Adler 1974; Copeland 1982; Pedersen 1988). In summary, the focus of multicultural counselling has changed from an emphasis on the client (in the 1950s) to the counsellor (in the 1960s) to the whole counselling process (1970s, 1980s and 1990s) (Gladding 1996).

Europe started adopting ideas from the “multicultural counselling movement” in North America. However, as noted among others by Bimrose (1999) and Moodley (1999), the development has been slower, and thus multicultural counselling has only gradually started to affect the thinking of professionals working in the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING AS A FOURTH FORCE IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Starting points

During the 1990s multicultural counselling was already quite well established in the sense that the importance of cultural perspectives in counselling was quite well

recognised, although there was and still is a lot to be done in the field. One example of the more recognised status among the professional organisations in the USA were the guidelines provided for counsellors to address the special needs of various cultural and other minorities (Guidelines 1993). Pedersen's (1991) special issue of the *Journal of Counseling and Development* focusing on multiculturalism as a fourth [theoretical] force in counselling was among the first publications which explicitly opened the discussion around this particular perspective. According to Pedersen's interview (see Sandhu 1995), he wanted to point out the generic validity of the multicultural perspective. The following sections deal with the development of multicultural counselling as a generic theoretical force. Many experts in multicultural counselling agree upon this line of thinking, but some have also made critical comments. The critical voices have mainly focussed on the problems seen in the generic perspective which according to critics may ignore cultural differences and lead to poor success in counselling cultural minorities (see e.g. McFadden 1996; Sue et al. 1998).

The traditional theories of counselling and psychotherapy have evolved in a Western cultural environment. They emphasise the feeling self (humanistic-existential), the thinking (cognitive), the behaving (behavioural) or the social (family systems) selves (Sue et al. 1996). Each of these theory families emphasises important, but in some respect narrow, aspects of human nature, and all of them almost completely lack the dimension of cultural diversity. Therefore, a more holistic theoretical approach to counselling and therapy was required to meet the needs of culturally and ethnically diverse populations. This section of the chapter will deal with multicultural counselling as one of the theoretical forces.

According to Herring (1997) two distinct trends have dominated the field of multicultural counselling. *The universal trend* emphasises that all counselling is multicultural in the sense that, for example, all individuals belong to many cultures that have different values (see e.g. Fukuyama 1990; Gladding 1996; Patterson 1996). For example, a black, disabled man from an ethnic minority is related to his ethnic culture, the culture of blacks, the culture of the disabled, including the combinations of these. Pedersen (1991) discusses multicultural counselling as a generic approach in counselling. In multicultural counselling a counsellor and a client have some similarities and differences. The differences are generated by a certain culture via the effects of socialisation or child-rearing in a certain ethnic community (Locke 1990, 18). Given that people have unique personal histories that make them different, all counselling relationships can therefore be considered multicultural. Some authors sup-

porting the universal trend have also analysed the applicability of some conventional theories in multicultural counselling. For instance, Patterson (1996) claims that Carl Rogers’ theory of person-centred counselling is neither culture- nor time-specific (see also Freeman 1993; Usher 1989). Others, such as Courtland (1996), have adopted an opposing, culture-specific view, and emphasise specific national cultural traits and are more critical towards using conventional theories of counselling in multicultural counselling.

The *culture-specific trend* emphasises the importance of understanding and responding to the special nature of certain cultural groups in counselling and at the same time of keeping in mind that clients should be seen both as individuals and as members of a culturally different group (see e.g. Locke 1990, 1992; Nwachuku and Ivey 1991; Patterson 1999). According to this trend, a cultural group is defined mainly by race and ethnic background. Nwachuku and Ivey (1991) note that culture-specific counselling approaches the counselling of specific cultural groups by asking questions such as “ ‘How does a particular culture view the helping relationships?’ ‘How do they solve problems traditionally?’ ‘Are there new specific counselling skills and ways of thinking that make better sense in the frame of reference of the culture than typical Euro-North American systems?’ (p.107).” Culture-specific counselling first tries to form an understanding of the culture and then moves on to action where the theory is applied.

The opponents of the culture-specific trend criticise it because of problems related to potentially harmful generalisations. For example, Patterson (1996) is sceptical towards using knowledge about various ethnic minorities, because he thinks it implies generalisations and that it might even lead to self-fulfilling prophecies. On the other hand, e.g. Nwachuku and Ivey (1991), who focus on counselling skills in their model of culture-specific counselling, point out that without paying proper attention to specific cultural groups we may apply generalisations and stereotypes based on our dominant Western thinking. One major problem in the culture-specific trend is that – regardless of the type of interpretation made of it – counsellors and other professionals (such as social workers and mental health specialists) are not able to acquire in-depth understanding of all the specific cultural groups they encounter in their daily work.

Sue et al. (1992) point out that the universal and focused multicultural trends are not necessarily contradictory. Both offer legitimate issues and views that can enrich our understanding of multicultural counselling. A number of other authors have also not-

ed that both perspectives are needed: in Jackson's (1995) words "multiculturalism has arrived in the counselling profession. With its arrival come the challenges of understanding unique cultural differences without repudiating the commonality of the human species. (p.13)" Correa (1990, 131) noted that "it is of utmost importance to understand that ignoring differences among people is just as dangerous as stereotyping groups of people from different cultures." Wrenn's (1962) earlier adopted concept, cultural encapsulation, is related to an extreme form of the universalistic ("etic") approach to cultural differences. The extreme "etic" approach disregards cultural diversity and overemphasises universal elements. In contrast, the extreme culture-specific ("emic") approach overemphasises cultural differences and disregards similarities. For practitioners it is important to seek a balance between these extremes (e.g. Draguns 1981; Pederson 1996). Fisher et al. (1998) propose consideration of the common factors found in psychotherapy and healing across cultures as a means to build a closer connection between universal and culture-specific trends.

Although there still exists a debate around the two major trends, universal and culture-specific, the differences are not as big as they used to be and it seems that gradually these two trends are being integrated. The following sections will deal with multicultural counselling as one major theoretical approach among other existing approaches in counselling and they will show how the above two trends have merged to complement each other.

Multicultural counselling among other major theoretical approaches in counselling

Four major theoretical approaches or systems can be identified in counselling and psychotherapy: psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, existential-humanistic and multicultural counselling (Pedersen 1991; Hackney and Cormier 1996). The first three theoretical forces will be briefly introduced below and then the emphasis will be laid on presenting the main elements of the fourth force, multicultural counselling. In relation to the existing theoretical approaches used also in European countries, one must be aware, as a guidance practitioner, of the fact that (see Sue, Ivey, Pedersen, 1996):

- Psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, and existential humanistic theories claim to base their clinical practice on scientific hypotheses. However, counselling could more truthfully be described as being guided by cultural hypotheses.

- Western-oriented theories of counselling and psychotherapy – whether psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, or existential-humanistic – reflect the values, norms, customs, philosophies, and language of Euro-American culture.

The first theoretical force covers *psychodynamic theories*, which, for example, include psychoanalytic therapy (Sigmund Freud) which is based on psychoanalysis and Jungian therapy (Carl Jung), the theoretical base of which is also analytical (Hackney and Cormier 1996). Psychoanalytic theories explore the private personality and the unconscious motives that direct behaviour. Psychoanalytical theories are also concerned with the way in which personality develops. For example Freud compared the human mind to an iceberg. The small part that shows above the surface of the water represents conscious experience; the much larger mass below water level represents the unconscious, a storehouse of impulses, passions, and inaccessible memories that affect our thoughts and behaviour.

The *cognitive-behavioural theories* form the second theoretical force. According to the cognitive-behavioural approach, the behaviour and feelings of people are affected by consequences, rewards and punishments, and by the way that we perceive and think about our lives. The various theories are characterised by, among other things, interactional patterns and roles (e.g. Structural family therapy by Minuchin and Haley); interpretation, confrontation and contract (e.g. Transactional Analysis by Berne); as well as by responsibility-oriented, reality-based and rational approaches (e.g. Rational-Emotive Therapy by Ellis) (Hackney and Cormier 1996).

The *existential-humanistic theories*, such as Gestalt therapy (F. Perls) and Logotherapy (V. Frankl), belong to the third theoretical force (Hackney and Cormier 1996). For instance, existential psychotherapy is concerned with people’s ways of dealing with the fundamental issues of human existence, the meaning and purpose of life, isolation, freedom and the inevitability of death. In this approach increased awareness of the self is more important than exploration of the unconscious. Humanistic therapies overlap considerably with existential approaches and emphasise the growth and fulfilment of the self, through self-mastery, self-examination and creative expression.

It is important to note that many of the Western theories of counselling expect the clients to show a certain degree of openness and be active. The psychodynamic and humanistic theories focus on verbal discussion of thinking, experiences and emotions. The role of the counsellor is to reflect on expressions by the client, which

hopefully leads to insight or deeper understanding in the client. Persons who do not wish to open themselves up may be considered resistant and defensive. In addition, counsellors often stress how important it is that the clients are assertive, active and able to make their own decisions and then act upon them. When working together with a client coming from a different cultural background, the counsellor may find that this approach does not work. In some cultures people are taught to be respectful when communicating with an older person who is considered to be wiser and has a higher standing in the social hierarchy. Counsellors may regard a “silent” client as a person who has difficulty in expressing him/herself. Most forms of guidance and counselling presuppose a form of intimacy and openness. In this area, great cultural differences exist in relation to opening up and speaking about private matters with a stranger – in this case with the counsellor. This may be quite an absurd thing to do for people with a certain cultural background. Private matters are often only discussed with a few very close friends that one has known for several years, not during a 30-minute session with a stranger (Pedersen 1977; Sue & Sue 1990).

Self-awareness forms an integral part of Western culture. The ‘self’ is a fundamental assumption in our culture. This becomes visible in the shape of individualism and pervades our relations to others. In guidance and counselling, this results in speaking about self-awareness, self-confidence, self-realisation and making our own decisions. The self is a unified concept, which directs our way of thinking, puts our actions into perspective, serves as a source for our motivations and a focus point for our decisions. We experience an “I-me”-orientation as positive, identity is not understood as a “self” separate from the group in other cultures. It is a typical misinterpretation when guidance practitioners think that Asian guidance clients depend more on others, are not able to make decisions and are less mature. Actually, many Asian people do not consider decision-making to be their individual business (Pedersen 1997).

A large part of guidance and counselling theories developed in the West are deeply rooted in an analytical and linear way of thinking typical of Western cultures. This is shown, for example, in the way the counsellor asks the client questions and responds to him/her. The guidance and counselling models are usually divided into certain logical phases. The emphasis on logical thinking contrasts markedly with the philosophy of some other cultures, which perceive the world from a more holistic perspective and emphasise the harmonic aspect of the world. Many non-

Western cultures emphasise intuition and non-linear thinking, which differ considerably from an analytical reductionist demand for cause and effect often implied or explicitly expressed in Western thinking. As a response to these and other related challenges, multicultural counselling as a theoretical approach is seeking ways to recognise the limitations of Western theories and narrowing the gap between the West and the “Rest”.

Multiculturalism and multicultural counselling – as noted earlier – has been proposed as a fourth force in counselling by Pedersen and other authors working in the field of multicultural counselling.

Multicultural Counselling and Therapy (MCT) developed by a number of authors, especially by Ivey, Sue and Pedersen (1996), is the fourth theoretical force. MCT has contributed to changing the thinking in psychology from a Eurocentric, deductive theoretical approach to a perspective-centred, inductive approach to the study of human behaviour by stressing the significance of culture in determining perspective and by laying bare the assumptions, values, and biases typical of Western theories. MCT can be seen as a meta-theoretical approach, because it acknowledges that all modes and theories of helping arise from a particular cultural context and that cultural views of reality are social agreements developed in relation to interpersonal exchange.

MCT combines the universal and focused/culture-specific trends. In multicultural counselling, the guidance practitioner must be aware of his/her own cultural baggage and of the values that influence the different theories used in educational and vocational guidance and counselling. Culturally skilled counsellors need to have a clear understanding of the culture-bound, class-bound and monolingual characteristics of counselling and how these may clash with the cultural values of minority groups if attention is not paid to these possible problems. MCT is a metatheoretical perspective that recognises the importance of culture as an internalised, subjective perspective. It rests on the assumptions that all theories of counselling are culture-bound and that their values, assumptions and philosophical bases must be made explicit. It is important to notice that as a metatheory MCT does not intend to replace the other existing theoretical approaches and methods but it calls for a proper cultural analysis of them and encourages counsellors to widen their repertoire of theories and methods to be able to flexibly respond to the needs of diverse clients in counselling (Sue et al. 1996).

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF A THEORY OF MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING AND THERAPY

In general, it can be said that Western-oriented theories of counselling and psychotherapy – whether psychoanalytic, behavioural, humanistic or cognitive – reflect the values, norms, customs, philosophies, and languages of Euro-American culture. Multicultural specialists have often criticised counselling and therapy as culture-bound, because they arise from a predominantly Eurocentric perspective. These culture-bound values often are in conflict with the values of culturally different groups. As a response to these problems, Sue, Ivey and Pedersen (1996) have created a metatheory of multicultural counselling that consists of six basic assumptions, so-called propositions. These propositions with corollaries refining them are based on the available research and theory of multiculturalism. In the following the propositions are introduced as the original authors have presented them (Sue et al. 1996).

According to *Proposition 1* MCT theory is a metatheory of counselling and psychotherapy, a theory about theories. It offers an organisational framework for understanding the numerous helping approaches. It also recognises that both theories of counselling and psychotherapy developed in the Western world and those indigenous to non-Western cultures are neither right nor wrong, good or bad. Each theory represents a different worldview.

Proposition 2 stresses that both counsellor and client identities are formed and embedded in multiple levels of experiences (individual, group, and universal) and contexts (individual, family, and cultural milieu). The totality and interrelationships of experiences and contexts must be the focus of treatment.

Proposition 3 states that development of cultural identity is a major determinant of counsellor and client attitudes toward the self, others of the same group, others of a different group, and the dominant group. These attitudes are strongly influenced not only by cultural variables, but also by the dynamics of a dominant-subordinate relationship among culturally different groups.

Proposition 4 emphasises that the effectiveness of MCT theory is most likely enhanced when the counsellor uses modalities and defines goals consistent with the life experience/cultural values of the client.

In *Proposition 5* MCT theory stresses the importance of multiple helping roles developed by many culturally different groups and societies. Besides the one-on-one encounter aimed at remediation in the individual, these roles often involve larger social units, systems intervention, and prevention.

The liberation of consciousness is a basic goal of MCT theory according to *Proposition 6*. Whereas self-actualisation, discovery of the role of the past in the present, or behaviour change have been traditional goals of Western psychotherapy and counselling, MCT emphasises the importance of expanding personal, family, group, and organisational consciousness of the place of self-in-relation, family-in-relation, and organisation-in-relation. This results in therapy that is not only ultimately contextual in orientation, but that also draws on traditional methods of healing from many cultures.

These assumptions together with related corollaries presented by Sue et al. (1996) were a fruitful starting point for a more systematic theoretical development of multicultural counselling and therapy. Already in the very same book edited by Sue et al. (1996), a number of authors presented constructive criticism to facilitate the development of this metatheory (e.g. Corey 1996; Casas & Mann 1996; Daniels & Andrea 1996). A number of other excellent articles and books have been published to address the importance of theory development in the field of multicultural counselling (see e.g. Pedersen 1999; Sue 1995). Pedersen (2001) continues discussion on multiculturalism as a fourth force in psychology and counselling, noting major changes taking place in the field of psychology. He suggests that multicultural perspectives and controversies should be seen as mediating these changes and that a culture-centred perspective as a “fourth force” can complement and strengthen the other three “forces”, conventional theories of psychodynamism, humanism, and behaviourism. Furthermore, it is important to note that many conventional theories are still relevant when given proper reflection from the point of view of cultural differences (see e.g. Lee & Ramirez 2000; Sue & Zane 1987). A concrete example of these reflections is given in Antokoletz’s (1993) article on the psychoanalytic view of cross-cultural passages. Also Ariel’s (1999) book on culturally competent family therapy, which outlines the foundation for a general model, is a good example of activities in integrating culture as a core perspective on looking at phenomena previously ignored from a cultural point of view.

Given the scope and complexity of the phenomena related to multicultural counselling it seems impossible that a theory, or even group of theories, could cover all aspects needed in practice. Therefore, theory development could be seen as a continuous learning process, the purpose of which is to synthesise and analyse relevant empirical research and theoretical thinking in order to provide counsellors working in the field with alternative frameworks and conceptual tools to be applied in a creative and flexible manner with their clients. Using a theory or theories should

never be considered as a technical trick, but as a conscious striving to use existing theoretical knowledge and understanding for the benefit of clients, keeping in mind the possible (even probable) limitations of the theory. Therefore working *together* with clients, learning *from* them and taking a critical and creative perspective on the theory is important. From the point of view of counsellors, the theories they use develop through practice and practice develops using theories – both are needed and both are important. Multicultural counselling needs counsellors who are willing to keep interaction between theory and practice alive and active!

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING TRAINING

After discussing multicultural counselling as one major theoretical “force” among other “forces” of counselling, it is also important to know that there are differences *within* the “family” of multicultural counselling theories dealing with multicultural training. Given that facilitation of multiculturalism among counsellors is largely based on education and training, it is useful to be aware of these differences. For further information on counsellor training issues from the point of view of multicultural counselling competencies, please refer to chapter 11 by Pia Nissilä and Marjatta Lairio in this book.

Some of the prominent researchers within the area of multicultural research, such as Ivey (1994), Sue & Sue (1990) and Pedersen (1997), draw attention to the fact that the form of guidance and counselling that guidance practitioners are being trained in is often limited to “the mainstream individuals” i.e. the Western-oriented idea of culture. This is also apparent from some of the most conspicuous and most widely used models of guidance and counselling in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, where guidance practitioners are trained by one of the authors of this article (Højer). As a response to these limitations, theoretical approaches to multicultural counselling training have been developed. We will now briefly look at some variations in the training approaches as presented by Carter & Qureshi (1995). Based on an examination of the literature they classified the philosophical assumptions under multicultural training approaches into five groups, as follows:

- 1) Universal (e.g. Fukuyama 1990; Ivey 1987; Parker 1987)
- 2) Ubiquitous (e.g. Pedersen 1977; Ponterotto 1988; Sue et al. 1982)

- 3) Traditional (e.g. Arredondo 1985; Christensen 1989; Leong & Kim 1991; Ponterotto & Casas 1987)
- 4) Race-based (e.g. Carney & Kahn 1984; McRae & Johnson 1991; Sue, Akutsu & Higashi 1985)
- 5) Pan-national (e.g. Bulhan 1985; Myers 1988)

The core aspects of these five “types” of multicultural training approaches and methods are presented in table 1 using the following three dimensions as categories through which the approaches are compared: assumptions, approach, method used by Carter & Quereshi (1995) – For a more detailed review of the five types of multicultural training approaches, please refer to the original article.

The usefulness of studying the classification in table 1 is in that it makes educators and participants better aware of important starting points and perspectives within multicultural counselling. Although the classification was originally from and for American society, we think it is possible to use the classification to analyse multicultural training in Europe as well. Probably the most common approaches in Europe are the first three or four, namely Universal, Ubiquitous, Traditional and Race-based approaches, whereas the Pan-national approach seems more rare. Our opinion is that all five types of approaches can contribute to European multicultural training.

It is useful to note that multicultural education and multicultural counselling have common ground. Therefore cooperation between experts working in these two interconnected fields could be possible for running training for counsellors and educators. This is important also because in an adaptation process to a new culture, counsellors, educators, and other professional groups, such as social workers and mental health workers should build collaborative networks to better support immigrants in their integration into the new society. There are, however, differences between societies, which should be recognised and taken into account in developing guidance and counselling services as well as theoretical approaches and methods to be used with immigrant clients. The following section discusses in more detail the societal framework and how it should be considered in applying theories of multicultural counselling.

Table 1. *Classification of multicultural training approaches and methods according to Carter & Quereshi (1995, 244)*

Type	Assumptions	Approach	Method
Universal	All people are basically the same; intragroup differences are greater than intergroup differences.	Affirm human similarities through universal constructs; focus on shared human experience.	Counsellors should transcend construct of race.
Ubiquitous	All loci of identity or shared circumstance are constitutive of culture; people can belong to multiple cultures, which are situationally determined.	Make counsellor comfortable with difference, foster cultural sensitivity.	Acknowledge and celebrate difference; increase awareness of others' cultures and expose stereotypes (e.g. sexism)
Traditional (Anthropological)	Culture equals country: It is determined by birth, upbringing, and environment and is defined by common experience of socialisation and environment. Race as a social construct is ignored, culture is an adaptive phenomenon.	An individual's circumstances are superseded by the general culture; cultural membership circumscribes possible personality dynamics.	Trainee should experience new culture through exposure; use of cultural informants.
Race-based	Race is the superordinate locus of culture; experience of belonging to a racial group transcends all other experiences; culture is a function of the values of the racial group and of the values, reactions, and institutions of the larger society.	Racial awareness; recognise the effect of racism and oppression; and foster racial identity development for all racial groups.	Trainee should learn about racism and their own racial identity development.
Pan-national	Culture is a function of a dynamic other than geosocial; racial group membership determines one's place in the distribution of power; culture is viewed globally.	Teach about the history of racial-cultural groups dating back to ancient times. Students should know the psychology of oppression and history of imperialism and colonialism.	Teach trainees about how psychology of oppression and domination influences the counselling process.

CONSIDERING THE SOCIETAL FRAMEWORK IN APPLYING THEORIES OF MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING

Given that specific theories of counselling are usually developed in different countries where societies differ from each other, the theories are – accordingly – often interpreted and used in different ways. This is why it is useful to pay attention to the societal framework of multicultural counselling. Figure 1 presents a simplified model that provides one way of describing the societal framework in which multicultural counselling takes place. Keeping these perspectives in mind, it is easier to adapt the theories to the specific structures of a society. The model is inspired by Anders Lovén’s (2000) theoretical frame of reference for “Kvalet infor Valet” (“The Trouble of Choosing”), and it points out the factors at various levels influencing counselling.

Global preconditions

Globalisation is often seen as a primarily economic phenomenon, although cross-border social, cultural and technological exchange is equally relevant to it. The rapid increase in the amount of economic activity taking place across national boundaries has had an enormous impact on the lives of people and their communities everywhere. The current form of globalisation, with the international rules and policies that underpin it, has resulted in the growing mobility of people in Europe and to Europe, particularly from developing and transition countries.

In a globalised world, European societies – to be economically powerful – are forced to develop and implement strategies for supporting the social cohesion of immigrants/refugees so that they become active citizens in their new home country. Therefore, the role and objectives of guidance and counselling should be crystal clearly defined and the actual guidance and counselling system adequately resourced at a societal level: the purpose of all guidance and counselling services available to migrant and ethnic groups is to increase and facilitate their participation in education and employment at a local level.

Guidance practitioner

The guidance practitioner is guided by certain goals, which have been set for guidance and counselling and by theoretical and methodological considerations in rela-

tion to guidance counselling, and these are firmly anchored in a Western-oriented way of thinking. Furthermore, the guidance practitioner has acquired some experience of guidance and counselling in relation to refugees and immigrants.

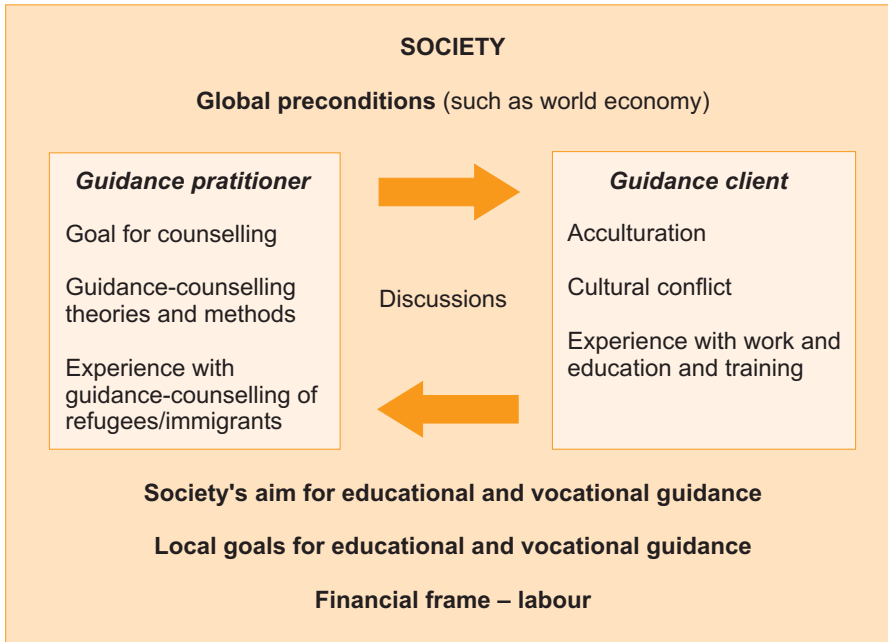


Figure 1. *Theoretical frame of reference for multicultural counselling*

Guidance client

The guidance client is guided by his or her own culture and by a different culture - the host culture. This form of cultural adjustment is called acculturation and this involves various forms of cultural conflicts/disturbances. The guidance client's experience in relation to choice of education and occupation is deeply rooted in a non-Western oriented way of thinking. The different terms will be specified in the subsequent sections of this article.

Society’s aim for educational and vocational guidance/Local goals for educational and vocational guidance/ Financial frame – labour

A considerable number of counsellors working with multicultural clientele in Europe is placed within educational and vocational guidance and counselling related institutions. These macro systems set a number of important expectations and frames for counsellors in terms of official objectives (such as labour market requirements in the society), organisational structures (different type of organisational infrastructure in different countries), allocation of time, money, personnel and support systems for counsellors (These vary depending on the country and organisations), etc. In real-life guidance and counselling situations these general, societal preconditions have a great impact on how theoretical approaches in multicultural counselling will be interpreted and applied.

In many cases the main objective of guidance and counselling is to help the guidance client make a choice of education and occupation and thereby of conditions of life and to do this on a qualified basis. The choice thus becomes central to guidance and counselling. It is emphasised in educational and vocational guidance that counselling is a process in which a person who seeks and receives guidance and counselling will undergo a development process where she/he changes by gaining knowledge, experience and awareness, etc. This process of development and learning is expressed in a DOTS model by Law and Watts (1996), in which the objective of guidance and counselling is to teach the guidance clients to: 1) make a **D**ecision, 2) to notice **O**ppportunity, 3) to deal with **T**ransition and 4) to get to know them**S**elves. This common way of rational thinking in Western educational and vocational guidance will emerge from the subsequent applied guidance and counselling models and will be challenged by clients who come from other cultures where decision-making processes are more holistic and collective as compared to the Western individualistically oriented processes.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the whole, the review of the historical development of multicultural counselling in general and as a theoretical force shows how its intensification is linked to the developments in a larger societal framework. Counsellors should also recognise the need for taking responsibility for advocacy and social justice – a topic discussed in

some other chapters of this book including the conclusion chapter. It seems very clear – as suggested also by many of the authors presented in this history/theory review – that the traditional one-to-one individual counselling approach is insufficient for supporting immigrants and other cultural groups within our societies. We need more proactive and social justice -oriented approaches to complement the more traditional theoretical approaches in counselling. These new approaches can utilise multiprofessional networks in collaboration with immigrants' own networks. Developing these approaches takes time and needs support from political decision makers. In this sense it seems that multicultural counselling shares some of the challenges present also in other current discourses within e.g. feminist and systems theories (see e.g. Taylor 1996; Bor et al. 1996).

One crucial aspect in how research and theories of multicultural counselling could benefit us and help us in developing our field work, is how we see the relation between theory and practice. Perhaps it is helpful to consider theory as a map and practice as a land. If the map is good, it helps us navigate our way through the land. However, we need to learn how to read the map and its symbols, and we also need to keep our eyes open while we navigate and make decisions on routes based on our interpretations of the map. In other words applying theories is as active process of thinking. We need creativity and courage to make interpretations of how the theory could be used in real-life situations. Constructive criticism and discussions with colleagues, educators and researchers are important means to develop both theories and practice and we also need to listen to our clients.

In an interview where he was asked about the future of multiculturalism as the fourth force (see Sandhu 1995), Paul B. Pedersen responded in a way which still seems appropriate to describe the challenges involved: "Whatever labels are used, it seems clear that culture will become an important construct for assessing, interpreting, and changing psychological processes in the future. As non-Western cultures become more urbanised and industrialised, they can perhaps expect to encounter many of the problems that older industrialised countries experience, where counselling has been an important service function. We need to interpret those aspects of counselling that can and should be transferred to other cultures and those that need to be adapted or discarded. The process of making culture central to the counselling process will require reconceptualising our theories, tests, methods, strategies, and outcomes. This would be an appropriate task for the advanced training for all of us beginners in multicultural counselling." As Europeans we also share these challenges!

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

- 1) How has multicultural counselling been developed in your own country? How did it start and what is its current phase of development?
- 2) What do you think are the main reasons multicultural counselling, as a theoretical force, has not developed as quickly and widely in Europe as it has in North-America?
- 3) Do you know research studies in the field of multicultural counselling in your country? Try to find 2-3 examples of national (or European) research projects and/or studies that focus on multicultural counselling, and discuss with your colleagues how you could use them for developing your counselling work.
- 4) Sometimes people working in the field may perceive theory as something that is quite distant from practice. This may be due to misunderstandings, poor links between researchers and counsellors working in the field, etc. How do you see the relation between the theory and practice of multicultural counselling? How could you benefit from theory? Try to be specific and concrete. Discuss this with your colleagues.
- 5) What institutions in your country do research in multicultural counselling? Contact those institutions and ask what they could offer you and your organisation to facilitate multicultural counselling.

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Globalisation, postmodernity and migration – Rethinking cultural identity

INTRODUCTION

The concept of identity has traditionally played a central role in the theories concerning the situation of migrants and ethnic minorities. Cultural and national identities have, in fact, been created and stressed within the framework of the ideology of modernity. In accordance with the material exigencies of industrialism and capitalism the ideology of modernity urged individuals to constitute and preserve national, cultural and ethnic as well as personal identities. Strong national and cultural identities were necessary in the beginning of the modern era to protect domestic industries, markets and domestic capital. Today we are facing a situation where industrialism and capitalism have developed far beyond the borders of the nation-states and have transformed the whole world into one single production unit, which exists within one single market. These changes undoubtedly have consequences for the way people conceive of their identities and their belongingness. The ongoing globalisation of almost all aspects of social life tends to erase the differences between cultures and is replacing them with a global consumerist culture. This process has made it almost impossible to preserve unity and continuity within one and the same culture. Identity, like many other aspects of life in postmodern societies, is increasingly becoming a matter of individual preferences.

The concept of identity, as one of the grand narratives of the ideology of modernity of human life, will be questioned in this chapter and the necessity of renewal and rethinking within the discourse of cultural identity will be emphasised. Another basic idea presented in this text is that the integration of migrants becomes only really possible if we let go of the idea of fixed identities and loosen the boundaries between groups of people. The chapter is thus formed in a polemic style to stimulate critical

reflection and debate. One of the points of departure in this chapter is the intensified process of globalisation and its eventual effects on individuals' perceptions of themselves. However, the chapter does not intend to provide *one* concrete definition of the phenomenon 'globalisation', rather it will try to trace the consequences of this phenomenon at different levels with an emphasis on its impact on ways of thinking of the individuals. The discussion will also deal with whether information and communication technologies, together with widespread consumerism, can wipe out the boundaries of national and cultural identities and create a common globalised basis for individuals' self-identification. In this regard this chapter will put forward the idea that those people who have physically crossed geographical borders between different societies, e.g. migrants, have a greater potential to adopt a postmodern global identity. Of course, the chapter makes no claim that the ideas presented here are of universal validity for all migrants. The text provides, however, a picture of a process of change, or an emerging reality, which might lead to the emergence of the experience of having fleeting and variable identities. The discussion here is thus about individuals who have a deterritorised and culturally nomadic position. This can include people who have left their homelands but also those whose work has freed them from national boundaries, such as intellectuals, artists, businessmen, etc.; in other words individuals whose lives are characterised by crossing the boundaries between different lifestyles, ways of thinking, cultural praxis and working patterns.

MODERNITY AND IDENTITY

Modernity has created its own repertoire of concepts. Some of these concepts have since been transformed into absolute truths. Identity is one of them. However, the concept of identity has always been complex and manifold. There is a range of theories within a broad range of different disciplines discussing this concept. The myth of identity as an inevitable part of our personality, together with the accompanying grand narrative of each individual's need to find her/his place in existence by means of an own identity, is one of the most important creations of modernity. Modernity started to define people – and even other social and natural phenomena – by distinction instead of, as was common in the pre-modern eras, by relation. Each individual was defined as a separate entity distinguished from the group of other individuals; each individual was allotted certain characteristics that were hers/his; each individual

was assigned an identity. Modern industrial society needed to identify each individual in order to more efficiently use their labour power and also to control their lives. Identity was thus the code according to which each individual could be defined, a kind of map about what s/he was capable of being or doing. There is a tendency in host societies to impose and maintain a stereotypical view of the migrants in order to preserve existing power structures and maintain status quo. Stigmatisation and marginalisation of some populations might be used thus to restrict their social identities.

The idea that identity is constructed in an interaction between the individual's inner self and the social-cultural environment surrounding her/him (Erikson 1968) belongs today to one of the common-sense ideas within the discourse of identity. Further, the idea of the responsive or interactive character of identity (we are those roles we are playing), and the idea of identity building as a conscious process of creation, during which individuals research and constitute themselves, are generally recognised. Modernity's prevailing approach to identity, i.e. considering identity as a continuity that is consolidated by external factors that have an imposing effect on individuals, transforms identity into a prison or a label that is attached to the individual and forces her/him to be someone with certain pre-defined characteristics. This is particularly valid in regard to cultural identity, which is the result of mere organic and externally defined characteristics such as race/origin and religion.

Nevertheless, by changing the material world, humankind changes its own way of looking at things; changes that are often irreversible. In the same way that the intrusion of modernism and industrialism in the material world had altered man's ideas about nature, time and space, the transition into the postmodern era together with the intensifying globalisation of both economy and social life would also alter human beings' ideas of their own identities, in general, and of their cultural identities in particular. Already in the beginning of the century the German philosopher Georg Simmel (1858–1918) described the modern urban man as a person whose identity would no longer be found in the local communities (Lyon 1994). The mobility that was introduced by modernity, and the increasing emphasis on individuality, made it easier for individuals to start to construct their own identities and to project it on others as if they were pure reality. This form of identity that came to replace previous forms, e.g. objective identity at social and personal levels, can be described as a subjective identity at personal level. This kind of identity is mainly based on the individual's self-image, whether it is “real” or “preferred”.

Despite the fact that identity at personal level is increasingly considered as contextual and situational, when it comes to cultural identity this characteristic is often ignored. Modernity's definition of evolution and development gives this ideology an excluding and contrastive character. This in turn creates clear-cut distinctions between different societies, groups and individuals. The modern ideas of the existence of permanent and fixed identities is not an exception in this regard. Within the discourse of modernity whenever identification occurs by means of culture or ethnicity, individuals are defined ontologically instead of on the basis of what they do (Calgar 1998), or whom they themselves feel to be.

The discourse of modernity on culture builds on the idea of objective, distinguished and identifiable cultures. Culture is assumed to be the expression of common values, symbols and mythologies that are relatively easy to identify as they are completely distinguished. In this regard, social identity is defined in relation to those values that have emerged throughout a common history and supposedly prevail in an individual's personal culture (Erikson 1968). Cultural values are thus regarded as inevitable factors for the construction of an image of the self (Jacobson-Widding 1983). This essentialism (Ehn 1993) in the view of culture and ethnicity upholds the old traditions of having a given, definable and permanent cultural identity which is common to all the members of the society. According to this approach, culture and identity are stable and relatively impenetrable domains surrounded by sharp dividing lines (Gross 1996). The idea of cultural identity, as it is understood according to the ideology of modernity, disregards cultures' inner dynamic. However, throughout history human beings have always examined and altered their cultural beliefs in order to handle changes in their social surroundings.

If we consider the fact that value-systems, systems of belief and lifestyles, which allegedly put their stamp on identity, are primarily social constructions (and thus changing over time), it is then no exaggeration to draw the conclusion that cultural identity is also something time-bound. The time-boundness makes the concept of identity a changeable and indefinable concept. Identity is, instead, considered as an ongoing process rather than a fixed characteristic. Considering identity as an ongoing process leads to the conclusion that migrants can hardly be assigned a cultural and ethnic identity independent of the social and historical setting in which they are living now, i.e. the host societies.

POSTMODERNITY AND IDENTITY

One of the basic assumptions of postmodern discourse is that a new society is taking form. Although there is no consensus about the nature and the characteristics of this society, there is anyway some agreement on some indicators of postmodern society. Postmodern society is characterised by widespread consumerism and a continuous revolution in communication. According to Lyon (1994), the transition to a post-industrial and postmodern society does not only mean a new mode of production but also new ways of establishing social relations. Virillio speaks of the death of geography (according to Bauman 1998) and Bauman himself wonders to what extent the natural or man-made boundaries between societies can create differences in people's identities. The distance between societies is, according to Bauman, a social construction and today's high technologies do not leave these boundaries intact. The global capitalist market, the ever developing information technology and the popular culture that is spreading rapidly to all corners of the world – due to the media and new means of communication such as the internet – have obliterated national and territorial boundaries and are close to breaking the frameworks of the definition of any cultural identity.

Today we can observe the emergence of a new approach to identity, namely one that considers identity as a result of individuals' need to adapt to new political and social environments. According to this approach the concept of identity is transformed in the postmodern context into something rational, instrumental and transitory (Gross 1996). Under the "postmodern regime", identity becomes fragmentary and momentary. This implies that the meaning and the objectives that individuals create in their identities will live for a short period of time and not for the whole of life. Instead of creating long-lived identities with reference to cultures, religions or ideologies, individuals try to find meaning in short episodes of their life moving from one coincidence to another. Identity thus becomes a series of short-term strategic projects; something that the individual her/himself chooses. To have an identity implies creating one's own, personal narratives; short stories instead of novels. Any project of identity building in our unpredictable and changing world is but a short-term and pragmatic project. According to Melluci (1992) identity should be understood as a game in the now. Instead of speaking of identity, one should speak of temporary identities. If identity is regarded in this light, then even the ideas of losing identity and having an identity crisis due to migration will be called into question.

What happens during migration is that the disunion of the chain of long-lived projects and consequently the disunion of long-lived life-stories and identities becomes more obvious.

IDENTITY AND MIGRATION

The experience of moving between different societies and cultures teaches the migrant to consider her/his previous ideas about the nature of reality and what is normal or abnormal with greater caution and flexibility. S/he learns that what was regarded as “real” in her/his society during a specific period of time might be considered as “non-reality” in another society. This might lead to the conclusion that identity, like reality, is fleeting. As mentioned before, this understanding is not necessarily confined to migrants but an increasing number of people are making similar realisations about their identity and the reality of these identities. Nevertheless, for the migrant this situation is felt more intensively. It should also be admitted that many individuals, although living in postmodern societies, have not been affected by the new “post-modern reality” of their societies in their everyday life. For the migrant, however, the situation is different. S/he has no other choice but to face this reality. The migrant who until recently had a name, a job, a home, a social role, in short, a fixed place in her/his existence, must now redefine everything. For the individual, migration means breaking with the old accustomed roles, being forced to travel from one partial reality to another and, learning that there are as many realities as there are people. This means an intensification of the anguish that has haunted the modern individual as a consequence of individualisation and the dissolution of the traditional ties with the collectives.

For the migrant this anguish is transformed into a persisting experience since s/he is never certain about whether s/he has made correct choices of identity (Kellner 1992). In addition, the loyalty towards the home country and a sense of belonging turn into burdens that each migrant is forced to bear. At the same time the rupture from the old life, from the old society and the old identity might grant the migrant a possibility to distance her/himself and to try to free her/himself from the burden of her/his previous fixed belongings, such as belonging to a certain nation, or to a certain culture. The rupture from the old social context might lead to a greater freedom for the individual to define her/his identity and her/his life history as s/he wishes.

Of course, the point is not that migrants would automatically be able to free themselves and to reject all their cultural belongings, but that migration offers them a greater potential to realise that they now have the chance to recreate their own identity and their own history. This means that, despite all the problems that the migrants face in the receiving countries, despite the prevailing racism and discrimination in these countries and despite a degradation of their social status, migration for many individuals means freedom. The liberation lies in the insight that what once was *The Reality* or *The Identity* now has become one reality or one identity among many others. When the individual realises that s/he possesses a repertoire of realities and identities to choose among, when s/he realises that s/he is able to create an identity and a life-history that s/he desires to have, then the modern myth of the continuity of identity ceases to be valid. Then the idea of a cultural identity loses its meaning.

The migrant will be transformed into a skilled tradesman on the identity market. Not even name and family ties will then be taken for granted. When nobody knows who the individual really is, the individual gets the opportunity and the possibility to define her/his self in a way s/he desires. S/he can assume names s/he never had, relate to people s/he never has known and believe her/himself to have lived a life s/he has never lived. In other words, the individual will be able not only to define her/his now, but also her/his past. The urge to have a ‘real past’, to have a ‘real’ history behind oneself gives way to the urge for the feeling of being able to create one’s own history and one’s own past according to the pattern one desires.

Cultural identity is traditionally considered to be derived from common myths and common symbols, from a common history. Many postmodern thinkers such as Vattimo question the idea of a real common history and instead consider history as a series of diverse ideas and images about the past interpreted differently depending on the interpreters’ interest (Vattimo 1992). Consequently, when history loses its chances to survive postmodernity, the cultural identity that is closely connected to historicity, would also be buried along with it. New myths and new symbols are now created by the global market and the global means of communication and they will come to replace the myths of history and cultural identity. Therefore, identification by means of a certain culture’s historical myths and history would provide a way to identification by means of objects, commodities and symbols that are produced within this new globalised market, e.g. certain brands of clothing or certain music styles. Fashion, literary, musical and artistic taste, culinary traditions and sexual behaviour, etc., play important roles in the formation of our identities. Our reality today is deter-

mined to a great extent by a global market whose nature, laws and characteristics are continuously changing. Our values, ideals of beauty, prosperity, happiness, our dreams about the future, about what is desirable, our ideas about honour, our desires and strivings, etc., tend increasingly to be determined by the global market and conveyed to us by the global media. Today we are living in a society where the market organises not only our social life but also our inner life. Lyon (1994) maintains that due to the recent developments of consumerism and television, it is hardly possible to draw explicit boundaries between and within the cultures.

Despite the risk of an increase in social and economic inequality and despite the risk of a greater possibility of controlling citizens, as the development of new communication technologies might imply, there is a greater emancipatory potential for the individual in the postmodern context. According to Vattimo, this potential emancipation does not lie in the discovery of who we *really* are as blacks, women, etc., but in the undermining of the principle of reality itself, in the discovery of finiteness, historicity and coincidency of our identities and value systems (1992). In this context, the person who once has left one culture and one history behind her/himself, and at the same time shared other histories, cultures and images of reality, has greater possibilities to take advantage of this freedom. The migrant has the potential to go beyond both his/her and the host society's images of reality and of cultural identity. This offers the migrant greater possibilities to define her/his identity in a personal way. S/he realises that s/he does not need to be the person s/he herself or himself (or even others) believed her/him to be. However, this freedom of choosing should not be mixed up with freedom *per se*: the former is a freedom within the frameworks of a specific market. It is also plausible to assume that the contrastive dimension of the identity will also cease to exist when identity becomes a self-chosen characteristic. In order to know who s/he is, the individual would not then need to know who s/he is not or who the other person is.

Globalisation also implies an increased individualisation. The reference point for the migrant in her/his self-definition becomes her/his own self, which in turn decreases the importance of belonging to some group or culture. In addition, the feeling of having lost things which one once had, both material and non-material, e.g. identities and the experience of having rediscovered all these things in other forms again, can free the individual from her/his ties to these things. Since these people know that one can always lose and regain.

GLOBALISATION AND IDENTITY

Globalisation and the consolidation of postmodernity leave no society unaffected. The term postmodern here refers to a set of conditions and thus signifies both a state of mind and a state of affairs rather than a historical period succeeding the modern era (Bauman 1992; Harvey 1990; Lash 1990; Smart 1993; Turner 1990; Vattimo 1992). As a consequence of the diminishing importance of geographical constraints, forces beyond national economics and politics have a direct impact on people's living standards and ideals. It is now considered common knowledge that the globalisation of the economy and international finance has brought about the almost total destruction of spatial constraints for the movement of capital (Bauman 1998; Bell 1974). However, the consequences of deterritorialisation are not confined only to the domain of economics. Crow (1997, 10) goes so far as to question the conventional definition of society: "It can no longer be assumed that people sharing a particular geographical space will also have the common social ties and culture by which a 'society' has conventionally been defined":

Globalisation is not a new phenomenon (Dickens 1992), although it is only within the last two decades that most of the theories of globalisation have been formulated (Albrow 1997; Axford 1995; Delanty 2000; Featherstone 1990; Jameson 1998; Robertson 1992; Waters 1995). For several hundred years, several processes of globalisation have been in force simultaneously; that is, the globalisation of economics, politics, knowledge, and culture. Some of these globalisation processes have been more obvious, and thus more widely discussed, than others; for instance, the globalisation of economics. Ever since the onset of industrialisation and the consolidation of capitalism, production and trade have increasingly been globalised. As early as the mid-19th century, Marx and Engels referred in their *Communist Manifesto* to the globalisation of markets and industry which, in their view, erased national boundaries and gave every nation's production and consumption a cosmopolitan gestalt – a process that would eventually lead to the overall interdependence of all nations (Marx & Engels 1999).

As a result of recent changes in communication and information technologies, the globalised media play an increasingly dominant role in our intellectual environment, producing a major part of our symbolic stimuli (Barker 1999; Castells 1996). The media acts, thus, as the immediate intellectual nurturing centre for the vast majority of humankind. One of the main consequences of the globalisation of mass communi-

cation is that a variety of transnational popular cultures have emerged. The globalised mass medial environment contributes to the global diffusion of diverse local symbols and ideals creating, not one, but several homogeneous representations and symbol worlds. In other words, the globalisation of the media has led to the creation of a number of local global cultures. Conveying impulses from different parts of the world, the globalisation of media can create the possibility of counteracting eurocentrism or other kinds of ethnocentrism. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the global media's diffusion of local popular cultures does not exclude the tendency among huge global media concerns to monopolise reality. It is also easy to observe that today, due to the domination of the Western and primarily American value images and cultural representation and also because of the size of their resources, it is mainly the Western media that stands for the creation of the new global culture, although, as mentioned before, the new communication technologies create the potential for the more pluralistic global culture.

As a result of the globalisation of cultures, aesthetic preferences and values tend to become more and more similar and homogeneous around the globe (Featherstone 1991; Jameson 1991; Shields 1992). Ritzer (1993) discusses the process of the "McDonaldisation" of society. In the same way it might be possible to refer to the processes of Ikea-isation, CNN-isation, Nike-isation and Survivor-isation. The same brand of clothing, the same home furniture, the same culinary taste, the same movies and shows, and the same news, debates and images of reality are found all across the globe. Internet sites are becoming increasingly like one another; in a short space of time we are now being nourished and nurtured by the same sources of mediating symbols.

Another relevant global change with respect to the discourse of identity is the emergence of "mega cities" and their corresponding lifestyle. According to Castells (1996) "mega cities" have emerged where impulses from the whole world interact with one another. These cities are centres with a great attraction power, exercising great influence over their surroundings. They establish connections between continents and across large territories. They are globally united with their sister cities and locally severed from their regional and national contexts (Castells 1996; Sassen 1992). A characteristic of mega cities is that they arise in different regions of the world and spread global life ideals and ways of thinking to their surroundings. That people actually live in traditional villages and are preoccupied with their everyday concerns is of less interest; what matters here is that their ideals, hopes, and dreams are affected

by and directed towards the lifestyle of the mega cities. That is why a Chinese villager would rather wear a Polo Ralph Lauren garment – even though it is a fake – than a local brand of cloth. It must be emphasised, however, that the production of the same dreams and ideals does not negate the enormous inequalities and differences in lifestyles and living conditions throughout the world, and that these inequalities and differences have in fact grown as a consequence of the one-sided economic globalisation.

It would be naive not to realise that the tremendous changes in our physical and intellectual surroundings caused by globalisation also affect our symbols, representations and consciousness. Consciousness is shaped partly by the cultural products we consume. In this regard, it could be said that changes in the material conditions of life could transform our symbol world; and changes in how we understand space, time, and the accessibility of the surrounding world could bring about changes in our consciousness. Our everyday consciousness is being exposed more and more to events far beyond the parameters of the nation-state. It is no longer through interaction with our immediate surroundings that our conceptual framework is formed, but through ceaseless references to the world as the main context. In this respect, this article aims to stress the idea that the increasing globalisation of the material basis of human experience could result in the emergence of a globalised consciousness brought about by the recent revolutions in media and communication technologies. This new consciousness affects our self-definition, expectations, and life ideals, as well as how we define the surrounding environment and our possibilities within that environment. New possibilities and new problems may emerge as a result of the globalisation of consciousness, which in turn creates new challenges for the theory and practice of social work.

In the same way that modernisation and industrialisation, by changing our material world, transformed our ideas of the Self and its place in relation to the Other (Ahmadi & Ahmadi 1998; Giddens 1990; 1991), the transition to global postmodern society will also change our understanding of how to organise everyday social life. Demands and desires might change more radically and more rapidly than political and economic possibilities change. Thus, one of the major consequences of the globalisation of consciousness becomes the globalisation of life ideals. The knowledge of events in other parts of the world and of alternative lifestyles affects our own life ideals, expectations, and goals. What characterises the postmodern global consciousness is the idea of attainability. The global market, the ever-developing information

technologies and the globalised popular culture have changed the frames of our definition of the attainable. The ability to travel from one corner of the globe to the other in a short time and to become acquainted with the lifestyles of other societies via television, tourism, and migration has contributed to the removal of the mental barriers that prevented people from encountering new life ideals. The world appears now closer to us than it was before and fewer things seem to us strange and unattainable. As mentioned earlier, the focus of the chapter is partly laid on the potentialities that are related to processes of globalisation. Obviously the issues of the poverty and powerlessness of vast majorities of the population around the world hamper today a complete realisation of these potentials.

The fact that the world has witnessed several waves of mass immigration during the closing decades of the 20th century indicates that an increasing number of people dare now to pursue and maybe revise their life ideals. Although there have always been reasons for migration – wars, poverty, adverse political circumstances – and although during the past centuries the world has witnessed some examples of mass immigration, it is not until the last decades that migration has become a serious alternative for millions of people. Their new global consciousness tells them that it is possible to live as bountifully on the other side of the planet as it used to be in their own hemisphere. This raises the question of the cultural integration of disparate sections of the population into new global postmodern societies. Since economic globalisation and technological advances have apparently led to increasing concentrations of wealth, and consequently the marginalisation of increasingly larger segments of the world's population, the gap between people's reality and their desires is widening. This could lead in turn to aggravating the social problems of people living in poverty.

INSTRUMENTAL IDENTITY AS A CONSEQUENCE OF MIGRATION

One could say that identity is constructed through the individual's struggle to answer the question "who are you?". What reference points the individual chooses to answer this question with and, if these reference points are one and the same during the individual's whole life, depends on the individual's subjective interpretation of her/his own reality. Any individual is living within a certain context at any given time and must therefore make a definition of both the surrounding context

and her/his role in this context. In this regard, the individual's short and long-term goals for the construction of her/his identity become crucial. In other words, the construction of an identity can depend on the individual's strategic choices.

The question of who one is, is less about the questioned person than an investigation into this person's right to be in a certain situation/context. In other words, the identity is not so much about who the person *is* but about her/his right *to be in* a certain place at a certain time. The identity gives access to the codes that are necessary for access to certain contexts. In this regard, the identity is a tool to get access to resources that are related to these contexts. By referring to her/his identity the individual claims the right to certain resources or privileges that are considered reserved for certain individuals with certain identities. In this regard, identity could be used of The Other (whether it is the society or another individual) as a means of control to inquire whether a certain person is entitled to the privileges s/he is enjoying or not.

The argument above implies that the question of identity is primarily a pragmatic and instrumental issue. Then, the most important question in regard to identity would be "what benefits can I get by having a certain identity? What do I want to achieve with this concrete identity?"

Likewise it is possible to discuss whether even the cultural identity is related to the individual's strategic choices. The choice of identity could be a rational choice among differentiated identities in a world of consumerism. The individual gets the chance to "buy" her/himself an identity in the global identity-market. The level of the identity's desirability is measured, as for any other commodities, by the criterion of profitability. The surrounding environment sends signals indicating what characteristics and what identities are desirable in a certain situation. Then it is up to the individual to decide whether the suggested identities would be convenient for her/him to assume. Certain cultural or ethnic identities are not desirable in situations where these identities cannot generate any advantages for their holders. It is only when the individual becomes aware of the value of her/his identities in a given situation that they start to struggle to keep these identities. Thus, it becomes more important for many immigrants to claim their newly acquired national identity in the host society in certain situations – e.g. when they seek work – and their old ethnic and cultural identities in certain other situations. Cultural and ethnic identity tends to be invoked only when they can grant the individual a concrete benefit. Needless to mention that when we refer to benefits, we do not necessarily confine ourselves to material benefits. In some situations individuals might choose identities that may 'cost' them a lot materially,

e.g. some political or sexual identities, but they might however gain benefits from these identities that are not directly materialistic.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned before, one of the disadvantages of the modern discourse of identity is that it ignores the coincidence of cultural identity. Exaggerated stress on the importance of cultural identity for the migrant creates a false picture of these identities as static phenomena. This in turn makes integration of different groups more difficult. A Swedish example of this, is the endeavour to promote migrant trade unions on the basis of members' previous nationality. The assumption is that the immigrant, due to her/his allegedly unchangeable cultural identity, has common interests and needs to have links with her/his previous countrymen. However, the result is that the gap deepens between the majority society and minority communities.

In this regard, it can be claimed that the minority's cultural identity is partly created and preserved by the majority society. Often it is the host society that defines a certain minority group's cultural belonging and identity. In this regard, the cultural identity could be regarded as the majority society's invention. Cultural and ethnic identities are more the results of the majority society's structural characteristics than a result of common ethnic characteristics (Yancey et al. 1976). It is not always the migrant her/himself that has the greatest interest in struggling to keep her/his identity but also the mainstream society that intends to limit her/his access to the assets and resources that traditionally belonged to the members of the majority group. Thus the myth of the unchangeable cultural identity can be used to justify the unequal distribution of resources, e.g. access to power positions and to jobs.

Of course, the false consciousness about the necessity of a cultural identity still has a foothold among the members of minority groups, too. Not least among the intellectuals whose concern about the different minority groups' equal rights with the majority has many times led to a consolidation of a homeland cultural identity. However, and despite the fact that there is often an element of protest and rebellion against the discriminating power structures in the intellectuals' discussions about cultural identity, there is a greater risk that these intellectuals land up in the same seat as their opponents, i.e. the position of defenders of the boundaries between the different groups within the host society.

The approach to the importance of cultural identity in our time has great relevance for the approach to integration. According to Alsmark (1997), integration is all about the subjective experience of belonging rather than any externally and analytically measurable criterion. Integration cannot be measured by something external such as employment, income, knowledge of the language, etc. Integration is about a feeling, about a subjective state that has to do with the individual's feeling of belonging, which in today's postmodern societies can be limited to a certain period of time in a given geographical setting. Experiences from countries with a long tradition of migration, such as England, France and the USA, where a great majority of the working class has traditionally consisted of 'unintegrated' migrants, confirms this claim. Although these migrants are participating in the society's economy through their employment, many of them have not become integrated in the political, social and cultural life of their host societies.

Integration and identity are interconnected to each other. In order to integrate, in the sense of becoming unified, the individual must attain certain understanding about the context within which integration would occur. By context I mean here both actor(s), structure(s) and time. This implies that an understanding of the condition of the individual's own self in the context is an inevitable part of integration. The question of identity can thus be transformed into the central question of integration. In a time of changeable and fleeting identities, even the project of integration is transformed into a short-term project. To be integrated in our time means to feel one is participating in a game that is going on at the moment. In this regard, integration cannot be considered as something absolute or definitive, because neither the reality nor the identity is absolute and definitive. Seeing integration in this light prevents the common mistake of mystifying the concept, as is done in the migration policies of many European countries.

Modernity's identity project, i.e. the one that stresses relatively fixed identities and their continuity in time, makes the process of integration more difficult. The view of an identity which still is persistent, despite the changes in the structure of society or of people's thinking over time, is a view that consolidates boundaries. An incessant division of people in different categories, stamping them with different cultural and other identities, restrains integration. Integration is a feasible and possible project only if we deter from considering cultural identity as permanent and instead stress each individual's right to make subjective self-definitions. This concerns members of the majority society as well as the minority groups.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

The following questions can be discussed individually, in pairs and/or small groups:

- 1) Suggest concrete models according to which it is possible to cooperate in practical terms on the issues of welfare and integration beyond the boundaries of the nation-states.
- 2) Do the globalisation of consciousness and emergence of postmodern identities affect women and men in a similar way? Discuss gender aspects in regard to postmodern identities.
- 3) Do the globalisation of consciousness and emergence of postmodern identities affect different social categories/classes in a similar way? Discuss class aspects in regard to postmodern identities.
- 4) Is the globalisation of consciousness a one-sided process originating from developed countries, a cover for cultural imperialism or, a possibility for increasing integration? How can developing countries take part in this process? Discuss power relations, as well as economic, political and cultural in a global context.
- 5) How can the globalisation of consciousness and emergence of postmodern identities promote peace and democracy at a global level?
- 6) How can certain typical welfare professions, e.g. social work, be internationalised? What would an international social work profession look like?
- 7) How can the increase in racism and ethnic conflicts in several European countries be understood in the context of globalisation?

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Approaching worldviews in multicultural counselling

INTRODUCTION

Major philosophical questions about life and its meaning are increasingly important in the post-modern world, especially in multicultural counselling. When we are dealing with our conception of life we encounter different thoughts about reality. A worldview (*Weltanschauung*) “constitutes an overall perspective on life that sums up what we know about the world, how we evaluate it emotionally, and how we respond to it volitionally” (Audi 1995, 204). How do we make sense of our existence? Who am I? What does it mean to be a human being? What is the meaning of life, where am I going? Who are “others” to me? All these questions are fundamental parts of the worldview. Although the worldview represents a holistic perspective on reality, many of these major philosophical questions may be parallel or contradictory in relation to each other and to the way we perceive the world.

Different authors define a worldview in different ways. Angeles (1981, 319) defines it as follows. It is a collection of beliefs (ideas, images, attitudes, values) that an individual or group holds. The worldview is a comprehensive outlook on life and the universe from which one explains and/or structures relationships and activities. A worldview may be deliberately formulated or adopted, or it may be the result of an unconscious assimilation or conditioning process. It is the general perspective from which one sees and interprets the world. Worldview has also been characterised as a “lens” through which people interpret the world, and it has gradually developed in a socialisation process under the impact of a certain culture (Ibrahim et al. 1994).

The worldview includes several presuppositions about reality, about human beings and existence. These basic assumptions are ideas that a person considers to be true without questioning them. The worldview implies how people perceive their relation-

ship to the world, nature, institutions, other people, etc. It is our conceptual framework, a structure of assumptions, through which we interpret reality and attribute different meanings to it. A worldview is “a major tool” for interpreting the world and life in a holistic way. A worldview is connected to our choices and to our relationships. The way people interpret their everyday life reflects their personal worldview.

On the one hand, a worldview is a multidimensional concept indicating a comprehensive and principled perspective on reality. On the other hand, it is a very practical concept in that it is reflected in our thinking, feeling, making of choices, etc. Especially in multicultural counselling the question of one’s personal worldview is a very complex one because assumptions about reality have their origin in culture and they are communicated in different words and concepts in different cultures. Several authors emphasise the important role of the worldview as a fruitful concept useful for multicultural counselling; counsellors should be aware of their own worldviews as well as of their clients’ worldviews to avoid possible negative effects on clients’ self-determination and cultural autonomy, that is clients should not be forced to assimilate to the counsellor’s perspective (see e.g. Arrendondo 1998; Burn 1992; Ibrahim 1991; Jackson & Meadows 1991; Sue, Arredondo & McDavis 1992; Trevino 1996; Williams 2003).

Assessment of the worldview of the client could help in avoiding and solving possible cultural conflicts stemming from differences in the way the counsellor and the client cope with cultural diversity (Coleman 1997). There are also practical assessment instruments for evaluating the worldview of a client. Naturally these instruments can be used for evaluating the counsellor’s own worldview as well. Even if not used for actual evaluation, these instruments can be used for getting a more concrete understanding of elements which comprise the worldview. Grieger & Ponterotto (1995) suggest the following sources, for example: Ibrahim & Kahn 1987; Ibrahim et al. 1994; Washington 1994.

In this article we discuss dimensions of worldview with a special emphasis on the ideas presented by Emmy van Deurzen-Smith (1988), followed by a more focussed view of the conception of human being in relation to good life according to Kotka-järvi & Nyysönen 1996. Conceptions of good life vary across cultures even though some broad agreements exist. It is good to note that we do not explicitly discuss what good life is, but we propose conceptual tools for approaching worldview issues which include questions of good life. After introducing these we deal with conceptual models for approaching worldviews in counselling. In addition to some existing models

we propose a holistic four-dimensional model which combines key elements of van Deurzen-Smith's (1988) ideas and the ideas presented by Kotkajärvi & Nyysönen (1996). Finally we discuss how to use this model in approaching worldviews by addressing particularly the connections between the dimensions.

DIMENSIONS OF WORLDVIEW

There is variation in what dimensions are included in the worldview. For instance, Ibrahim et al. (1994) and Dana (1993) have discussed this topic. According to Dana (1993) worldview contains two components:

- 1) group identity (e.g. nature of cultural heritage), and
- 2) individual identity (e.g. self concept)

These form the basis of one's values, beliefs and language, which in turn influence the way a person perceives counselling. Jackson & Meadows (1991) in their discussion on worldview concentrate on the philosophical assumptions underlying the worldview which represent the deep structure of culture and which are essential in understanding the cultural differences. These philosophical assumptions are: ontology, cosmology, epistemology, axiology, logic and process. Jackson & Meadows suggest that these components should be studied as part of counsellor training programmes.

In our view Emmy van Deurzen-Smith (1988) provides a good, comprehensive frame of reference to understand different worldviews. She uses a so-called existential approach which proposes a framework that describes the basic dimensions of human existence. The idea of the existential approach is to provide a holistic map for interpreting one's personal worldview which opens up fruitful perspectives without producing restricted and categorised interpretations. Traditionally the existential dimensions are threefold, including a physical, a social, and a personal dimension, their German equivalents being *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt* and *Eigenwelt* (Binswanger 1975; Boss 1963). Van Deurzen-Smith (1988) has added a fourth, spiritual dimension (*Überwelt*) to this classification.

The *Umwelt* describes the *Natural World* with its physical and biological dimensions where a person is likely to behave in an instinctual manner. The *Mitwelt* describes the *Social World* with its social dimension of human relationships and interactions where a person is likely to behave in a learnt, cultured manner. The *Eigenwelt* describes the *Private world* with its psychological dimensions of intimate and personal

experience where a person is likely to have a sense of identity and ownership. The *Überwelt* describes the *Ideal world* with its spiritual dimension of beliefs and aspirations where a person is likely to refer to values beyond himself/herself. (van Deurzen-Smith 1988, 69–103.) When discussing the four dimensions presented by van Deurzen-Smith it is useful to consider both the counsellor and counselee perspectives.

Van Deurzen-Smith (1988, 69–77) points out that the *Natural world* (*Umwelt*) is the most fundamental. Human existence is always anchored in an actual physical presence in a material world. At the same time there are individual variations in experiences of how to relate with it. All people relate to their environment according to their needs and perceptions. Subjective reality can thus be extremely diverse even at this most basic and concrete level of experience. This observation is very important in multicultural counselling because different backgrounds and cultures create different attitudes toward the physical environment. Various aspects of the *Natural world* need to be taken into account, including, for example, bodily awareness of the whole range of physical sensations both from internal and external sources, body image, ability to stave off illness, fitness or weakness, attitude towards food, sex and procreation. Exploring one's relationship to the elements of the *Natural world* is crucial in constructing a perception of one's relation to the world.

If we think about the *Natural world* as a whole, we can say that it represents the physical and biological foundation for existence. There are many differences between cultures in how the *Natural world* is perceived and how it is integrated as part of the worldview. Even though we know a lot about the *Natural world* based on scientific research, people's relation to this knowledge varies considerably.

The second dimension of human existence is that of a person's relation to others (*Mitwelt*). Intimate relationships do not fall into this category according to van Deurzen-Smith (1988, 77–87); they are part of the third, *Private world* dimension (*Eigenwelt*). The relationships of the public world are those of ordinary everyday encounters with others. The public world is the arena for all aspects of social interactions which are an inevitable part of human existence. A person's experience is embedded in a social and cultural environment which to a large extent determines actions, feelings and thoughts. The *Mitwelt* includes a person's relationship to his/her ethnic background, social class or other reference groups, country, language and cultural history. In addition, it includes one's family, and work environment, general attitude towards authority and the law. In all these aspects a person's presuppositions about what it means to be a human being become visible.

The third dimension of one's worldview that needs to come under scrutiny is a person's relationship to oneself (*Eigenwelt*). This *Private world* is the land of intimacy. It includes intimacy with self and intimacy with others. It is the home world: the place where you feel at ease with yourself, because you are surrounded by familiarity and kinship. The *Private world* is the world of the *I* and *We*. It encompasses everything that is felt to be part of oneself. The inner world includes feelings, thoughts, character traits, ideas, aspirations, objects and people, in as much as these are identified as one's own. (Van Deurzen-Smith 1988, 87–96.) In these aspects people from different cultures and within the same culture differ. In order to understand the role of worldview in multicultural counselling special attention must be paid to the nature of each person's *Private world*. An important goal in analysing this *Private world* is to make it more visible for the counsellee to help him/her in better understanding his/her "inside world" in relation to the social dimension (*Mitwelt*).

For a more profound understanding of the *Private world* (*Eigenwelt*) is important to consider its relation to the *Ideal world* (*Überwelt*) as well. Van Deurzen-Smith (1988, 96-103) emphasises that the strength and flexibility of personality and character are connected to a strong sense of what one values in the world. When people are hesitant in their relation to their *self*, it is often helpful to encourage them to reflect on what it is that attaches them to the *Ideal world*, which in turn will bring them closer to themselves, as they define their own purpose. In this process one's relationship with the absolute world of values will gradually become a central focus of attention. For many people spirituality or religiousness represent this dimension of *Ideal world* (*Überwelt*). For others any reference to spirituality or religion might be off-putting. Generally, most people are able to build a relation to the *Ideal world*. The *Ideal world* is the domain of experience where people create meaning for themselves. To create meaning for life means openness to ask basic questions, like what is reality, the real world, where does it come from, is there some reason behind reality, what happens when one dies, is there some kind of new form of life after death, what is the world we see and experience like, what can we know about it? All these fundamental questions are basically presuppositions of worldview which are choices whose contents are mainly based on what one believes. From this point of view personal worldview is based on faith. These parts of one's personal worldview construct the frame of reference in which one locates oneself and defines his/her meaning of life.

Dealing with *Ideal world* questions means that a counsellor tries to open the implicit ideological outlook of the person so that the *Ideal world*, beliefs and values,

will become more explicit. It is about making explicit a person's existing views of life. Understanding the *Ideal world* of a person means grasping how this person makes sense of the world and what it is he/she lives for and would be willing to die for. Recognising and defining *Ideal world* helps one to see what the frame of reference is through which one interprets his/her meaning of life and where he/she situates himself/herself. When a person discovers his/her inner connectedness to something greater than himself/herself, to some ideal which will lift him/her beyond everyday struggles, a new motivation flows which can carry him/her through difficulties with unerring purposefulness. (van Deurzen-Smith 1988, 97–98.)

Summing up the existential approach to understanding a person's worldview presented above, a special attention must be paid to the following three aspects.

- 1) Assumptions about the world need to be recognised, defined and questioned on all four dimensions. Assumptions are the things one normally holds true without questioning. They determine one's perception of things as real or unreal.
- 2) Values need to be recognised and determined in order to establish ultimate and vital concerns which make things worthwhile and meaningful.
- 3) Personal talents need to be recognised, defined and elaborated, as they are the source of what makes life possible and actual.

All three aspects need to be taken into account if a personal worldview is to be explored and translated into a dynamically reflective and satisfactory lifestyle. Gaining clarity about assumptions will increase the ability to make sense of reality; gaining clarity about values will increase the ability to make life worthwhile; gaining clarity about personal talents will increase one's ability to make life work in actuality (Emmy van Deurzen-Smith 1988, 103).

In today's world characterised by globalisation and technological development, both of which have changed the role and nature of work in societies, another type of perspective on worldview is also needed: how has globalisation (economic globalisation in particular) and technological development affected our conception of the world? It is important to note that these developments do not just change the practical aspects of life, but may eventually change the way we perceive the world in a more profound manner. Interesting analyses of globalisation and other societal changes have been made by researchers representing different fields of science (Beck 2000;

Casey 1995; De Mul 1999; Julkunen et al. 2003; Sennett 2003; Wright 1998). They challenge us to consider worldview issues from the perspective of current changes in our societies, as well. We take the stand that the dimensions presented by van Deurzen-Smith are fundamental and in a sense timeless, yet they are subject to alteration caused by the changes in societies. Do we want globalisation or developments in technology to change us without critically evaluating them and thinking what we actually do want? It can be relatively easy to passively adapt to the changes, but the price can be far too high. These questions are important not only for Western countries in general, but they also have relevance for multicultural counselling. By developing a critical perspective on the developments in Western societies counsellors can become more aware of the hidden values and ways of thinking in their own culture. This helps them to better consider how people from other than Western cultures may experience tensions related to differences in values and ways of thinking.

THE CONCEPTION OF HUMAN BEINGS AS A PART OF WORLDVIEWS

The conception of human beings is a very important part of worldviews. Particularly from the point of view of multicultural counselling it is important to consider the role of our conceptions of human beings. It is equally important to note both the counsellor and client perspectives when discussing the conception of human beings. The conception of human beings has links to ethical thinking. Kotkavirta and Nyysönen (1996) have presented an interesting way to combine these two important components (see figure 1). The figure includes two dimensions: culturalism – naturalism and essentialism – existentialism. Culturalism emphasises the role of human interaction as a basis for constructing the conceptions of the good life. People create understanding of the good life in communities and societies. According to the opposite pool of culturalism, naturalism, all members of human communities have natural needs, and the good life satisfies these needs, such as hunger, nurture, sex, etc. Essentialism is based on the idea that human beings have essential (common) qualities and the good life is actualising these qualities. According to the opposite pool of essentialism, existentialism, a person determines his/her existence him/herself as well as his/her good life. These four conceptions form a field of possible combinations. The idea is that most people's conceptions consist of elements of more than just one basic conception.

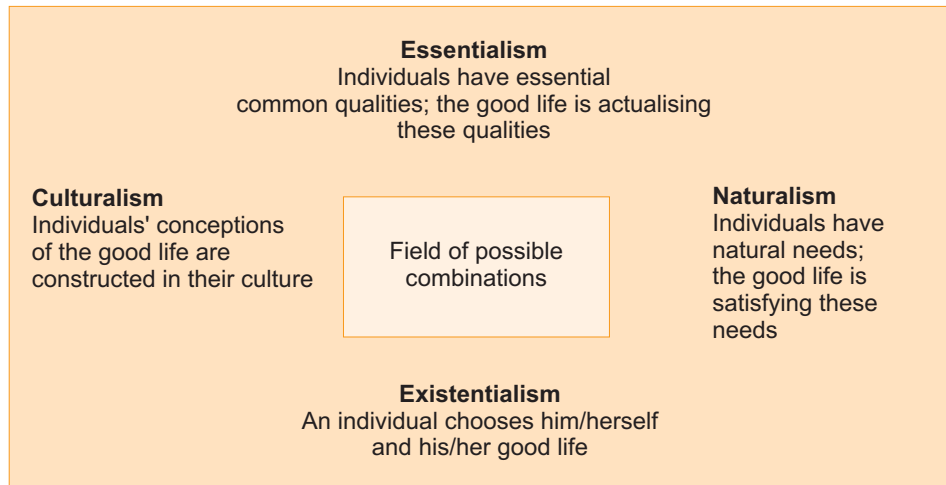


Figure 1. Connection between the conceptions of human beings and the good life (Kotkavirta & Nyysönen 1996, 77).

Our conceptions of human beings and understanding of ethics, what is a good life, are key components in our way of perceiving life and relationship to other people and cultures. In multicultural counselling counsellors and clients often perceive people and cultures from different starting points and perspectives. Therefore, it is helpful for counsellors to have conceptual models which can be used for analysing these differences. We believe that the model of Kotkavirta and Nyysönen (1996) can serve as such a helpful tool.

With regard to individualistic – collectivistic cultures it is interesting to note that existentialism and culturalism seem to become opposite poles. If we think of individualistically inclined Western countries and those countries characterised by a more collectivistic way of life, it would be reasonable to claim that Western countries are more inclined towards existentialism as compared to more collectivistic countries which are relatively speaking more inclined towards culturalism. The reason for the rather strong influence of existentialism in Western countries is partly due to liberalistic thinking, which emphasises individualism and each individual's right to choose one's values (Pursiainen 1995, 35). It is important that counsellors pay attention to the differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures in understanding human beings and the good life. However, at the same time counsellors must keep in mind individual differences within each culture.

What can counsellors do when they notice that their clients perceive the world and their life from very different starting points? Do counsellors have to adapt and accept the ways clients perceive reality as such? Do the clients have to adapt? ... or could both counsellors and clients enter into a true dialogue, mutual learning process, which is based on respect and appreciation? Cultural relativism becomes an important and inevitable question when different worldviews come into contact. For instance, Peavy (1999) discusses this question (see also chapter 8 by Pirkko Pitkänen in this book). On the one hand, he notes that each individual has his/her unique way of constructing his/her understanding of reality and from this perspective there are different realities. On the other hand, social constructivism emphasises that reality is created and constructed in communities, in interaction with others; different communities thus may have “different realities”.

Is everything then relative? Does each culture, community and individual construct different realities and different ways of conceptualising what the good life is? In an extreme version, cultural relativism would lead to a situation where any conception of reality and the good life is equally acceptable since there are no universal agreements on these questions. It is not difficult to understand that this type of cultural relativism simply does not work. At the same time it seems that we have to accept that differences exist in ways people perceive the world. From this point of view striving for a strict, universal framework to perceive reality in the same manner also becomes problematic. Therefore, as also suggested by Pirkko Pitkänen, cultural pluralism seems to be a reasonable “mediating” starting point to discuss the differences in worldview (for more, see chapter 8 in this book).

If we accept that there are differences in worldviews (which we should), it is also important to recognise that these differences should not only be regarded as individual differences amongst clients. It is equally important to discuss these differences in a wider framework of societies and cultures and pay attention to power relations between the dominating and minority groups within each society. It is possible that members of dominating groups with their attitudes and actions may make the life of minority groups more difficult. Therefore, counsellors should also understand their responsibility for advocating and raising questions which help society to become more collectively sensitive towards the differences existing in worldviews between different groups.

CONCEPTUAL MODELS FOR APPROACHING WORLDVIEWS IN COUNSELLING

We propose here a conceptual model (see figure 2) to help counsellors in approaching differences of worldviews in counselling. In the model we have combined figure 1 presented earlier (Kotkajärvi & Nyyssönen 1996) and the four-dimensional model suggested by Deurzen-Smith (1988) (see table 1). The reason for putting the dimensions of Kotkajärvi & Nyyssönen at the core is that in our view the conception of human beings and ethics is the most important aspect in multicultural counselling. In this way ethical thinking can be linked to a broader framework. We realised that combining the two frameworks seems to produce an even more comprehensive and richer conceptual framework to be used in multicultural counselling.

Table 1. *Examples of elements on the four dimensions of worldview (Van Deurzen-Smith 1988).*

Natural world <i>Umwelt</i>	Social world <i>Mitwelt</i>	Private world <i>Eigenwelt</i>	Ideal world <i>Überwelt</i>
Relation to:			
Food/nutrition	ethnic background	self	spirituality (holiness, tabu, myths, rites)
rest/sleep	social class	intimate people	
health and illness	other reference groups	feelings	religiousness
sex	gender	thoughts	ideology
sexuality	language	character traits	philosophy
fitness/weakness	country	ideas	time and space
body	cultural history	aspirations	
ageing	family	personally meaningful objects	
physical (cultural) environment	work environment	time and space	
nature	authority		
time and space	law		
	time and space		

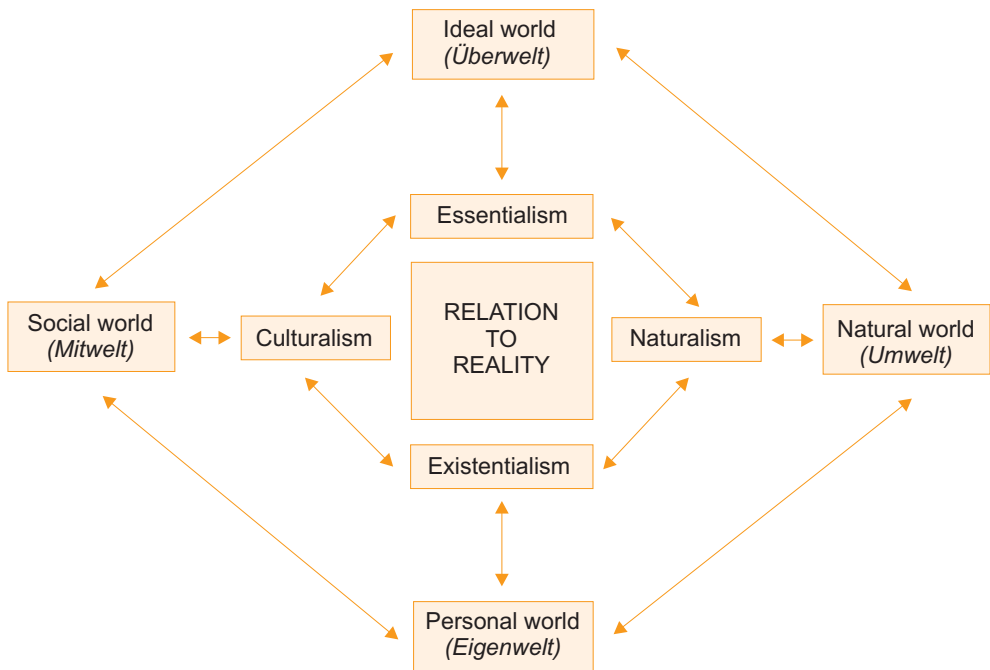


Figure 2. A holistic four-dimensional model for approaching worldviews.

The framework could be seen as a flexible tool in approaching worldviews with the following benefits:

- 1) The framework covers the diversity of cultures because the basic questions included in it are present in every culture.
- 2) It can be regarded as pluralistic in that it, for example, allows counsellors and clients to maintain their own understanding of truth in relation to the nature of reality and yet makes a constructive discussion possible.
- 3) It is both universal and culture-specific in that it considers the universality in the basic questions and differences in answers.
- 4) It works in various counselling contexts.
- 5) It makes it possible to consider each client holistically.
- 6) It enables the counsellor and client to deal with possible religious and ethnic tensions.

- 7) It is not bound or limited to any particular theoretical approach to counselling.
- 8) It provides an approach to facilitate lifelong learning in becoming more sensitive towards differences in worldviews and learning constructive ways to deal with those differences, and it is not limited to any particular approach and methods used in multicultural (cross-cultural) training presented by Carter & Qureshi (1995, 244).

Another model which can be used for conceptualising differences and similarities in worldviews is the worldview congruence model (see e.g. Brown & Landrum 1995). A number of researchers have discussed possible interpersonal conflicts which can happen on eight worldview dimensions: psycho-behavioural modality, axiology, ethos, epistemology, logic, ontology, concept of time, and concept of self (e.g. Myers 1991; Nobles 1972). Table 2 presents worldview positions based on the worldview congruence model according to Brown & Landrum (1995, 271).

Table 2. *Worldview positions (Brown & Landrum 1995, 271).*

Worldview Incongruence			
Worldview dimensions	Example Worldview positions		
Psychobehavioral modality	Doing vs. Being vs. Becoming		
Axiology (Values)	Competition Emotional restraint Direct verbal expression Seeking help	vs. Cooperation vs. Emotional expressiveness vs. Indirect verbal expression vs. "Saving face"	
Ethos (Guiding beliefs)	Independence Individual rights Egalitarianism Control & dominance	vs. Interdependence vs. Honour and protect family vs. Authoritarianism vs. Harmony & deference	
Epistemology (How One Knows)	Cognitive processes	vs. Affective processes "vibes", intuition	vs. Cognitive & Affective process
Logic (Reasoning Process)	Either/or thinking vs. both/and thinking vs. Circular		
Ontology (Nature of Reality)	Objective Material	vs. Subjective Spiritual	vs. Spiritual & Material
Concept of Time	Clock-based vs. Event-based vs. Cyclical		
Concept of Self	Individual self vs. Extended self		

The starting points and conceptual dimensions in the two models presented above are different and therefore they should be seen as complimentary models. Both models provide the counsellor and client with applicable dimensions to be used in multicultural counselling. Brown & Landrum (1995) discuss the application of the model from the point of view of supervision based on supervisor-counsellor-client triads. For further information please refer to their article.

DISCUSSION ON HOW TO USE THE MODEL IN MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING

General perspectives

In the following text we discuss how the model we proposed for use in approaching worldviews in multicultural counselling could be used. In order to create a good basis for using the model it is important that the counsellor is supportive and encouraging. McLure and Teyber (1996) emphasise the meaning of the counsellor-client relationship and the counsellor's (therapist's) sensitivity to the client's worldview. The multicultural-relational approach they propose includes the following components: the counsellor/therapist

- 1) creates a secure, positive environment,
- 2) validates and affirms the client's own worldview, and
- 3) facilitates the client's connectedness to and expression of his/her true "voice" and authentic relationships

These aspects are necessary starting points for using the model in dealing with worldviews. Accepting that differences in worldviews exist is a crucial basis for multicultural counselling. Given that the worldviews may often be sensitive and considered private, it is important that the counsellor respects clients' right to determine what can be discussed and when. It is good to explain to clients that they are encouraged to take a holistic view of their life when it is discussed during the counselling process and that the counsellor will respect their thoughts. The counsellor could say that he/she may ask questions which help clients to recognise the connections between the different dimensions of the worldview as well as possible differences there may be between the clients' culture of origin and the new culture they live in. The model can serve as

a general map for both the counsellor and the client and thus it could also be used as a paper copy during the counselling conversation. Depending on the clients and their needs the model can be used as a sort of checklist to scan the relevance of its elements to each client or it can be used as a “working platform” for the questions that come to awareness during the counselling conversation, either explicitly or implicitly. For instance, if the client has health problems, it should be proposed that they are included in the agenda if they have relevance to the client’s situation and needs.

After the above general orientation on how the counsellor and client could use the model the following variations, for example, may occur:

- 1) the individual client raises an issue related to worldview for discussion
- 2) the counsellor raises an issue related to worldview for discussion
- 3) a member of the client’s community participates in a counselling session to assist in dealing with worldview issues
- 4) the client’s social groups (working place/leisure time groups, etc) need multi-cultural consultation
- 5) the counsellor and the client have such a conflict related to differences in worldview which requires dealing with worldview tensions in order to proceed the counselling process

In cases where the client raises a worldview issue for discussion it is rather easy for the counsellor to continue dealing with the related questions, since the client was the one who took the initiative. If the counsellor takes the initiative, he/she must be sensitive and think about the appropriate moment for raising a worldview issue for discussion and he/she should make sure there is enough time to deal with the questions. The purpose of raising a worldview issue could be helping the client to widen his/her perspectives on questions within the client’s worldview, for instance helping him/her to realise possible congruence/incongruence between the dimensions of the client’s own worldview. The purpose could also be to provide the client with more information on worldview issues in his/her country that he/she arrived in. In many cases, particularly when dealing with religious issues (*Ideal world*), it is useful to ask respected members/authorities from the client’s (religious) community to participate in the counselling session in order to help deal with worldview issues. The participating community member must be someone who has adapted to the new country relatively well, thus being able to work as a “mediator” for the client in

collaboration with the counsellor. Sometimes worldview issues can become important in the social groups of the new country the client has moved to, and not only the client but also his/her new social groups may need multicultural counselling/consultation in order to better understand the client and help him/her in becoming an active member of the group. In addition, it is important that the counsellor takes into consideration the phase of the client's adaptation process to a new culture (for more on this topic, refer to chapter 11 in this book).

Linking the four worldview dimensions

From the perspective of using the holistic four-dimensional model of worldviews in multicultural counselling, it is good to note that no matter what the specific elements (see table 1) in the question are, they always have connections to other dimensions. The true nature and meaning of each element comes clear only by studying its connections. For example, formulating the values (part of the *Ideal world* dimension) that one lives by is often the first step in the direction of solving problems on the public, private and natural dimensions. Strength and flexibility of personality and character are connected to a strong sense of what one values in the world. Van Deurzen-Smith (1988, 98) emphasises that when it becomes obvious that certain ideals and values are very important to a person, he/she will find a new strength to implement those ideals and values regardless of external or internal pressures. On the other hand in multicultural contexts these pressures may often be quite heavy and should be recognised and discussed.

Many people have difficulties in making sense of their own ideals and values. Coming to terms with one's own aspirations and purpose in life is only possible in so far as one is able to gain sufficient distance from trends and phenomena around one. It is important that the counsellor understands that the distance between the client's country of origin and his/her new country with possible existing tensions can provide a fruitful basis for dealing with worldview issues. Dealing with one's public-world relationship is therefore often a necessity before the *Ideal world* can be approached (van Deurzen-Smith 1988, 102).

The *Ideal world* dimension requires counsellor sensitivity towards the individual's own philosophical and religious beliefs and presuppositions. It is very helpful to know some basic facts about different philosophies and religions because there are always some tensions between different cultural and religious groups which are

partly understandable from philosophical and religious points of view. This basic knowledge helps the counsellor to adopt different counselling practices for persons with different orientations towards religion and philosophy. General information on religions and philosophies is not always enough. The counsellor sometimes needs more specific information on particular aspects (e.g., rites, rules, etc.) related to different interpretations made by sub-groups of a certain religion or ideology. For example, certain religious groups may have specific rules and customs concerning food, clothing, sexuality (*Natural world*), authority, family relations (*Social world*), the status and relation of self, intimacy with other people, thoughts (*Private world*), etc. Particularly when dealing with these type of specific questions a counsellor should seek consultation with religious leaders and other relevant people who can open up the meaning of specific aspects of the religion or ideology.

A good way to conceptualise religion within the suggested model is that of Peterson (2001), who proposes to understand religions in terms of orienting world-views that are expressed – in addition to beliefs – in narratives and symbols. Religions orient action and all religious traditions address questions related to normative behaviour, both ethical and religious in character. Furthermore, religions are sometimes sources of conflict when extreme positions are taken with no attempts to understand the other parties. Gort et al. (2002) provide interesting perspectives on solving these conflicts and seeking reconciliation. Understanding the role of religions in conflicts is a starting point for seeking the way out of these conflicts.

When dealing with the *Ideal world* dimension it is also of great importance to be at ease in one's *Private world* dimension. Without a sense of inner confidence and trust in one's ability to cope with the responsibility of making one's own moral judgements and decisions, it is hardly possible to focus on the *Ideal world* dimension. At the same time, inner strength and clarity on the public dimension will dramatically increase when the *Ideal world* is being cultivated (van Deurzen-Smith 1988, 102).

The meaning of the *Private world* dimension opens best through exploring its relation to the other three worldview dimensions. There are, however, some specific aspects concerning the *Private world*. In order to fully understand the true nature of the *Private world* dimension, one has to be alone first to face his/her privacy and close human relations and objects. The experience of being alone is very common when people move to new cultures, which often creates the need to deal with the *Private world* and its relation to the other dimensions as part of the multicultural counselling process.

An intimate and secure relationship with oneself can only be generated if some basic facts of life and death are confronted. Building up a sense of confidence and courage in oneself can only be achieved by exposing oneself to the raw realities of living (van Deurzen-Smith 1988, 96.) A healthy and balanced relationship with oneself gives a better ground for tolerance towards other people. In terms of their relation to these things cultures and individuals differ significantly. The key questions are: How does a person in a particular group and culture experience her/his personality? How does one narrate his/her *Private world*? How does he/she relate inwardly to himself/herself? What makes one feel at home? What makes one feel safe? What does it mean to be alone for the individual and how does his/her culture typically define being alone? What is the meaning of life according to the individual and his/her culture? How does one interpret death and life after death?

In conclusion, worldviews are an important issue in many counselling processes because the deeper meanings of worldviews can be understood properly only when explored together with the client in their cultural and philosophical/religious context. Therefore, approaching worldviews is an important and interesting challenge in multicultural counselling. Differences in worldviews may create tensions, and therefore sensitivity and time are needed in searching for constructive dialogue. When a good general basis for the dialogue is generated, the proposed holistic, four-dimensional conceptual model for approaching worldview can be applied along with other possible models. The conceptual models can be regarded as tools to be used in multicultural counselling when worldview elements become an important issue during the counselling process. The models can be used for drawing a good overall picture of the client's worldview and for studying the links between the main dimensions of the worldview. The model we have proposed is not designed to be used as a detailed process-model. The idea is to use it as a general conceptual model which provides a basis for discussing the relevant elements which appear during the counselling processes.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

- 1) How would you describe your own worldview? You can use the presented conceptual models for studying your worldview.
- 2) What dimensions in your own worldview are the most important and how are they connected to each other?
- 3) How would you describe the meaning of the *Ideal world* dimension for yourself and how is it connected to the other dimensions. The reason for analysing this particular dimension is that it is often the most difficult one to understand and interpret and in many cases people are not so well aware of it. In addition, given that this dimension is often also very sensitive for clients, it is important that counsellors are first well aware of their own relation to the *Ideal world*.
- 4) Discuss with your colleagues in what kind of counselling situations it is proper and useful to directly approach certain worldview dimensions? Some worldview dimensions and elements are a natural part of almost every counselling process and some are more rare, depending on the cultural background of clients.
- 5) Start using the conceptual models first with your friends or colleagues who are willing to work with you. While you work with them, formulate and write down questions and expressions to be used in the dialogue. Try to create questions and expressions which are sensitive, clearly understandable, and work well for opening the discussion.

For example, a good opening question could be “How would you describe your relation to X?” What does X (e.g. clothing/family relations/fait) mean to you? Note that some people can easily start from very broad and abstract questions and some need a more concrete approach.

- 6) Based on your own or on your colleagues' experiences, choose a case where worldview issues have been important. Then discuss how the conceptual models could be used to approach the worldview of the client.
- 7) Familiarise yourself with world religions and analyse your own relation to them. Try to pay special attention to the attitudes you have. In addition, study how your and your colleagues' clients themselves relate to their (possible) religion and religious communities and how they interpret their religion.
- 8) Suppose that the counsellor and the client emphasise different dimensions of the worldview (of the model presented). Discuss possible consequences of this for the counselling process.

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A philosophical basis for multicultural counselling

INTRODUCTION

During the past few decades, most European countries have undergone major shifts in their ethnic compositions. This is mainly due to the relatively rapid increase in transnational mobility of people. Growing transnational migration throws up many ethical issues related to ethno-cultural diversity. One current issue of concern is that, in many countries, there are groups of people not considered capable of belonging, and therefore either denied full participation in society or alternatively forced to go through a process of cultural assimilation in order to belong (Castles & Davidson 2000, 11).

Immigration to another country inevitably starts processes of re-socialisation and acculturation. In practice, many people with a foreign background live in a hybrid space “in between” their home cultures and the mainstream culture of the society in which they reside. This coexistence of different or even opposing cultural frames of reference and behaviour may result in high social and psychological costs (Breakwell 1986, 6–7, 128–147; Talib 1999, 80–82). Important questions arising in counselors’ work are how ethnic minority clients could be helped to integrate¹ into the host society, to reconcile cultural conflicts and to cope with threatened identities.

¹ Integration has a positive connotation indicating that a society is well-ordered and that the entry of new individuals or groups neither endangers the integration of the existing system nor changes it in such a way that the society would not be re-integrated again as a result of the transformation. Accordingly, an integrated society aims to be a well-functioning whole. When I talk about integration, it is useful to specify the aims as well as the social and political goals set for the integration policy. The basic question is whether the policy implies a monolithic view of society or a pluralistic one. (Bauböck 1994, 10; cf. Amir 1994, 25.)

Intercultural encounters are by their nature phenomena that contain numerous variables and are difficult to predict. Therefore, participation in intercultural interaction situations requires new kinds of professional and communication skills. Often this means a capacity for managing anxiety caused by cultural differences in interaction with clients who see the world from perspectives which may be different or even in conflict with counsellors' personal values and beliefs.

This paper outlines ethical starting points for counsellors' work in increasingly diverse working contexts. This article will start by discussing the ethical basis for cultural assumptions. Then ideas for learning culturally responsive counselling will be introduced. Finally, the concluding chapter will summarise the paper.

ETHICAL ORIENTATION TOWARDS CULTURAL DIVERSITY

In many European states, the idea of cultural *pluralism* has gained ground.² The goal is that people accept the idea that immigrants and settled ethnic minorities should be integrated and not discriminated against on ethnic grounds, and at the same time they should not only be allowed but even encouraged to preserve their original cultures. Simultaneously, the populations and the institutions of the host countries should be taught not only to accept and tolerate cultural diversity but also to value it as enrichment of their overall culture. At the same time, however, assimilationist or even exclusive tendencies are appearing in many states. Culturally, an assimilationist approach represents *singularism*, which aims at cultural unity. Singularism defies a variety of the conceptions of good which are cherished by different groups.³ (Matilal 1991; Pitkänen 1997; Pitkänen et al. 2002.)

Relativism, again, goes a little further than pluralism; it holds that any conception of good is as good as any other, there being no ultimate standard. Relativists are entirely tolerant. Anything goes. This means that logical relativists inevitably come to

² In Finland, the increase in heterogeneity of cultural values and practices has had an effect on the immigration policy practices in Finland. In 1997, the Finnish government ratified the *Programme on Immigration and Refugee Policy*, and, in 1999, the *Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers* was enacted. According to these documents, pluralism is being viewed as the goal for integrating foreign arrivals. (Matinheikki-Kokko & Pitkänen 2002, 48–73.)

³ Phenomena like racism, xenophobia, islamophobia, for example, represent singularistic orientations.

a dead end. They have, among other things, to accept opposite opinions: as well as the opinions of a pacifist or of a war-fanatic. In addition, they have to accept the restrictions on the free expression of opinion; also that they themselves are being manipulated to change their views. Thus, relativists in their total tolerance have to accept intolerance! Accordingly, relativism turns out to be an untenable stand. In practical life, we have to attach to something. As a solution and a valid ethical attitude to cultural diversity arises pluralism. Pluralism means accepting cultural diversity, yet everyone is still expected to commit to some commonly accepted principles. (Matilal 1991; Pitkänen 1998, 44.)

Pluralism implies that there can be some universal moral standards which are applicable to all human beings, irrespective of their national, cultural, social, religion, etc. origins. The basic idea is that people are at once both *similar and different*. Human beings, as physical and psychological beings, are, in spite of their culture, basically the same all over the world. In spite of time and place, they have to face many similar questions in their life. Everyone needs food, clothing, and shelter; there is a need for food, for participation in social life, and so forth. Therefore, in spite of the diversity of life styles people produce cultural structures that are *functionally* the same and can be compared with one another. (Matilal 1991, 157; Gay 1995.)

TOWARDS PLURALISTIC COUNSELLING

Pluralism allows for the multiplicity of the concept of common good, as well as the freedom of choice on the part of the individuals to decide on their own community life. Although it entails the acceptance of cultural diversity, yet everyone is still expected to commit to some commonly accepted principles.

In addition to outward manifestations of culture, there may be differences in immanent values and norm systems⁴, conceptions of time, human relations, in individuals' cognitive styles (in the ways they process information), in their communication styles, and so on. This is giving way to new work environments in which the

⁴ Values are conceptions of what is desirable and important to us. Thus, values are goals of a good life and – either actual or potential – worth aspiring to. This does not mean that values do inevitably determine our life, rather they are ideals that lead or steer our functioning. Norms, in turn, are principles of right action serving to guide, control, or regulate proper and acceptable behavior.

working methods of the past no longer function. Rather, counsellors should learn how to engage with the diverse even conflicting knowledge and views they encounter.

In Western countries, we have a long ethical tradition with respect to *conflicts of interest*, but in a society of cultural multiplicity, the state of affairs turns out to be more complex. In addition to a conflict of interest, one may also get into a *conflict of values and norms* (cf. Eriksson 1997). The value and norm systems of people who live in the same cultural circle are usually fairly similar, whereas, for example, the Moslem and Christian views upon certain elementary questions of life may differ significantly from each other. Values and norms belong to the area of tacit arrangements and cultural self-evidences. Therefore we are often blind to them, culturally blinded, so to speak. For this reason, we should, in one way or another, get outside our own cultural circle in order to see our systematic blindness.

An inability to view other cultures as equally viable alternatives for organising reality is known as *ethnocentrism*. It is a common characteristic of a singularistic view, whereby one's own cultural traits are viewed as natural, correct, and superior to those of another culture, whose traits are perceived as odd, amusing, inferior, or immoral (Gollnick & Chinn 1998, 7–8). Pluralistic counselling brings in its train a challenge for more inclusive meaning perspectives. This presupposes mental flexibility and tolerance for cultural differences. Counsellors should recognise that their clients, as all human beings, are both natural and cultural beings, sharing a common human identity, but in a culturally mediated manner. They share several capacities and needs in common, but different cultural backgrounds as well as individual characteristics define and structure these differently.

The ultimate aim is that immigrants and other minorities would have the same opportunities for access to the goods and values of the societies in which they live as the members of the dominating cultures, and that there would be no discrimination according to ethnic origin. It seems that working contexts, where mainstream people are the norm, fail to provide the representatives of minority cultures with *equal opportunity* and, thus, to prevent their exclusion from society. Thus, it is not enough that all clients are to be treated the same. Rather, the achievement of equal opportunities presupposes *culturally responsive counselling*. This means that, in their daily work, counsellors need to grant additional support to their ethnic minority clients. This may be necessary to help them integrate into the host society.

Traditionally, a common belief has been that equal treatment can overcome the inequalities that exist in society. This can be true in a culturally homogeneous envi-

ronment where people share broadly similar needs, norms, motivations, social customs and patterns of behaviour. Equal rights here mean more or less the same rights, and equal treatment involves more or less identical treatment. The principle of equality is therefore relatively easy to define and apply, and discriminatory deviations from it can be identified without much disagreement. (Parekh 2000, 242, 261–262.)

This is, however, not the case in a culturally diverse environment. Equality consists in equal treatment of those judged to be equal in relevant respects. In culturally multiple environments, people are likely to disagree on what respects are relevant in a given context, what response is appropriate to them, and what counts as their equal treatment. Thus, once the counsellors take cultural differences into account, equal treatment does not mean identical but differential treatment, raising questions as to how they can ensure that it is really equal across cultures and does not serve as a cloak for discrimination or privilege.⁵ (Parekh 2000, 242)

LEARNING FOR BECOMING MULTICULTURALLY COMPETENT

Culture is not something we are born with, but rather it is *learned*. If culture is learned, then it is also *learnable*. A necessary, though insufficient, ingredient of multicultural learning is the acquisition of cultural knowledge.⁶ Knowledge is a form of cultural capital, and its possession empowers. Thus, one of the greatest resources and sources of empowerment⁷ is access to the kind of knowledge that is culturally accurate and has instrumental value when put in use. In particular, in culturally diverse environments, people navigate with the help of cultural awareness and critical self-reflection. This entails familiarity with foreign cultures, but also an awareness of one's own cultural starting points.

Much of what is learned about one's own culture is stored in mental categories that are recalled only when they are challenged by something different (Beamer &

⁵ It is worth noticing here that also the concept of 'equal opportunity' needs to be interpreted in a culturally sensitive manner. Opportunity is a subject-dependent concept in the sense that a facility, a resource, or a course of action is only a mute and passive possibility and not an opportunity for an individual if s/he lacks the capacity, the cultural disposition or the necessary cultural knowledge to take advantage of it. (Parekh 2000, 241.)

⁶ 'Cultural knowledge' contains among other things the way of life, the assumptions and values of which people are not always conscious.

Varner 2001, 3). We tend to evaluate everything we see and experience on the basis of our own background, and then act accordingly. This is called by Edward Hall (1977) a 'self-reference criterion'. Those who understand their own self-reference criterion and who are open to making adjustments in their evaluations are likely to become more aware of their own cultures while they are also learning about other cultures. Thus, in order to understand the other person we have to understand ourselves. This is not as easy as it may seem at first; most of what makes up a culture is absorbed unconsciously in the growing-up process of socialisation. (Beamer & Varner 2001, 17.) How do we get at it? How do we distinguish what we take for granted as universal human experience from what is culturally determined?

Jack Mezirow (1991) states that this kind of process of questioning basic cultural assumptions and habitual expectations is possible by examining why and how we constrain the way we see ourselves and other people. This *self-reflection* can result in altered meaning perspectives. This kind of change or revised interpretation of cultural ways is often the result of efforts to understand different cultures with customs that contradict our own previously accepted presuppositions. When we have an experience that cannot be assimilated into our meaning perspectives, either the experience is rejected or the perspective changes to accommodate the new experience. When we change significant meaning structures, i.e., our meaning perspectives, we change the way we view, and act toward, the world. Mezirow (1991, 168) believes that this process may lead to a more inclusive worldview (see also Taylor 1994).

⁷ In addressing the concept of 'empowerment' an essential issue is the interpretation of the root word *power*. The English word 'power' derives from Greek *δύναμις* and Latin *potentia*, which both mean 'strength' and 'ability to do a thing'. Predominant theories of 'power' have defined it in terms of relationships of domination: the ability to control others, to impose one's will on others. Kreisberg (1992) calls this conception of 'power' as *power over*. It is yet both possible and also useful to see empowerment as a process by which people come to have control over their own lives. Actually, the first meaning of the word 'power' given in the Oxford English Dictionary is the 'ability to do or effect something or anything, or to act upon a person or thing'. While there is clearly a dimension of imposition to the second part of this definition, the first part is quite free from domination. Consequently, the notion that one is 'able', while implying the ability to assert oneself in the world and to be able to fulfil one's desires, does not necessarily imply that effectiveness can only occur as a result of controlling or dominating others. Kreisberg terms this alternative concept *power with*. This is the meaning in which we use the term 'empowerment' in this project. We are interested in the participants' ability to use their powers and to realise the potentialities inherent in them.

Learning for becoming multiculturally competent can be described as a process which develops through critical encounters with cultures and through dialogue. Our own cultures should be perceived in relation to other cultures, so that misunderstandings and blind spots in the perception and interpretation of behaviour may be anticipated. The ultimate aim is to possess emotional commitment to the fundamental unity of all human beings and, at the same time, accept and appreciate the differences that lie between people of different cultures.

Various culturally based differences may exist in the relationships between the counsellors and their clients. If the participants in interaction situations come from different cultures, there is a high probability that their initial understanding of that event will differ. As a consequence, the behaviours evoked by these situational representations are likely to differ, so that the participants' responses to the same behaviour setting often disconfirm one another's expectations. Coordinating behaviour effectively becomes difficult, and attention must be shifted towards negotiating shared meanings about the situation if the relationship is to continue. (Smith & Bond 1993, 176.)

This kind of critical examination of conventional thinking does mean re-evaluation of one's own starting points. Therefore, above all the ability of continuous self-interpretation is needed. Sometimes this implies *discarding learning*: "learning off" what we have learned during the initial enculturation process. Values and norms are initially determined by the enculturation process by which human infants learn their culture. As values and norms generally belong to the area of tacit arrangements and cultural self-evidences, we are often blind to them, culturally blinded, so to speak. As our own culture is automatically treated as innate, it becomes the only natural way to function in the world. The rest of the world is viewed through our cultural lens; other cultures are compared with ours and are evaluated by our cultural standards.

Getting to know different cultural practices helps to reveal cultural self-evidences. In order to avoid ethnocentrism, we should, in one way or another, step outside our own cultural circle to see our systematic blindness. If we succeed in doing this, it may help in relating our thinking to the fact that our way of living does not represent the one and only way of living or world of values and norms, but only one among many. (Pitkänen 2002.) Does this mean that all values and norms are culturally bounded and relative, each culture having its own? In some recent Western socio-critical discussions, especially under the title of postmodernism, these kinds of relativist ideas have been presented. It has been said that there are no universal criteria for good or right,

but one way of life or system of values is as good as another. In the background, there is a subjective theory of value: a view according to which values are not determined by any natural arrangements or divine will but that human beings determine their own values. (Matilal 1991; Pitkänen 1997, 68–72; 1998, 44.)

Although pluralism does not deny the diversity of human goals, it does not stand in the way of defending the view that there is a basic or minimal moral fabric that is universal and context-transcendent. Especially, a basic fabric of universal morality seems to be necessarily related to *fundamental human rights*. Pluralism stipulates that we do not need substantive moral agreement, except for a basic agreement upon the indispensability of mutual toleration. It should be understood that mere cultural diversity does not make cultures good or bad, right or wrong. The cultures that have developed in various parts of the world are distinct because of the dissimilar climatic and other “given” circumstances and conditions of life under which people have had to gain their livelihood in different ways. Therefore, important issues concerning life and livelihood varies and have led to the development of differentiated systems of values and norms. This does, however, not mean that values and norms are “relative” in the sense that there would be no trans-cultural standard of evaluation.

CLOSING REMARKS

An increase in cultural multiplicity is creating a necessity for the restructuring of counselling practices and personnel training issues. A current challenge is that the work communities *as a whole* should be helped to deal with increasing cultural diversity. At the centre of this there is multicultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. Counsellors should understand that their own culture does not represent the only right way of thinking but only one way among many others. A critical examination of conventional thinking is not carried out by mere intellectual evaluation but it also requires re-evaluation of one’s own attitudinal starting points (Hoffmann 1992). Accordingly, although necessary, awareness of cultural multiplicity is not sufficient for true multicultural competence but these skills have to be underscored by attitudinal engagement with cultural diversity.

The ultimate aim is to possess emotional commitment to the idea that only by respecting cultural diversity can we move towards truly sustainable and equitable patterns of living. To achieve this, there is a need for intercultural interaction and dia-

logue in which the reasonableness and validity of different life forms can be judged and examined (see Bennett 1995, 259–265). Comparisons between cultures can help to see different cultural practices as solutions and answers to the same kind of problems in human life. In attempting to understand another culture's perspective, a key issue is to take off our own cultural blinders and develop sensitivity in the way we speak and behave.

Learning intercultural interaction is not easy: we are all culturally based and culturally biased. Often there is a need for some kind of intercultural transformation. A change from an ethnocentric worldview to multicultural awareness requires significant attitudinal changes. One way of asking questions is to notice that another culture goes about things differently from the way we expect. This does not mean we have to agree with another's cultural viewpoint, or that we have to adopt the values of another culture. Rather, it means that we need to examine our priorities and determine how we can all best work together, being different. (Hall 1977; Beamer & Varner 2001, 5.)

A crucial point in pluralistic multicultural counselling is the view that since clients are both similar and different, they should be treated equally because of both (Parekh 2000, 240). In practice, the achievement of equal opportunities for ethnic minority clients presupposes culturally responsive counselling. It is not enough that all clients are to be treated the same. Rather, in their daily work, counsellors should be able to grant additional support to their non-dominant clients.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

- 1) What kind of value conflicts can occur in counsellor's everyday work in a culturally diverse environment?
- 2) How could these problems be solved?
- 3) In what ways can multicultural counselling support client empowerment?
- 4) What are the main challenges, in ethnically and culturally diverse contexts, to achieving equal opportunities for all?

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MULTICULTURAL
APPROACHES
AND METHODS

III





Mika Launikari

Intercultural communication as a challenge in counselling immigrants

The continuously growing mobility of people with increased contacts among different cultures in the world and the emergence of a multicultural education and labour market in all European countries require that we develop our communication skills and competencies so that they are appropriate for living, studying and working in culturally diverse societies.

A more regular contact with other cultures challenges our own way of thinking and brings the question of who we actually are and who the others are into our awareness. As we have probably all experienced, it is not always easy to understand and to get along with people who are greatly different from us. Therefore, the importance of increased self-awareness and better understanding of other cultures as well as good intercultural communication skills among guidance counsellors cannot be emphasised enough.

This article examines the challenges related to intercultural communication in the context of counselling immigrants. The aim of the article is to define the concept of intercultural communication as well as to describe the competencies needed for successful intercultural communication. The discussion will also include some major cultural differences that a guidance counsellor should be aware of when working with immigrant clients. Additionally the article deals with the use of interpreters as communication facilitators between a guidance counsellor and an immigrant client in a counselling session. Experiences that Finnish guidance counsellors have from working with interpreters will also be discussed, as well as their expectations towards interpretation and interpreters.

THE CONCEPT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Intercultural communication as a phenomenon has existed as long as individuals from different cultures have been encountering each other. The communication process that involves culturally diverse people has been thoroughly studied by researchers all over the world during the past few decades (e.g. Bennett 1998, Storti 1990). The study of intercultural communication is fertile ground for interdisciplinary analysis. Interest in the topic is strong among anthropologists, ethnomethodologists, social psychologists, and scholars from less theoretically inclined spheres of international business and politics. Consequently, scientists have presented several theories and models of what really happens when people communicate interculturallly.

How do we then understand each other when we do not share a common cultural background? Firstly, we will have to look at the opposite of intercultural communication, *monocultural communication* (Bennett 1998), to identify the positive attributes applicable to one's own intercultural communication. Monocultural communication is based on common behaviour, beliefs, language and values. This means that the everyday interaction between members of the same culture is based on roughly common definitions of the surrounding world as well as on norms and traditions shared by everybody. These similarities enable the members of the same cultural background to predict the behaviour of others and assume a common perception of reality. Monocultural communication is therefore based on similarities.

As we know, culture may be based on commonalities such as nationality (*Finnish, Polish*), ethnicity (*Roma, Jews*), geography (*northern Sweden, southern Italy*), religion (*Islam, Christianity*) or gender (*male, female*) (Collier 1997). However, intercultural communication does not allow for assumptions of similarity to be made that easily. If we define cultures by their difference of language, beliefs, behaviour and values, these differences have to be recognised. In simple terms, *intercultural communication can be defined as face-to-face interaction between people whose cultures are significantly different from one another* (Bennett, M. 1998). The attributes needed to establishing effective and meaningful intercultural communication are language, non-verbal communication, communication style, values and assumptions.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY AS A REQUIREMENT FOR EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Intercultural competency is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts (Bennett, J. 2003). According to a model synthesised from research literature (Bennett, J. 2003) intercultural competencies consist of a *Mindset* (cognitive variables), a *Skillset* (behavioural skills) and a *Heartset* (affective variables).

The *Mindset* includes pure knowledge areas such as cultural self-awareness, culture-general and culture-specific frameworks, identity development patterns as well as understanding of cultural adaptation processes. The *Skillset* consists of behavioural skills relating to interaction management, stress and anxiety management, listening, observation, social adaptability, empathy, relationship building, problem definition and resolution. Finally, the *Heartset* deals with attitudes and motivation comprising, among others, curiosity, open-mindedness, patience, tolerance, perseverance, flexibility, initiative to explore other cultures, respect for others' values and beliefs, confidence to take appropriate risks, and attention to group and interpersonal harmony.

Another framework for developing multicultural counselling competencies is created by Sue et al. (1992; 1996). This framework defines several competencies – similar to those in the Bennett model – that a culturally competent counsellor should ideally have. The model of Sue et al. deals, among other things, with self-awareness, awareness of client culture, and intervention skills, including verbal and non-verbal communication skills, and working together with interpreters or qualified bilingual counsellors for helping the client (see more about Sue et al. in the chapter 11 by Nissilä and Lairio). However, in the following, certain aspects relevant to intercultural communication will be discussed using the model of intercultural competencies by J. Bennett (Mindset-Skillset-Heartset).

KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER CULTURES AS A BASIS FOR EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION (MINDSET)

The starting point for intercultural communication is that in order to be effective in working with people from different cultures, guidance counsellors must first become aware of their own values, biases and beliefs as well as have specific knowl-

edge about their own racial and cultural heritage. A counsellor should also understand how her/his own background affects the way s/he personally communicates and gives counselling. The motto for intercultural counsellors could be Tao Tzu's "Knowing others is wisdom, knowing yourself is Enlightenment."

Cultural awareness relates closely to the concepts of *ethnocentrism* and *ethnorelativism*. Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own cultural/ethnic group is centrally important while others are peripheral and differences are assumed to be nonexistent. Ethnocentric is usually defined as judging other groups as inferior by using one's own set of standards and customs. This normally leads to making false assumptions about the others based on our own limited experience. Ethnorelativism is the belief that no group is central, no group is peripheral, and differences from others can be fully integrated. Ethnorelative refers to being comfortable with many standards and customs and to having an ability to adapt behaviour and judgements to a variety of interpersonal settings (Bennett, M. 1998). (see also chapter 8 by Pitkänen)

The development of intercultural sensitivity and competency demands attention to the subjective experiences of people. It is fundamental for guidance counsellors to establish a good client-counsellor relationship to be of any assistance to clients. If you wish to establish credibility with adolescent clients and to discuss productively with them, it is necessary to know something of their culture (e.g. slang, fashion, music, videogames, filmstars, etc.). Exactly the same applies to various cultural groups, too. If you wish to gain recognition and communicate effectively with ethnic minorities, it is recommendable to possess some knowledge of their cultural, historical, social and religious background as well as current socio-political situation. This means acknowledging that differences exist, and it is important to value and respect such differences in all intercultural interaction.

Guidance counsellors often have reading materials or other reliable sources from which they can easily retrieve the information that they need on various cultural/ethnic groups. But not all the answers regarding other cultures can always be found through the channels available. Therefore, it is best to sensitively ask the client, if you as a guidance counsellor are not familiar with certain cultural issues emerging in the course of the guidance and counselling process. In this way, you also acknowledge the importance of the issues and show concern and willingness to learn about the client and about her/his cultural background. However, guidance counsellors should also do their 'homework' to gain general background information on various cul-

tures and not overly rely on clients to be their cultural teachers. Sometimes it might even be beneficial for guidance counsellors to work together with relevant support workers who represent the culture of the client and who thus can act as cultural brokers in the guidance session. By these means, qualitatively good conditions can be created for effective face-to-face communication between the counsellor and her/his culturally diverse clients.

We can sum up by saying that multicultural counselling and intercultural communication do not mean that guidance counsellors should know as much as possible about different cultures, but rather that they are aware of the impact of culture¹ on the personalities, behaviour and communication style of both the counsellor her/himself and the client (Metsänen 2000).

COMMUNICATION AS A BEHAVIOURAL SKILL (SKILLSET)

Communication, the sending and receiving of messages, is an integral part of culture. Culture is an important ingredient in communicative behaviour. Edward Hall has argued that culture *is* communication (Hall 1989). Communication falls into two classic categories: verbal and non-verbal. They are practically inseparable. What is said is closely linked to how it is said. The impressions (e.g. closeness or distance, spontaneity or reservedness) that we get from other people are to a great extent based on non-verbal communication (e.g. gestures, facial expressions, eye-contact, touching, body distance) (Samovar & Porter 1997).

There are a number of cultural verbal and non-verbal communication differences that can influence the communication and counselling process with individuals from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds. If misunderstood and/or misinterpreted, many of these communication differences can seriously jeopardise the relationship between guidance counsellor and client. If guidance counsellors are not familiar enough with some of these differences, they may also unintentionally misinterpret certain communication behaviours as signs of disorder.

¹ For example, the EU-awarded Rainbow in-service training programme on multicultural counselling and intercultural communication approaches cultural diversity from the perspective presented by Metsänen (see annex 1 in this article for more information about the Rainbow training).

Always remember: the potential for conflict is greater when a person of one culture interacts with a person of another, because both of them risk coming together with misjudgements, predicted viewpoints and stereotyping based on learned expectations. Both guidance counsellors and their clients must be constantly watchful of misinterpretation and misjudgement due to miscommunication across cultures. Individual decision-making is always a complex communication process, and therefore implications of decisions may be profound especially, if a decision is based on culturally misinterpreted information. For this reason, it is important for guidance counsellors to have some awareness of the communicative behaviours and communication styles that vary cross-culturally as well as the potential impact of these differences on the communication/counselling process.

Communication styles

Numerous differences in communication styles between cultures have been identified. The most important and most studied distinctions are the direct/indirect, or low context/high context, dichotomy. Context refers to the amount of innate and largely unconscious understanding a person can be expected to bring to a particular communication setting.

In the following, the direct/low context and the indirect/high context communication styles are presented as two extremes. Hardly any culture is considered purely direct or indirect. Usually most cultures fall somewhere in between these two extremes and features of both communication styles can be found in them.

Direct/low context

In low-context cultures most of the information is contained in the verbal message, and very little is embedded in the context or within the participants (Samovar & Porter 1997). A guidance counsellor working with direct/low context cultures (e.g. German, Scandinavian, American) should know that they are usually more heterogeneous and individualistic, and that they use a more direct communication style. Less can be assumed about the other person in a heterogeneous society, and less is known about others in a culture where people prefer independence, self-reliance, and a greater emotional distance from each other (Hofstede 1994).

Direct/low context people say what they mean and mean what they say. The message is usually explicit and spelled out. Words are the primary means of communication: people rely more on words, and the words are usually interpreted literally. It is important to tell exactly how things are. Non-verbal cues are not the key to understanding the verbal message (Hall 1997).

Representatives of direct/low context cultures are normally people for whom face has moderate importance. The facts and expediency are more significant than being careful about what you say. Receiving and giving information is the overriding goal of the communication exchange. Criticism is straightforward. It is also accepted to say no and to confront people openly. The truth is more important than sparing the feelings of the other person. The goal of communication is accomplishing a given task, not pleasing the other person or spending much time on establishing a good personal relationship.

Indirect/high context

In high-context cultures most of the information is in the physical context or is internalised in the people who are part of the interaction. Very little is actually coded in the verbal message. (Samovar & Porter 1997.)

A guidance counsellor working with indirect/high context cultures (e.g., Arab, Japanese, Thai) should know that they tend to be homogeneous and collectivistic. People carry within them highly developed and refined notions of how most interactions will unfold, of how they and the other person will behave in a particular situation. Due to the collective nature of these cultures, people work closely together and generally know what everyone else knows. (Hofstede 1994.)

Because people in high context cultures already know and understand each other quite well, they have developed a more indirect style of communication. Indirect/high context people have less need to be explicit. They rely less on words and on the literal meaning of the spoken word to convey meaning and more on non-verbal communication. Non-verbal cues are the key to understanding that what is not said may be the message (Hall 1997).

Representatives of indirect/high context cultures are usually people for whom the overriding goal of the communication exchange is maintaining harmony and saving face. Not losing face² takes precedence over the “truth”. The truth, if it hurts, should be tempered. What one says and what one feels often are not the same. Confronta-

tion is avoided, saying no is difficult and criticism is handled very delicately. The goal of communication is building a relationship that is seen as a prerequisite to accomplishing any given task.

The main features of direct/low context and indirect/high context have been described above. Communication skills considering high and low context cultures, directness of speech, temporal and spatial concepts that are different across cultures, as well as, interactional skills such as turn-taking rules that can be differently used and interpreted cross-culturally, can be essential factors for guidance counsellors. Counsellors should also be sensitive to communication nuances, such as 'yes' having several meanings or 'no' not necessarily being an absolute no in some cultures. Additional dimensions that influence all intercultural communication are, among others, gender (male-female; Tannen 1993), power distance (leader-subordinate; Hofstede 1994), and notion of time (linear-cyclical or monochronic-polychronic; Hall 1989). For more details see Chapter 4 by Garcea in this book.

THE IMPACT OF FAMILY ON INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING

In Hofstede's words (1994) the majority of people in our world live in societies in which the interest of the group prevails over the interest of an individual (i.e. collectivistic cultures) whereas the minority of people live in societies in which the interests of the individual prevail over the interests of the group (i.e. individualistic cultures).

The role of the family is quite different in an individualistic culture compared to a collectivistic culture. In individualistic societies individuals have lots of personal freedom in their vocational and educational choices, religious and political affiliations, and social role (Pedersen 1997). Self-actualisation and independence are highly valued especially in the Western world where the "I" comes before the "We". The decision-making process in a collectivistic culture practically means that the whole extended family (e.g. grandparents parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc.) participates in discuss-

² Losing face, e.g. losing control of one's emotions or otherwise causing embarrassment in public. One example of losing face is expressing anger or showing extreme emotional swings in one's behaviour in public; anyone who makes such displays is judged as unworthy of respect and trust in many cultures. Fear or avoidance of confrontation and conflict is directly tied to losing face.

ing and deciding on important issues of an individual who since her/his birth is an integrated member of a strong, cohesive ingroup (Hofstede 1994). Communal responsibility, social usefulness and acceptance of authority (Pedersen 1997) as well as loyalty to the family (Hofstede 1997) are emphasised. Thus, the “We” always precedes the “I”.

Families and sometimes even religious leaders of minority communities are of great significance in multicultural counselling and they can be asked to participate in counselling sessions when needed. Family members of an adolescent immigrant should in many cases be invited to participate in the counselling process where issues relating to the young immigrant’s educational and vocational life are discussed. From the counsellor’s point of view, the intercultural interaction in a guidance session with several family members becomes more complicated. For example, it might not always be evident to the counsellor who is the most prestigious person in the room or how decisions are actually taken within the family or within the religious community.

At the same time the role of the guidance counsellor may be unclear to clients from different cultural backgrounds. The counsellor is normally situated in an office in an administration/ school building and s/he usually has the same ethnic background as the majority population. Thus, the counsellor can easily be seen as an authority figure or even an oppressor. The counsellors need from the beginning to make their role clear, to emphasise confidentiality and to define the goals and nature of counselling.

The counsellor also has the responsibility of helping clients and their families understand the role of their own culture/family and the new culture in their lives. For instance, immigrant children normally acquire language competencies (i.e., language of the new home country) faster than their parents. This can lead to a role reversal when children start acting as interpreters for their parents, who in various ways become dependent upon them. This role reversal might radically influence the power relations and decision-making processes within the family. All of a sudden, the children, who speak the language of the country, have much more control over the interaction in everyday situations (e.g. a guidance session) than their parents. In addition to this, children – thanks to their language skills – usually become culturally better integrated in the host society than their elder family members. This may create tension and result in an intergenerational conflict due to individuals’ varying rates of acculturation to the new culture. In such a case, guidance and counselling should be easily available to those family members, who think that they need some professional help with their cultural adaptation process.

Empathy

Empathy is a core counselling quality (Ridley and Upidi 2002) and at the same time a skill needed in intercultural communication. Empathy, as defined by Milton J. Bennett (1993), describes an attempt to understand by imagining or comprehending the other's perspective and communicating that understanding back to the other person. It is based on an assumption of difference, and implies respect for that difference and a readiness to give up temporarily one's own worldview to imaginatively participate in the other's. (see also *Subject-Subject communication* in the chapter 17 by Charpentier)

Interacting with culturally diverse clients and showing them empathy during the counselling process can be challenging and emotionally demanding. Knowing some basic guidelines for responding empathically throughout a multicultural counselling session can be useful.

Ridley and Upidi (2002) list the following culture-general advice for showing empathy: respond to core themes (*i.e. listen attentively, put clients' central messages into their own words*), recover from misunderstandings (*i.e. check out your perceptions with the client*), do not pretend to understand (*i.e. ask for more information/further clarification*) and use time in ways that reflect empathy (*i.e. take time to think before you speak/respond to clients*).

Ridley and Upidi's (2002) culture-sensitive guidelines for showing empathy are as follows: check yourself for cultural biases and hidden prejudices (*i.e. be as objective as possible*), do not stereotype (*i.e. avoid overgeneralising about any cultural group*), explore cultural and racial issues early in counselling (*i.e. content and process issues*), incorporate cultural and racial data into counselling (*i.e. personalise the cultural information that you get from clients*) and use cultural schemata (*i.e. mental structures that are characteristic of one cultural group but not others*).

The capacity to participate in another person's feelings is enhanced, the more a guidance counsellor is aware of clients' cultural differences and the more s/he has wisdom and knowledge from his/her own life experiences. A guidance counsellor is successful at showing empathy in intercultural communication when the client leaves the counselling session with the pleasant feeling of knowing that the counsellor has listened and understood her/him.

COUNSELLORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER CULTURES (HEARTSET)

Personal encounters with racism are not necessarily part of most counsellors' experiences and therefore they do not know the debilitating impact of such encounters. There is considerable evidence that the effects of racism and social exclusion negatively influence people's physical and mental health (Matinheikki-Kokko 1997). For that reason, counsellors need to be aware of the negative emotional reactions and consequences caused by discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping. At the same time, counsellors must note the importance of learning about the strengths of each individual client to balance a focus on their problems and traumatic life experiences.

Guidance counsellors should be committed to understanding themselves as racial-cultural beings and to actively seeking a non-racist identity. In other words, counsellors should be able to recognise the limits of their competencies and seek professional expertise and resources from more qualified individuals when needed. Counsellors are encouraged to seek out educational, consultative and real-life experiences to enhance their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different populations.

One effective way of enhancing good intercultural communication skills is to read professional journals and to follow the latest research and theoretical findings on cross-cultural work. Another effective way for counsellors to broaden and foster their knowledge and understanding of minority groups is to become involved with ethnic/cultural activities outside of the regular counselling context. Participating in community events, social gatherings and traditional celebrations could be a good way for counsellors to see the culturally diverse clients interact in their natural setting. This, in turn, could contribute to taking a non-judgemental and a more flexible mental position to interaction with other cultures in the future.

INTERPRETERS AS FACILITATORS OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Immigrant clients who have little proficiency in the language spoken in the country they are living in, encounter enormous difficulties in a counselling situation without adequate means of communication. Counselling can be both unproductive and extremely frustrating for the counsellor and the immigrant client alike without the use of a professional interpreter. It is paramount to successful communication that proper-

ly trained interpreters are used to ensure that messages are correctly given and received by the counsellor and the client. Using an interpreter in a proper manner is a skill that needs to be learned.

Interpretation can be organised either face-to-face, over the telephone or through video-conferencing. The most convenient and efficient way is to have the counselling session interpreted face-to-face, because then all those involved – guidance counsellor, immigrant client and interpreter – are physically in the same space. Telephone and videoconferencing may be used for interpretation when the interpreter cannot be available there where the actual counselling session between the guidance counsellor and immigrant client takes place.

CASE: Results of an inquiry concerning the use of interpreters

In the following, the results of a small-scale inquiry concerning the use of interpreters for counselling immigrants will be presented. The inquiry was conducted by email in spring 2004 with the aim of collecting some practical and experiential information for this article from guidance counsellors working with interpreters. The respondents were 20 Finnish guidance counsellors in education and employment sectors regularly working face-to-face with immigrant clients and interpreters.

The Finnish respondents were asked the following questions:

- In general terms, what kind of experiences do you have from working with interpreters when counselling immigrant clients? Describe briefly both the positive and negative practical wisdom that you personally have gained from interpretation.
- In what kind of situations do you use an interpreter? Describe briefly what the topics are that you discuss with your client and that need to be interpreted.
- What are the professional qualities that a good interpreter should possess? How does a trained interpreter work, according to your own experience?
- How do your immigrant clients react to using interpreters in a counselling session? If you have any examples of their reactions, please describe them in concrete terms.
- How does interpretation influence your own way of communicating and the way your clients communicate? How do you expect the interpreter to communicate between you and your client?

Positive and negative experiences from working with interpreters

According to the respondents, the most positive aspect of working with an interpreter in a counselling session is that it helps focus on the essential and that it carries information comfortably over language and culture barriers without changing the content. Still the guidance counsellors must understand that the interpreters are delivering only an approximation of the client's statements and her/his emotional expressions, because words and meanings are often not interchangeable between languages (Tribe 1999). However, Finnish respondents often experienced difficulty in reading the non-verbal communication of the client, but talking to the interpreter about the communication after the interpretation was said to be very eye-opening.

Problems or difficulties with interpretation/interpreters arise on some occasions. Usually the problems are of a practical nature, such as that educated/trained interpreters are a scarce resource and thus they are not easily available when one needs them. This is especially true of interpreters of less-spoken foreign languages, with whom one has to make an appointment weeks before the actual interpretation takes place. Another problematic aspect is that every now and then clients just show up at the office without any pre-arranged time reservation. They might expect an interpreter to be there immediately on hand to help them discuss sometimes even highly acute and complicated issues that simply cannot be processed by the guidance counsellor alone without proper interpretation.

Guidance counsellors, despite the presence of an interpreter, should always face their client in counselling. "You are talking to your client, not to the interpreter", was a common remark made by several respondents. However, the immigrant clients seem to have a tendency to speak directly to the interpreter although they should face and speak to the guidance counsellor in the first place.

On a short-term basis interpretation can be experienced as quite time and energy consuming, something the Finnish guidance counsellors pointed out in their responses. However, the respondents also estimated that in the long run the use of interpreters saves time and money, not only for the guidance and counselling services, but even more importantly for the immigrant clients themselves.

Typical situations for using interpreters

Interpretation is usually needed when there are more in-depth discussions going on between the guidance counsellor and the immigrant client. A typical case for inviting an interpreter to a counselling session is when a personal integration plan, a job search plan or a study plan for the immigrant client is constructed. Running information sessions for groups of immigrants on various topics (e.g. about the education and training system of their new home country or how to apply for work or study place) always requires the presence of an interpreter.

Sometimes an interpreter is also available when matters of a more private nature concerning an immigrant are being discussed. Clients from minority backgrounds often have pressing survival needs that require immediate intervention. Such needs may include finding suitable accommodation, helping with legal matters and organising financial support. Such intervention caters for primary needs and establishes the guidance counsellor as someone who can help, thus laying foundations for further more subtle interventions.

Professional qualities of an interpreter

The Finnish respondents listed several qualities that a good interpreter should possess. According to their answers, the professional qualities include that the interpreter is obliged to interpret everything that is said, but s/he must not add or omit anything. The interpreters should not engage inside conversations with clients without literally translating the content of those discussions to the counsellor. Qualified interpreters are unbiased, they are bound by strict confidentiality to their clients and they are always sworn to professional secrecy. The interpreter must be fully impartial and s/he is not allowed to act as a spokesman or an official for the immigrant. Experienced interpreters are also familiar, at least to a certain extent, with the topic that they are interpreting (e.g. education, training and labour market issues). An asset for the interpreter is of course if s/he has at least a working knowledge of the culture that the immigrant represents. Although the interpreter should act as a neutral person in the counselling session, s/he is still expected to be open and to show empathy.

Immigrants' reactions to using interpreters in counselling

According to the respondents, the immigrant clients normally appreciate the use of interpreters, because they well understand the benefits that interpretation gives them. A polite thing to do as a professional guidance counsellor is to let the client know a few days in advance if there will be an interpreter participating in the counselling session. The selection of an interpreter should always be discussed with a client. This way the client has a chance to better prepare and adjust her/himself mentally to the forthcoming counselling situation.

As pointed out by some of the respondents, problems or difficulties may arise if the interpreter represents a cultural or an ethnic group to which the client feels antipathy for historical, religious, conflictive or any other reasons. This may affect the counselling process unfavourably, i.e. the client does not trust the interpreter and therefore no progress will be made. In such a rare situation, the interpreter usually has to be replaced by another interpreter to whom the immigrant has a more neutral attitude. If replacing the interpreter is not possible, the guidance counsellor should try to arbitrate between the immigrant client and the interpreter to ensure that the guidance session can continue in a mutually understanding atmosphere.

Regional dialects of clients sometimes make the interpretation work more difficult if the interpreter is not that familiar with that specific dialect. The only advice here is to ask the immigrant to use the standard language instead of her/his own dialect, if possible. Also, the issue of an interpreter's gender might sometimes cause difficult situations: men from some cultures might not be willing to work with a female interpreter, but they insist on having a male interpreter. Finally, one more important aspect was mentioned. Despite the confidentiality between the interpreter, guidance counsellor and client, some clients may still have concerns about release of information within their ethno-cultural communities.

Interpretation influencing the communication process

An individual counselling session is influenced by interpretation in many ways. The Finnish respondents reported on radically improved interaction between themselves and their client when the interpreter was present and facilitating the communication. However, the task of an interpreter is only to interpret the conversation between the guidance counsellor and her/his client. The interpreter must not participate in the

conversation, but s/he is there only to make conversation possible between the guidance counsellor and her/his client.

The Finnish respondents emphasised that guidance counsellors should really pay attention to the way they communicate in a counselling session that is interpreted. The guidance counsellors should speak in short sentences, pronounce the words clearly, leave superfluous words out, avoid complicated expressions and use more breaks to simplify the work of the interpreter. Exactly the same rules apply to the immigrant speakers of course.

Additionally, the respondents mentioned that guidance counsellors should spend enough time on clarifying the specific concepts/terms (e.g. labour administration or education vocabulary) to be sure that the message is as clear as possible for their immigrant client. The interpreter provides the counsellor with the certainty that the client gets the message and understands the complex issues that are discussed and described. The respondents stated that interpretation brings depth to the discussion and quality to the whole counselling process.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has focused on presenting the criteria for effective intercultural communication as well as on introducing the role of interpreters in immigrant counselling. If we want to maintain social relationships and improve them, we need to cooperate and understand one another better. As a consequence, a more stable human community, which is based on the willingness of all people to join the society and work for good relationships with each other through communication, will develop. However, quite often people – guidance counsellors and their immigrant clients – do not share a common language, and thus they are only able to communicate with the help of interpreters. Whether intercultural communication succeeds or fails, depends mainly on the communicators, not on the interpreter. In intercultural interaction each one of us should have a strong will to overcome potential communication gaps for understanding the other better. Only the lack of genuine good will leads to a communication breakdown between counsellors and immigrant clients.

In Dr Janet Vick's (2001) words, there will never be a "cookbook approach" to counselling culturally diverse populations, nor how to communicate effectively with them. The process of developing one's own intercultural communication and multi-

cultural counselling skills is a lifelong quest and can best be compared with a continuum. The learning starts somewhere one day, and after that moment it goes on forever in uninterrupted ordered sequences including both theoretical studies as well as practical real-life interaction with other cultures. Only with increased awareness, enhanced knowledge and improved skills pertaining to an individual's culture, will it be possible for guidance counsellors to establish rapport and culturally appropriate relationships with immigrants. Although we do not yet have any easy-to-use "recipe book" available for multicultural counselling, there are still numerous ways and methods – as described in this article – for how guidance counsellors can become culturally more responsive to their immigrant clients in terms of communication.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

- 1) How would someone from a different cultural background respond on a first visit to your office? To your colleagues? To you as a guidance counsellor? Try to see the situation "with new eyes" from the client's perspective.
- 2) Can you think of five to six common idioms in your native language that might cause communication problems when speaking with someone who has your mother tongue as a second language?
- 3) Why is it important to recognise similarities between cultures as well as differences?
- 4) How do you, as a guidance counsellor, approach your immigrant clients in terms of greeting them and asking them questions? Try to be both culture-general and culture-specific when thinking of the situations in which you exchange greetings with immigrants from different cultural backgrounds as well as ask them questions. Write down a list of polite and clear ways to greet and ask questions.
- 5) What kind of experiences do you have of working with interpreters? Reflect on the issues introduced in the article: are your experiences more or

less the same or do they differ a lot from what has been described in the article?

- 6) How do you feel about working with parents in counselling adolescents or adult clients?
- 7) When would you encourage clients to come in with their parents or to pursue counselling on their own?

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APPENDIX 1. THE “RAINBOW MODEL” FOR MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING TRAINING

Introduction

The increasing number of immigrants and refugees in modern European societies directly influences the daily work of guidance counsellors who deal with clients from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds in the employment, education, health and social care sectors. Guidance counsellors have a key position in facilitating the integration of the migrant groups into all dimensions of life in their new home country. Especially important in this context is to help immigrants acquire sufficient command of the language spoken in the country and other vital skills through education and training enhancing their future employability on the labour market. However, many guidance counsellors have not been equipped with the specific competencies to cope with the challenge of cultural and ethnic diversity in their work (Launikari 2002).

In-service training on multicultural counselling at a European level

One of the first attempts in Europe to develop an in-service training course on multicultural counselling and intercultural communication for guidance counsellors was made by six European countries (the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece and Italy) in 1999-2001. The goal of the so-called RAINBOW project was to design and implement a common European in-service training course on multicultural counselling for those employment and education experts who work with the guidance and counselling of immigrants, refugees and ethnic minorities (Launikari 2002).

The RAINBOW training course was based on evidence that at the end of the 1990s there were hardly any national or European training courses on cultural diversity in guidance and counselling available in Europe. Course participants became acquainted with the following contents and main themes of the RAINBOW training, designed by the partnership:

- core concepts and processes of multicultural counselling
- societal framework of multiculturalism and cultural diversity in Europe
- ethical principles of guidance and counselling in a multicultural context

- culture-sensitive counselling in practice
- competencies of a multicultural counselling relationship
- multiculturalism at local and global level
- networking skills required in a multicultural context
- intercultural communication in the guidance and counselling profession
- interpreters as communication facilitators in immigrant counselling
- theoretical framework of multicultural counselling as well as working methods and
- approaches developed for multicultural counselling and for problem-solving to reduce tension between the guidance counsellor and his/her immigrant client.

About 100 guidance and counselling practitioners interested in multicultural counselling, that is 15–20 participants in each country, took part in the RAINBOW in-service training course that was held at the same time in all the six partner countries in 2001. The training course (80 hours) consisted of a written pre-task, a three-day training seminar, a video-conference session between the participating countries, and some distance learning in a virtual learning space on the internet. The RAINBOW website at <http://rainbow.cimo.fi> contains all the study materials of the training course (Launikari 2002).

To sum up the feedback received from the participants after the training, it seems obvious that multicultural counselling should be a key development area in the employment and education sectors in Europe in the future (Launikari 2002). The most significant impact of the RAINBOW project was that it initiated a discussion about the importance of multicultural counselling competencies in Europe, both at grass-root and political levels. In 2002, the European Commission included the Rainbow project in an external evaluation together with 150 other successful European pilot projects. Based on the results of this external evaluation, Rainbow was selected for inclusion in the *Good Practices on Intercultural dialogue* publication released by the European Commission in 2004.

RAINBOW activities from 2002 onwards

The work on further developing the model of the RAINBOW training (contents, methods, structure, practical implementation, number of participants, etc.) has been continued by the original project partners, with Finland taking the lead, since 2002.

The Finnish RAINBOW project coordinator – the Centre for International Mobility CIMO – and the University of Jyväskylä have organised two in-service training courses (120 hours) on multicultural counselling for Finnish guidance counsellors in 2002 and 2004. Both training programmes were largely based on the contents and structure of the initial RAINBOW training module.

The most important element that was focused on during the training programmes (2002 and 2004) was to increase/develop intercultural awareness among participants. A great deal of the activities, training materials, some of the distance learning tasks and a number of discussions dealt with this specific issue from different perspectives. One key dimension in the courses was sharing thoughts and experiences among participants. This dimension was especially prominent while dealing with distance learning tasks between the contact teaching periods. Creating professional networks and personal relationships was emphasised, e.g. the distance learning tasks were focused on building local networks with immigrants and guidance practitioners in various institutions that offer services to immigrants. The participants found these tasks to be of great help in their everyday work and also with regard to gaining more understanding of different cultures (Launikari & Puukari 2004).

In addition to the six original project partner countries, the RAINBOW training module and website have been promoted in international fora (e.g. conferences, seminars, fairs) in several European countries (e.g. France, Iceland, Ireland, Spain, the United Kingdom). Information about the RAINBOW training experience has been widely disseminated in the European media (e.g. publications, magazines, newsletters) to contribute to the discussion on how guidance counsellor training programmes should be organised so that guidance and counselling services could already today better meet the needs of culturally diverse clients in Europe.

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Demystifying the other – Intercultural conflict management through Crossing Borders activities

INTRODUCTION

As the genesis of conflicts seems to stem from a deep fear of the stranger, it is vital that people meet, interact, demystify and discover the human nature of one another. In this way, the other will mirror our own self. To be sure, in addition to fear as the original sin of human conflict, the deep-rooted straightforward interpretations concerning monotheistic concepts of “good versus evil” and that the former will prevail over the latter, is another dangerous source of the permanent search and need for an enemy. This narrow perspective builds on either us or them, rather than us and them together.

Here lies the very importance of meeting, interacting, learning to live and to accept the necessity and beauty of cultural diversity, which could be as important as the biological diversity of the universe. Once the other gets a face like our own, then there will be less cause for anxiety and fear of that other. Reduced fear of the other is at the core of intercultural conflict resolution, management and transformation towards intercultural understanding and counselling. Xenophobia is often created and sustained by misinformation, ignorance and harmful generalisation. Perhaps, this is why people still travel thousands of miles to meet and discuss issues. Even the most technologically super-advanced companies with teleconference facilities still organise meetings for people to have face-to-face encounters. Darren Roberst argues that “With face-to-face meeting, the following will generally become known in the space of a short amount of time: grammar, appearance, punctuality, tone, dress code, age, sex, self-image, self-confidence, attitudes, permanent injuries, etc.” The author continues “Anything that one can pick up with sight, smell, touch, feel and audibility. All

the five senses come into play here.” (Darren Roberts: www.powerhomebiz.com/index/powercd.htm).

Hence, the most effective way to reduce and eliminate xenophobia is the demystification of the other, the stranger and enemy through direct meeting, dialogue and cooperation on equal terms. It is not enough just to have the dominant and the dominated groups to meet for the latter to make exotic food and to perform dances for the former to enjoy and enthuse over how sweet the natives or immigrants are and how colourful their culture is. For the encounter to be mutually meaningful, the different groups must jump into the fire or cold water together, learning some useful knowledge, skills, producing and/or creating useful outcome together as equal participants. In this regard, the public Service Commission of Canada argues that stereotypes can change when members of different social groups increase their interaction with each other. Through interaction, false/negative stereotypes can be disproven. For instance, people may believe that members of some groups are generally lazy without believing that any of the members of these groups whom they know personally are lazy. For increased interaction to be effective in changing stereotypes, certain conditions must be met:

- There must be an equality of status among the group members.
- Group members should participate equally in working together toward common goals and the contact between the group should be intimate and varied, rather than superficial or merely frequent.
- Relevant authority figures must lend their support to the change process (Jelking and Sajous 1995).

An example of these kinds of intercultural encounters forms the basic idea of Crossing Borders, through which Arab and Israeli youth and educators meet across the conflict divide. Although based on the same concept, the youth programme is different both in contents and format from the teachers’ programme. The former focuses on basic conflict analysis and management tools, basic communications and journalism skills, while the teachers’ programme focuses more on intercultural knowledge, understanding and pedagogical skills aimed at helping the teachers respond to and effectively deal with conflict related problems their pupils and students face. Thus, instead of focusing on the conflict that divides their societies, the point of departure and focus is what the youth aged between 16 and 20 needs, the interests and con-

cerns that they have in common. These common interests include being part of the search for lasting peace in the region, having their voices heard, acquiring modern media and communication skills as well as through sports, music and the internet, all of which will help them do well at school. For the teachers programme, participating Arab and Israeli teachers come from social science backgrounds. Whether they are Palestinian, Israeli or Jordanian, they all have the typical problems and challenges of teachers like dealing with students, administration and the impact of the conflicts on their pupils and students, lack of resources, time and space constraints. In their meeting, the teachers across the conflict divide have plenty to discuss, to learn from one another's ideas and experiences in dealing and coping with such typical teachers' problems. In the following pages, the concept, activities and methods of Crossing Borders will be described as an example of positive intercultural meeting on equal terms for mutual benefit that can be applied in various crosscultural/intercultural encounters and cooperation activities towards common goals.

APPROACHES TO INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Before addressing the different types of conflicts and appropriate approach to each, it is important to make it clear that conflict is part of life, every change, development and growth. As such, it is safe to claim that conflict is not bad per se. Furthermore, to dispel possible confusion between conflict and violence, below is a brief definition of conflict and what differentiates it from violence.

- Conflict is a relationship between two or more individuals or groups who have or think they have incompatible goals. Or it is a difference between two or more people that can lead to tensions and violence.
- Violence consists of actions, words, attitudes, structures or systems that cause physical, psychological, social, cultural or environmental damage and/or prevent people from reaching their full (positive) human potentials (Fisher et al. 2003).

Traditionally conflicts have been looked upon as something

- objective with a right solution
- involving individual opponents who put the blame on each other
- win-lose situation with legitimate use of overt and covert power: all is fair in love and war
- disturbing situation to be removed

However, now experts tend to look upon conflict as a situation

- in which nobody has monopoly on the truth
- involving different individuals or groups in mutual conflict
- a process that may lead to lose-lose, win-lose or win-win depending on how it is managed
- a human reality in every society that must be dealt with
- involving active parties that share the responsibility for the situation

Whether a conflict is within or between groups, the general approach should be to acknowledge the existence of a conflict, identify the real issues, hear the different points of view, help the parties to find ways of resolving the conflict together, reach agreement on and responsibility for the agreement and schedule a follow-up meeting to review the resolution (Chang 1994).

SUGGESTIONS FOR APPROACHING DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONFLICTS

- **Instrumental conflict**, which is about tangible issues, means, methods, procedures and structures. The appropriate approach to this type of conflict seems to be problem solving to reach resolution through negotiation, bargaining and compromise.
- **Conflict of interest**, which is about allocation of time, money, labour, space, etc. The appropriate approach to this type of conflict seems to be direct negotiation between the parties or through their representatives to reach agreement.
- **Personal conflict**, which is about identity, self-worth, loyalty, breach of confidence, rejection, etc. The appropriate approach to this conflict is open communication and transparency for mutual understanding of the underlying needs,

fears, interests as well as positions taken by the parties. Needs are what each party believe they cannot do without, interests are what each party really wants to have while positions are what each party says or declares that they must have, do or not do.

- **Conflict of values**, which is about religion, politics, ideologies and other deep beliefs. As these deep values are not for negotiation or compromise, the most appropriate approach to this type of conflict is honest and ongoing dialogue for deeper mutual understanding and accepting the right for all to be different.

Finally, rule number one in approaching conflict is to involve the conflicting parties in the whole process from the start to implementation, and evaluation of the outcome. In this way, they can own the outcome and hopefully share the responsibility for building and sustaining good relationship both within and between the groups.

THE FOCUS OF THIS ARTICLE

This article will describe the basic ideas of Crossing Borders, which are programmes for youth and teachers as a method to address intercultural conflicts through demystifying the other. The article will furthermore argue that meeting, learning, studying and cooperating on common interests as a team (production, creation, problem solving, simulation, role plays, etc.) on neutral ground and on equal terms will ultimately put a human face on the other (the enemy). Such experience from joint activities in absolute equality will act as a positive step towards intercultural counselling. Positive experiences contribute to healthy personal development in terms of self-confidence, acquiring new and useful social skills, cultural competencies and an expanded social network.

BACKGROUND

Crossing Borders was started in 1999 by the International People's College (IPC) in Elsinore, Denmark, with the aim of supporting dialogue among young people and teachers/educators in the Middle East. Crossing Borders is therefore an extension of the Learning to Live Together in Middle East seminar that was initiated in 1994 fol-

lowing the historic Oslo accord between Israeli and Palestinian leaders. Between 1994 and 1998 educators from Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia met each summer for two weeks with the aim of getting to know one another, how their respective education systems presented the conflict and how they as educators could contribute to the peace process. In 1999 the seminar was transformed into a project called Crossing Borders whose main activities were to take place in the region as much as the situation allows.

THE CORE IDEAS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF CROSSING BORDERS

The idea of Crossing Borders is based on the belief that in an increasingly globalising world, living, working and learning in a multicultural environment is becoming the rule rather than the exception. Thus, it is assumed that it is no longer just a useful, but a necessary life skill for people to acquire multicultural awareness, knowledge, understanding and skills. In order to achieve such knowledge and competencies, it is not enough to just read or debate about other people, cultures and places. It is necessary to meet, interact, learn, work and create/produce together with counterparts across physical, cultural and especially psychological borders. It is about entering into dialogue on equal premises and jumping into the mud together. In the conclusion of the chapter, using cross borders activities as an approach to conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, management, transformation, communication and mutual understanding in a globalising world will be argued for. As such, the concept of Crossing Borders is not just limited to geographical borders, but especially the more problematic psychological, gender, professional, social, economic and generational, etc., divides.

If we dare to observe what is going on around the world today, it is easy to see that geographic proximity, centuries of contact, trade, shared natural resources, increased knowledge, supersonic air transportation, instant communication and material accumulation have not eliminated misperceptions and other barriers within the world, let alone in the Middle East. Peaceful coexistence, the free meeting of people and cultural exchange and cooperation across cultural boundaries cannot yet be taken for granted.

Moreover, the alleged transformation of the world into a single global market has not translated into mutual understanding, appreciation, acceptance, respect for cultural diversity as a positive and necessary source for individual and collective development. Nor has increased wealth and knowledge resulted in more solidarity within and between nations.

This is a serious problem that cannot be ignored, or resolved, at the official level alone. Official interventions need to be combined with sustained contact, dialogue and cooperation at grass root as well as educational level, where it can be demonstrated that people on all sides have more in common than what we see on the television and in other mass media. As Eichhorn et al. (2001) assert

- Direct experience is the best way to begin to learn any culture;
- Differences can be like a threat at first. We tend to overlook similarities and notice just the differences when we first begin to interact with members of another culture, even though we all share 98% of the same DNA and we are all far more alike than we are different, but that is easy to forget at the beginning;
- Stereotyping due to overgeneralisation is a common occurrence, especially among those who only interact with other cultures infrequently. There is always more variation within groups than there is between them;
- For precisely the reason described above, our own cultural identities are not apparent to us until we begin to interact with others who have different backgrounds;
- Finally, cultures are always changing, especially as they interact with each other.

Experiences from around the world have shown that face-to-face dialogue meetings on equal terms do help foster better understanding and mutual respect across borders. The more people meet, the more they discover how much they have in common and therefore the less they live in fear of the unknown across the street or on the other side of the neighbourhood or border.

In terms of the protracted and multifaceted Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East, top-down political peace accords without popular participation have not been effective enough. For such peace accords to be realised and sustained, they have to be inclusive. It is essential to involve the people in the whole process. For an area like the Middle East where two thirds of the population are under 25, it is also a matter of justice and inclusive democracy to include the voices of the youth and educators. Youth are the future of society and educators are the ones who primarily prepare the youth for their local and global citizenship development. Another reason for choosing youth as the target group is because they are in their formative age, which makes them more receptive, more open and eager to learn. Perhaps more than any other generation before, youth of today have many identities spanning

from the personal and local to the global. Their multifaceted identities are akin to the different layers of an onion. With modern telecommunication technologies, they are also more connected across borders than other generations ever before.

For pupils and students, teachers remain the most important multipliers of information, ideas, knowledge, values and attitudes. The aim of the programme is to develop crosscultural competencies and networking among teachers. Reaching and training one teacher means reaching many learners, readers and future members of society. Therefore choosing teachers and educators is a conscious recognition of education as the key to developing positive citizenship both at local, national and global levels. Through educators, intercultural understanding and respect for the other side can be enhanced and promoted.

Educators and teachers act as a role model for their students and pupils. Teachers' active participation is believed to foster community interest in entering into dialogue with fellow community members from other cultural groups.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CROSSING BORDERS CONCEPT AND METHODS

The concept, methods and programmes of Crossing Borders have been inspired by the author's personal experience and professional development in living, studying and working in various multicultural contexts. Among others the Danish folk high school system, extensive reading and lifelong learning, teaching at the International People's College (IPC) in Denmark, as well as giving lectures and training to multicultural groups and international development workers, combined with the author's deep interest and experience in the Middle East, have been the main driving force to develop Crossing Borders (Lawson 1996). In the following, the factors and sources of the underlying principles behind the concepts and methods of Crossing Borders will be introduced (Diallo 1999).

THE PERSONAL DIMENSION

The author explains: "I was born in 1956 to a cross-border Fulani family in a small village of 6–8 households in Southern Mauritania, West Africa. I was brought up according to Fulani education with four elder sisters, one elder brother and two

younger brothers. Like all the other inhabitants of the village my parents had never made it to school. No one could read or write in any language. When some members of the colonial tribe came to demand tax money, they had to speak to the people through interpreters. With lots of cattle herds, we thought of ourselves as rich, free like birds and proud of our self-reliance and symbiotic relations with our local environment. People believed in the concept of unity in diversity; united in life by being an integral part of the universe and united in humanity as part of the same human race while diverse in cultural, religion, languages, lifestyles and outlook. Diversity is the rule, monoculturalism the exception. People were very sceptical of Western schools and believed that what their kids would gain at school was not worth what they could lose there. Therefore, none of my brothers or sisters was expected to go to school. Thus, I was running around with the cows like a cowboy until I was 15, when one day a school from the nearest town visited our village. The school consisted of some 50 boys, all of them with khaki shorts, plastic shoes, white shirts and caps. They were marching and singing in a strange language. I got excited and begged my father to send me to school. A few days later I was on a camel behind my father with three milking cows running in front of the camel. One cow was for the school fee; the second was for my host family and the third was for my subsistence allowance.

On the following day I was made to join the crowd of hundreds of black and brown boys, all struggling to speak in a strange foreign tongue: French. The rule of the school was that no local “vernacular” was allowed in the arbitrary schoolyard, with no walls or fences nor clear limits. The angry teachers could always track us down and punish us for using the “tribal” language. In addition to the language torture, the entire content of the education system was about foreign people, places, things, ideas, values and over glorified foreign history and against our own culture and identity. This made me join the others in creating an underground cell to learn and teach our mother tongues, which was illegal (Diallo 1993). I started to despise the system and sneak back home until I finally dropped out and began to look for ways out of the country to get an education of my own choice. When I was 19, I found my way to the Gulf State of Qatar, where I spent ten years between 1976 and 1986 studying and working. After gaining a BA and education degree in 1986, I left for Norway where I worked in the health system and Red Cross while I took courses in political sciences, international relations, environment and development, computer science, British and American studies as well as taking a diploma at the Oslo Teacher Training College. At the same time, I was very active in immigrant advocacy and became

chairperson of the pan-African society of Norway and gave lectures on the impact of ethnic conflicts in the African Sahel with special focus on Mauritania and the Sudan. In one of my lecture tours to Stockholm in 1990, I met Professor Dani Nubudere from Uganda, who was at the time teaching African and international studies at the International People's College (IPC) in Elsinore. He invited me to the 1991 IPC International Summer course to give a lecture on the Afro-Arab conflicts in Mauritania and the Sudan."

THE DANISH FOLK HIGH SCHOOL

The author continues: "In 1992, I was offered the chance to join the IPC staff and teach African, Middle East and Sustainable Development Studies. It was here at the IPC, with students and faculty staff from over 30 countries, including Chinese and Tibetans, Arab and Israelis, black, white and mixed South Africans, Japanese, Koreans, Croats, Serbs, Bosnians and Albanians and so on, I saw the power of direct interaction, living, studying and working together on equal terms as the most important step towards intercultural knowledge, understanding and peaceful coexistence." Here students from the age of 18 upwards make the choice to come and experience living in and learning in a multicultural context where established stereotypes break down and people start to see and treat each other as individuals and consequently find out that not all Japanese can make a camera in their kitchen, not all Americans eat McDonald's food and, most importantly, they learn that the differences within groups are often bigger than the differences between groups. They also learn that the various types of intelligences, wisdoms and knowledge are equally distributed across individual and cultural groups on the globe. There are no such things as culture X being more intelligent than culture Z. Studying in such a stimulating environment has a double benefit. Students learn to know more about themselves, their cultures through the others while they learn about the other cultures and value systems of their fellow students and teachers. Here, learning takes place all over all the time. For more about the Danish folk high school, the *Land of the Living* by Steven M. Borish, is a comprehensive source book on this liberal adult education system (Borish 1991).

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER IN THE MIDDLE EAST SEMINARS

As soon as the historic handshake between the late Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and president Yasser Arafat sealed the Oslo Accord in September 1993, it was thought the folk high school would be a perfect neutral place to bring Israeli and Palestinian educators to learn to know one another and how they as educators could contribute to the search for peace in their war-torn Holy Land. Thus, between 1994 and 1998, each summer 40 Arab and Israeli educators participated in seminars where they together learnt about each other with the aim of developing educational ideas, activities, methods and programmes that could serve as modules for peaceful coexistence education. The Crossing Borders youth and educators' programmes have been developed based on the experience from the Learning to Live Together seminars (Diallo 1998).

The author's own natural thirst for learning and discovering got a big boost and inspiration from teaching multicultural groups of students with rich and varied personal, academic backgrounds and life experiences. This inspired him to discover and extensively read books and other learning materials on the subject of intercultural communication and cooperation. This created a positive chain reaction that each book he read led him to discover more books to read.

THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF CROSSING BORDERS

Crossing Borders activities are divided into two programmes. The original and more developed programme is the youth programme. Due to the success of the youth programme teachers and educators, whose pupils and students have participated in the youth programme, got inspired and expressed an interest in having a programme of their own. Thus, while the youth programme started in 1999, the teachers' programme began at the beginning of 2004. In the following pages both programmes are described in details.

The youth programme

Since the very beginning (1999) the main activities of the Crossing Borders youth programme have consisted of the annual two-week training courses for a new batch

of 40 young Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian youth recruited by their local coordinators. Due to its length and the necessity for good facilities on neutral ground, the course takes place in Denmark. During the course the participants receive intensive training in conflict management, intercultural communication skills, basic journalism and the role of the media. This provides them with a framework to engage in creative dialogue while living, studying and working together on the production of a magazine. The course concludes with the publication of the magazine as a concrete end product that the participants take home.

The other main activity of Crossing Borders comprises four-day follow-up seminars for the participants of the previous summer course. The seminars are held in November and March in Turkey. The seminars also act as a neutral forum to meet and keep in touch, receive further training in conflict management, communications and journalism. In addition, the seminars ensure the participants are able to share and exchange information on ongoing developments in their region and how the conflict is affecting them and their respective communities. They also get a chance to evaluate the previous activities and editions of the magazine, and write individual and joint articles for the upcoming editions. Since its inception in 1999, Crossing Borders has trained some 350 young prospective journalists from Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan. The Crossing Borders magazine is now in its 24th edition. Five two-week summer courses and ten regional seminars in Turkey will have been implemented by the end of 2004.

As an educational framework to bring and keep the youth active in Crossing Borders, the publication and distribution of the bi-monthly magazine constitutes a vital activity. Entirely written by and for youth in the Middle East, the magazine is distributed to high schools, youth clubs, community centres and other organisations working on and/or interested in the region. One of the most interesting and challenging methods that CB has developed is joint article writing. The young people are trained and coached to write joint articles on host issues such as the separation wall, checkpoints, suicide bombing, Jerusalem, Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. During the seminars, the youth exchange draft articles for mutual feedback and critique. Having joint articles published in the magazine encourages joint ownership, responsibility and interest in getting the magazine distributed and read across the conflict divide.

The magazine's editorial board consists of the four local (Israeli, Palestinian, Arab Israeli and Jordanian) coordinators. The position of editor in chief rotates among the coordinators. The coordinators are also responsible for the recruitment

of participants, organisation of uni-national meetings, collection of articles and distribution of the magazine, and networking in their respective sectors.

The teachers' programme

Like the youth programme, the basic aim of the Crossing Borders Teachers' (educators) programme is to encourage healthy dialogue and enhance understanding and cooperation among teachers across borders on equal terms. This is done by providing a neutral and stimulating space where participating teachers receive special training. While the youth training focuses on basic conflict management, communication and media skills, the teachers' seminars address pedagogical and intercultural skills and competencies, while sharing experiences and exchanging views on pedagogical and intercultural issues affecting their societies. The programme comprises two-week summer seminars in Denmark; four-day workshops in Turkey, uni-national meetings in each sector and two reunion meetings in Jerusalem plus the publication of an educational journal by the participants for general distribution throughout their schools and communities and beyond.

Two Summer Seminars

The Summer Seminars are held during the teachers' summer holidays. The seminars give the teachers unique opportunities to increase their knowledge, expand their regional networks, renew their existing skills and acquire the latest crosscultural competencies together. As the first encounter with participants from the other side, the seminars take place on neutral ground and in a stimulating educational setting. In such a learning environment, the participants are able to learn about each other through sharing personal experiences. They also learn about themselves and their educational systems through the others' eyes. The outcome of such interaction and exchange broadens educators' personal horizons and professional competencies.

In order to ensure maximum diversity, participants are recruited from different schools and regions, and balance is sought in terms of gender, religion, age, social background and nationality. The key criteria for selection are based on individual interest in dialogue and cooperation with fellow teachers from other cultures. To further emphasise balance, the common language of the programme and the educational journal is English.

The main theme of the teachers' programme is educators' contribution to inter-cultural exchange and cooperation across cultures. Their contribution is achieved through interactive dialogue, mutual learning and joint production of cultural and educational programmes. Another aspect of such contribution is the critical exploration and analysis of how their respective educational systems and media encourage or discourage cooperation and cultural exchange within and between the regions. The participants do this as they learn the necessary skills to professionally deal with existing cultural misperceptions, prejudice and stereotypes, which constitute major obstacles to accepting diversity as a positive source of individual and collective development. These skills are expected to enable the teachers to transfer positive and democratic attitudes and knowledge to their students and communities. Training in conflict management, negotiation, mediation, human rights and democracy education are integral parts of the programme.

In terms of structure, the seminar programmes comprise keynote lectures on core themes in the morning, workshops in the afternoon, presentations and social activities in the evening. Excursions and study tours to relevant educational institutions are included in the programme. Furthermore, the participants apply the media skills they learn in writing articles for the educational journal and in the development of teaching modules, simulation activities to be used in their own schools. The teachers have a chance to present their ideas and perspectives to each other. They work together, in pairs and in groups, and present the outcome of their work in plenary sessions. The participants also get a chance to step into each other's shoes to enable them to see issues from different perspectives and through different eyes. The participating teachers get assigned to prepare special lessons on cross-cultural issues of their choice to present to and receive feedback from their fellow teachers from other cultural groups.

Regional workshops

The aims of these workshops are to provide the teachers with a learning forum to reunite, share information and experience and report on how they used their experience of the previous seminar(s) in their teaching and what feedback they have received from their students/pupils and social environment. The workshops also provide an excellent setting for the teachers to improve the programme in the light of their experience of using it.

CB teachers' uni-national meetings

As part of each seminar and workshop, local coordinators arrange meetings in their respective sectors for the selection and preparation of the participants for the activities. After the participants return from the seminars and workshops, reflection and evaluation meetings are held in the respective sectors by the coordinators. These uni-national meetings function as forums for the teachers to share ideas and perspectives in their own national groups on the overall development of the project. After every meeting, the local coordinators compile reports and send them to all the partners and the Project Manager to share the information.

Reunion meetings

As an expression of solidarity and empathy with their fellow Israeli and Palestinian teachers, reunion meetings are organised in Jerusalem. All the teachers who have participated in the previous seminars and workshops are invited to the reunion meetings in the Holy City.

The programme of the reunion meetings comprises keynote lectures by outside speakers followed by presentations by the participants themselves. Participants then divide into workshop groups to share information, ideas, experiences and perspectives on the project. Based on their experience of the project, the participants are coached and encouraged to express their hopes and visions for future dialogue activities in the Middle East.

Preparation for the first encounter with the other side

Adequate preparation of the participants before meeting their counterparts is the first step toward a successful meeting. Thus, after the careful and lengthy selection of the participants, several meetings are held in each sector for the participants to be introduced to the basic idea, programmes and expected challenges they are about to face and possible benefits that participants could get out of the adventure. Among the things they get prepared for are going to meet, live, cooperate and engage in dialogue with people with different backgrounds, narratives, perspectives, beliefs and ways of doing things. It is important for the participants to know and expect that different people could see the same thing entirely differently. Thus, their historical

facts may likely be seen as fake inventions to justify certain political aims. They need to be strong, able to listen to opposite points of view and bring along big and sharp ears rather than big mouths. Culture shock could be expected in such situations.

The other thing that participants need to know is that they represent nobody but themselves. It is also perfectly acceptable to change one's viewpoints or positions. Therefore, no final declarations, communiqués, agreements or other accords are going to be issued and signed at the end. They should use "I" when talking, rather than "We" to emphasise the fact that they are speaking only for themselves. They come to meet their age group, professional counterparts as equals to mutually learn from one another and together in absolute equality. The focus is on issues of common interest and concern for common benefit. The participants are encouraged to bring along information materials, photos and cultural items that symbolise their personalities and cultures. The preparation is done by the coordinators, special experts and CB manager.

During encounter

On arrival, the participants are welcomed and treated equally with respect and accommodated in the same building. Those who do not object, share a room with someone from the other cultural groups. After the introduction, the participants are divided into mixed colour groups (e.g., apple, strawberry groups, etc.) to take care of certain tasks, such as cleaning and setting tables after meals and coordinating extracurricular activities.

To break the ice, the first half day of the encounter is dedicated to group dynamics. This includes a minute of silence for the participants to reflect on why they are here, their expectations of themselves and from the programme and other participants and what they are willing to do to achieve what they have come for. The short introductory silence is followed by soft music as a universal language for the participants to enjoy and relax to.

The next step is often playing a name game for the people to learn one another's names. This can be done in various ways. One of these ways is to make the participants stand clockwise in a circle in alphabetical order of their names, using the facilitator's first name initial as a starting point. When the alphabetical order is complete, each participant is asked to say her/his name with a positive adjective before it and a body movement symbolising their personality (e.g., magic Mary, king Khaled, great Garba) and then write their first names with the adjectives in their name.

In mixed pairs, the participants are instructed to talk and interview each other about who they are, their expectations, special hobbies, skills, needs and what makes them unique. They should share the time equally, listen to each other without interruption and finally agree on 2–3 ground rules for the seminar. To make this session a positive experience, the pairs are instructed to present each other as if they were presenting each other as the best person to lead the group. After the presentations, the different ground rules are summarised and put on a poster for display during the whole seminar period. The other confidence building activity is called the label game, in which participants have positive labels (caring, cute, adorable, trustworthy) glued on their foreheads (make sure there are no mirrors in the room) and then instruct the participants to mingle, as if at a cocktail party, and treat each person according to the label they carry. After a few minutes or so, ask each person to guess who they are.

Selection of the coordinators

The coordinators are selected by Crossing Borders partner institutions in the Middle East. The Israeli Jewish coordinator is selected by the Jewish Arab Centre for Peace at Givat Haviva, Israel. The Palestinian coordinator is selected by the Jerusalem Times weekly English newspaper, the Palestinian Authority. The Arab Israeli coordinator is selected by Crossing Borders, as an independent facilitator while the Jordanian coordinator is selected by the Jordanian NGO, Masar, Jordan. The criteria for the selection of coordinators is that they must have the will, interest, pedagogical and media qualifications and skills to work in a dialogue project with fellow partners across the Arab-Israeli conflict divide, on equal terms. This means they must rise above the tense situation and function as a positive role model for their students.

THE OVERALL PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The guiding method of the programme revolves around mutual dependency, respect and equal partnership among the participants. There is an ongoing consultation among project coordinators and management to ensure active participation of the beneficiaries from the planning phase, through implementation, feedback and evaluation of each activity.

Activities are participatory and target group oriented, with maximum equal ownership of the project by the participants. Sessions during the seminars are based on the workshop method. Instead of one-way communication via lectures, the participants work in pairs and groups to exchange their viewpoints freely and reach conclusions.

This active participation of the target group is expected to result in increased cooperation skills, shared values, understanding of issues of common concern, joint ownership and collective responsibility by the participants.

The programme consists of keynote introductory lectures in the morning, simulation games, workshop methods and role-plays with concrete exercises to win the attention and interest of the participants and maintain their motivation and engagement in the activities. Activities are aimed at encouraging dialogue and deeper mutual understanding and transformation. Crosscultural communication, individual reflection, cooperation, active listening and teamwork are some of the key guiding principles and practices of the programme. Generally speaking, participants from the conflict area are looking very much forward to dealing with the “hot” issues. It is important to be ready to facilitate the discussion so that everyone gets the chance to express their point of view and be heard. If participants return home without taking up the hot topics, they may feel as if they have been swimming without getting wet.

FOLLOW-UP AND REMAINING IN CONTACT TO MITIGATE RETURN CULTURE SHOCK

Upon return to their communities, the participants face new challenges because they belong to different realities (Furnham and Bochner 1986). This sort of return culture shock is particularly problematic for Arab and Jewish teenagers who go back home after a unique experience with the “enemy”. In SAFETI On-Line Newsletter, Volume 1, Number 1, Autumn 1999-2000, return culture shock is defined as “what you experience when you return home and have to readjust to your own country”. This is particularly difficult for young people from value loaded conflict backgrounds. According to the SAFETI newsletter, students who are returning home should prepare themselves for

- Family and friends may show less interest in your stories and experiences than you expect. This may make you feel lonely, misunderstood, or unappreciated.

- If you are unhappy about your return home you may try to withdraw from or delay from re-establishing good relations with family and friends.
- You will no longer stand out in your surroundings. When you were a foreigner you may have attracted more interest and developed new friendships. Once you are in your own country your friends will not find you so unusual.
- Being at home is not challenging and exciting in the way that life is in a foreign country where you have to struggle to make a success of everything from food habits to behaviour, dress codes and language.
- There is a sense of achievement in having to stretch yourself to meet challenges in a foreign country. A sense of achievement or personal growth is not the same at home where you do not necessarily face so many challenges.
- You may miss foreign friends as well as the culture, the climate, the food and the language.
- Your hometown may not seem as glamorous, interesting or exciting as the cities or towns you visited or lived in while you were abroad (<http://www.lmu.edu/globaled>)

On the challenge of re-entry culture shock, Bruce La Brack (1985) explains in his article “The Missing Linkage” that “Re-entry shock or reverse culture shock is usually characterised by two unique elements: (1) an idealised view of “home” and (2) a taken-for-granted familiarity with the home culture which fosters this illusion that neither home, nor the sojourner will have changed since she/he went away. This combination of mistaken attitudes frequently results in frustrated expectations, various degrees of alienation, and mutual misunderstanding between returnees and their friends and family.”

While the Israeli and Jordanian participants can expect their parents and relatives to meet them at the airport, many of the Palestinians have to use public transport after thorough security checks and searches. On their way home to the West Bank they have to pass through the nerve breaking checkpoints before they can hope to see their families. After returning from last year’s summer seminar in Denmark, one Palestinian youth wrote:

After I came back from the seminar that was held in Denmark, I was full of hopes and dreams about peace and the possibility of approaching it. As two days passed I recognised that I was just dreaming.

“This seminar planted in my mind a lot of ideas by using several methods that convinced my brain. The matter of equality was one of these ideas. We lived in the same building under one roof. They tried to treat us the same. We ate, played and danced together. We felt that we are all humans that deserve to live equally. Palestinians and Israelis were Equal!!! What about the reality? When the airplane dropped us off, the Israelis’ parents came to pick up their children from the airport. Of course, parents miss their children and want to see them as soon as possible; to hug and kiss them if they haven’t seen them for a long time. I remembered my mother who lives near Ramallah and said in my mind, “Maybe my mother didn’t miss me, that’s why she didn’t come to pick me up”!!! Actually I knew that the way is very difficult. I remembered the checkpoint that is placed not very far from our home” (Jerjes Boullata 2003).

At this point we need to look at the remedial stage of counselling. The young people have direct contact with their local coordinator and the CB manager to help them deal and cope with returning to the war reality. A week after returning home, the coordinators organise a meeting in the respective national groups to reflect, share experiences and ideas on the seminar experience and its aftermath. As people, especially young people, tend to fear the reaction of their groups more than the “enemy”, they often hesitate to talk about participating in a seminar with people from the other side. They are often blamed for having changed or gone crazy. Therefore, it is important to organise a meeting for the whole national group that has participated in meeting the other side. They can discuss, reflect on the experience and work out strategies to cope with the often negative reaction of their class mates, age group, etc. In 2001, one Israeli participant after a few days of meeting and becoming a friend of a Palestinian youth said:

“If someone were to tell me that in two weeks, my best friend would be a Palestinian, I would have thought I would be more likely to win the lottery. X is my soul mate. He has told me that the only reason we get along is because we’re equal here. Through this experience, all the walls have fallen down for me. When I go home, I don’t even want to know what’s going to happen. I’ll have to hide my new feelings, even though I now feel proud that my best friend is a Palestinian” (Linda Horowitz 2001)

Another effective way of following up on the Crossing Borders youth programme is the regular meetings held every second week in their national groups and the reun-

ion meetings that normally take place in Jerusalem for all the groups. However, the most important fact that keeps the participants engaged and active in Crossing Borders is writing in and receiving the magazine every second month. Writing, sending the articles back and forth to and from the coordinators and giving and receiving feedback on their articles, keep the participants in constant contact with the project, their coordinators and with one another. Another core incentive to stay active in Crossing Borders is the opportunity to participate in the two follow-up workshops in Turkey in November and March for the previous summer course participants who have been active in the project. Finally, perhaps the most important reason for them to join and stay in Crossing Borders is that it contributes positively to their personal and academic development. We have many examples of participants who say that their school performance, self-confidence and language skills have improved. I know of two Jordanian brothers whose parents testified to the positive effects of participating in the programme. The elder brother got a full scholarship at MIT and the second was accepted to study hotel management in Switzerland earlier in 2004. He explained in his application that after being in Crossing Borders for four years he learnt to work and deal with people from different cultures. A Palestinian participant received a full scholarship to Indiana University, which she attributed to her active participation in CB. There is no doubt that learning to study, produce a magazine and cooperate with fellow counterparts has positive effects both on self-image and our image of the world around us. Having one's articles and photos published and developing the confidence and skills to stand up and speak about complex issues in front of a big international crowd also have an empowering effect on the personal and professional development of young people in particular. Thus, the combined effects of demystifying the other, increased awareness and skills development are a source for both mental and emotional health. After this year's summer course, one Palestine participant wrote an email to the group saying:

"Hey ...everyone...

Well....I can't start telling you the impact of Denmark on meits weird. My mom always told me that I give out these vibes to Israelis that I don't like them and that's why I always get in trouble with soldiers. But after coming back, she saw me dealing with soldiers more at ease and when I went to the mall the girls working there were talking to me nicely. I was shocked; it's as if now I am treating the Israelis

in a normal kind of human way. I owe it all [this] to you guys coz this is gonna get me out of a lot of problems that I used to get into before....and on another level... that's the thing not a lot about u know that happened to me in Denmark is the encounter with Islam that I had. It is really helping me out. It's making me think differently about a lot of things in my life and I am really shocked by the way I started thinking or dealing with people around me...I love it. It is like Denmark was a kind of therapy to me.. And I hope that it helped you guys too. Other than that I really miss all of you, and I really hope and wish we can all meet up again” (Ashira Ramadan 2004).

The good news is that crossing the cultural, psychological and social borders through spending a meaningful time with “strangers” or perceived “enemies”, will make the person

- more aware and appreciative of oneself and one’s own culture through the eyes of the others.
- develop a wider horizon and understanding and curious about the world and its many cultures.
- more flexible about life and more open towards other people, cultures and lifestyles.
- more able to respond to and cope with new and seemingly stressful cultural experiences.
- discover things and ways of doing things while one makes new friends, and this in turn opens new opportunities to travel, learn new things and visit new places.
- see her/his own culture more objectively than she/he did before.

As the saying goes, there are no strangers, only friends we have not met, yet.

THE NEED AND ROLE OF THE THIRD PARTY

In value-laden and protracted conflict with deep-rooted suspicion and mistrust like in the Middle East conflict, it is necessary to have a third party’s mediation. It is on this basis that the International People’s College chose to facilitate meetings be-

tween Arab and Israeli educators and youth on neutral ground and under the same roof in Denmark. Such a neutral third party approach has been used to facilitate successful dialogue meetings and learning to live together since the school opened its doors for that purpose in 1921. In Crossing Borders, the role of IPC as mediator is concentrated on ensuring the implementation of the activities according to the stated values of Crossing Borders: balance, equality, learning and quality publications of the magazine. With a highly interested, knowledgeable and experienced management and facilitation team, it has been possible to bring the participating educators and/or youth from the conflict areas to meaningful dialogue sessions for the past 10 years. Participants have come not only from the Middle East, but also from Burundi, South Africa, the Balkans and Central Europe.

In order to win and maintain trust as a neutral third party, it is essential that the facilitators meet the following minimum criteria:

- Deep interest in, knowledge of and commitment to working in the situation with these kinds of groups.
- Respect for the positions and viewpoints of the involved parties.
- Ability to facilitate that everybody has the opportunity to fully participate and voice their opinions.
- Equal treatment, deep understanding of the situation of the parties and empathy toward them.
- To a certain extent, the third party needs to be inspiring and embody the hope and aspiration of the parties.
- Having the necessary facilitation skills, personal stability and humility.
- Ongoing consultation with the participants' organisations, communities and leadership.
- Sensitivity to individual and group needs and awareness of group dynamics.
- Awareness of the fine line between intervening too much or too little.
- Honesty and transparency at all levels of the encounter and dialogue process from planning through implementation to evaluation.
- Having sufficient balance between the groups with equal number of participants, gender balance, same level of education and age, etc.

POSSIBLE DUPLICATION IN OTHER CONTEXTS

Experience from Crossing Borders demonstrates that joint production and creation can form a perfect framework for bringing different individuals and cultural groups to meet and work together as a team towards common goals. As we have seen in the previous pages, in the process of working together toward common goals, participants are likely to learn to know, appreciate, respect and finally demystify each other. Such positive experience will help both young and adult people realise that there are no strangers (or enemies), only friends that they have not yet met and learnt to know and appreciate. “It’s like a marriage in the traditional Middle East. You marry first and then you fall in love later, not the other way around.” This means that complex conflict issues can be approached using simple methods. Instead of, for example, focusing directly on the conflict, it is often better to start with what the participants have in common to build a programme on. In Crossing Borders we hardly have any session on resolving the conflict in the Middle East. What we do is to focus on the process of conflict management, communication and media skills that the participants apply to writing articles for the magazine. The participants get extensive training not through one-way communication lectures, but through learning to be in the shoes of each other in pairs and small groups, by doing through simulations, group dynamics and role-plays. The magazine is both a framework to keep the focus of the participants and also a direct outcome of their joint efforts. The end product with both individual and joint articles creates joint responsibility and interest in the magazine being distributed in their schools and beyond. Thus, in the process of learning useful skills and joint production of the magazine, the participants learn to know and appreciate one another as a positive step toward peaceful and cooperative coexistence. The magazine can be accessed online (www.crossingborder.org)

In conclusion, the concept of Crossing Borders can be applied to other situations of inter/crosscultural meetings. The basic rule is meeting in a neutral space, focusing on common interests and concerns on equal terms, towards achieving a common goal. Elements of gaining relevant knowledge and skills while participants have fun are essential components in successful encounters across cultures. The concept can easily be used for dialogue and integration between host culture and immigrant groups as well as other inter/cross/multicultural encounter programmes. For such encounters to succeed, the following criteria and principles need to be applied:

- Integration has to be at least a two-way process that meets respective needs and takes into consideration the mutual fears of both or all the groups involved in the process.
- The meeting point has to be seen as neutral, safe, stimulating and attractive. Travelling and spending time on a camp and study tour will be helpful for integration.
- There have to be useful elements of learning new and immediately beneficial knowledge and skills.
- The participants have to do, create/produce some useful things together for which they feel joint ownership, responsibility and pride.
- There has to be equality between the groups in terms of numbers and education levels and sufficient common interest/ground to build on.
- To have professional, personally balanced, culturally knowledgeable, sensitive, neutral and dynamic facilitators.
- Participants need to have fun and enjoy themselves while they learn together and through one another.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

INTERCULTURAL/CROSS-CULTURAL ACTIVITIES BY GARBA DIALLO

Being in the shoes of others

Work time: 45 minutes

Presentation Time: 5 minutes per group

The aim of this simulation activity is to imagine ourselves in the shoes of others.

In each group, imagine that you have been forced by circumstances out of your home country to the Middle East.

After six rough months' stay in temporary refugee camps, fortunately, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees has managed to secure a permanent residence permit for you in the following country to settle for good.

The question for each group is what they will do to integrate and effectively function as much as possible in their new society.

Think, reflect, discuss, agree and briefly present in writing and orally your integration strategies in the host culture.

The criteria for your integration will be measured in terms of core cultural values and aspects like:

- Language
- Religion and traditions
- Food and drink habits
- Gender roles and relations
- Dress codes of conduct
- Schools for yourself and children
- Career choice
- The will to learn about and respect local laws and rules of the game
- Mutual expectations
- Aspects of your culture/values you are willing to give up to integrate
- Aspects of your culture which you cannot imagine being without

Designing a multicultural school

Work time: 45 minutes

Presentation Time: 5 minutes per group

Aim: To increase our cooperation skills based on equality and task sharing.

Method

- Design a multicultural school for 12–15 years old pupils from various cultural and religious backgrounds, with all the necessary facilities.
- Make a day programme from 9 am to 2 pm for the pupils to learn about global citizenship.
- Describe the method of teaching and the relationship with teachers.
- Draw a boy and a girl with the correct type of outfit.

- What and how should they eat for lunch.
- The children are Muslims, Jewish and Christians, while the remainder practise different indigenous beliefs.

Designing an international youth club

Work time: 45 minutes

Presentation Time: 5 minutes per group

Aim: To increase our cooperation skills based on equality and task sharing.

Method:

- Design an international youth club indicating all the facilities you deem necessary.
- Make a programme for opening and closing hours.
- The type of activities to be implemented during the weekends.
- The sort of music to be played and drinks to be served.
- Colours and other decorations to reflect the international nature and target group relevance of the club.
- Task division of duties to manage the club, who is responsible for what and why.

Preparation of an international Christmas party

Work time: 45 minutes

Presentation Time: 5 minutes per group

Aim: To increase our cooperation skills based on equality and task sharing.

Method: Prepare an international Christmas party for a group of 50 people from Africa, Europe and the Middle East. The participants include an equal number of men and women, all in their late 20s.

In the group, discuss and agree on how to organise the party to make it a memorable and enjoyable experience for the participants.

Key elements to remember:

- The venue, where the party is going to be held and why
- When should the guests come and leave
- What is expected from the guests to bring or help with
- What kind of food and drinks will be served
- How the food and drinks are going to be consumed
- What kind of music will be played
- What the dress code should be for both men and women
- Plus any other necessary things which could be thought of

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Pia Nissilä & Marjatta Lairio

Multicultural counselling competencies – Training implications for diversity-sensitive counselling

The aim of this article is to review the development of the Standards of Multicultural Counselling Competencies (Sue et al. 1992) and to discuss its implications for counsellor training. These standards are one of the most widely used conceptual frameworks in the field of multicultural counselling. They have also been one of the bases in our counsellor training programme at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland since 1996. Although there is an increasing amount of literature concerning Multicultural Counselling Competencies, there are only a few examinations of their training implications. In this article discussion around the theme is based on a broader context of social inclusion issues in Europe and diversity-sensitive counselling (Nelson-Jones 2002).

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING COMPETENCIES

During recent years, there has been a lively discussion around multicultural competencies needed in the work with immigrants and other minorities in Western Countries. In the United States the discussion has been focussed on the model of Multicultural Counselling Competencies by Sue et al. (1992;1996). Since 2002 there has even been a national campaign in USA to endorse the Competencies (see Arredondo & Toporek 2004), which have induced several critical comments (e.g. Weinrach & Thomas 2004; Coleman 2004; Vontress & Jackson 2004). Internationally, however, the discussion about goals and competencies needed in multicultural work has been broader and more complex (see e.g. Nelson-Jones 2002; Hiebert 2004).

Discussants agree that the foundation of developing multicultural competencies should be the fact that European-American people (i.e. majority population in Europe as well as Americans of European descendant) have a tendency of being ethnocentric and that there is a need to move beyond such monoculturalism (Sue et al. 1996; Nelson-Jones 2002). On the other hand, several critical comments have also been expressed about the attention given to ethnic minorities only. With an emphasis on ethnic and racial minorities, issues of, for instance, sexual minorities are diminished (Weinrach & Thomas 2004). The emphasis of broader issues of social inclusion and exclusion are important especially in Europe (see e.g. Hiebert 2004). Therefore there have been suggestions for broader concepts like diversity-sensitive instead of culture-sensitive counselling (e.g. Nelson-Jones 2002).

Framework of Multicultural Counselling Competencies (Sue et al. 1992; 1996) is based on extensive research concerning cultural identity, intercultural communication, mental health of minorities, as well as on counselling research. It was originally carried out for counsellors in the United States for typical counselling interactions involving a White (Euro-American) counsellor with a client from a different ethnic background. The starting point in this article, however, is that competencies can be seen as a broader framework for diversity-sensitive approach in counselling (e.g. Nelson-Jones 2002). This viewpoint is supported also by the latest research: there seems to be a positive correlation between clients' ratings of Multicultural Counselling Competencies and clients' ratings of counsellors' general competency (Fuertes & Brobst 2002; Farga et al. 2004).

The roots of the Multicultural Counselling Competencies are in the framework of cross-cultural counselling competencies by Sue et al. (1982). In that position paper the authors outline three dimensions of cross-cultural counselling competencies: beliefs and attitudes, knowledge and skills. The first dimension deals with the counsellor's attitudes and beliefs about racial and ethnic minorities, the need to check biases and stereotypes and develop a positive orientation towards multiculturalism. The research has emphasised the importance of the counsellor's awareness of his or her own culture and of the client's culture. To be able to place oneself in the situation of a person from another culture, one has first to become aware of the effects of one's own culture and values on one's action. The second dimension proposes that the culturally skilled counsellor has a good knowledge and understanding of his or her own worldview, has specific knowledge of the cultural groups he or she works with, and that he or she understands socio-political influences. The last dimension empha-

sises specific intervention techniques and strategies needed in working with minority groups.

Multicultural Counselling Competencies by Sue et al. (1992; 1996) revises the original three-dimensional framework by adding to it the following three characteristics of a culturally competent counsellor: 1) awareness of his or her own assumptions, values and biases, 2) understanding of the worldview of a culturally different client as well as 3) an ability to develop appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. Due to the fact that each of these characteristics are described as having dimensions of beliefs and attitudes, knowledge and skills, Multicultural Counselling Competencies define a total of nine competency areas (as shown in Table 1).

In order to encourage educators and practitioners to implement these competencies, Arredondo and Toporek (1996) expanded and operationalised them into measurable behaviours and activities. In this expanded version, the authors described a framework for the development of the competencies and included explanatory statements for each competency along with strategies for achieving them. The newest version of the competencies differentiates multiculturalism and diversity. Multiculturalism refers to ethnicity, race and culture, whereas diversity means to other individual differences including age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

Table 1. *The framework of multicultural counselling competencies (adapted from Sue et al. 1992)*

	1. Counsellor's awareness of his/her own assumptions, values and biases	2. Understanding the worldview of the culturally different client	3. Developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques
A. Beliefs and Attitudes	1. The counsellors are aware of and sensitive to their own cultural heritage and value and respect differences. 2. The counsellors are aware of how their own cultural background influences psychological processes. 3. The counsellors are able to recognise the limits of their competencies and expertise. 4. The counsellors are comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and clients in terms of race, ethnicity, culture and beliefs.	1. The counsellors are aware of their negative emotional reactions toward other racial and ethnic groups that may prove detrimental to their client in counselling. They are willing to contrast their own beliefs and attitudes with those of their culturally different clients in a non-judgemental fashion. 2. The counsellors are aware of their stereotypes and preconceived notions that they may hold toward other racial and ethnic minority groups.	1. The counsellors respect a client's religious beliefs and values about physical and mental functioning. 2. The counsellors respect indigenous helping practices and respect minority community's intrinsic help-giving networks. 3. The counsellors value bilingualism and do not view another language as an impediment to counselling.
B. Knowledge	1. The counsellors have specific knowledge about their own racial and cultural heritage and how it affects their definitions and biases of normality-abnormality and the process of counselling. 2. The counsellors possess knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination and stereotyping affect them personally and in their work. 3. The counsellors possess knowledge about their social impact upon others. They are knowledgeable about communication style differences and their impact on clients of a minority group.	1. The counsellors possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group that they are working with. 2. The counsellors understand how race and culture may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestation of psychological disorders, help seeking and the appropriateness of counselling approaches. 3. The counsellors understand and have knowledge about sociopolitical influences that impinge upon the life of racial and ethnic minorities. For example, immigration issues and racism are often difficult and they may influence the counselling process.	1. The counsellors have knowledge and understanding of how different counselling practices suit a culturally different client. 2. The counsellors are aware of institutional barriers that prevent minorities from using different support services. 3. The counsellors have knowledge of the potential bias in assessment instruments and use procedures and interpret findings keeping in mind the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the clients. 4. The counsellors have knowledge of minority family structures, hierarchies, values and beliefs as well as the features and resources of a minority community. 5. The counsellors are aware of relevant discriminatory practices at the social and community level that may be affecting the psychological welfare of the population being served.

C. Skills	1. The counsellors seek out educational, consultative and training experiences to enrich their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different populations. 2. The counsellors seek to understand themselves as racial and cultural beings and seek actively a nonracist identity.	1. The counsellors should familiarize themselves with relevant research. They should actively seek out educational experiences that enrich their knowledge, understanding and cross-cultural skills. 2. The counsellors become actively involved with minority individuals outside the counselling setting.	1. The counsellors are able to engage in a variety of verbal and nonverbal helping practices and pay attention to their culture bound nature while choosing measures. 2. The counsellors use interventions for the support of a client, helping him/her to see when problems are due to bias and racism in others and not in a client. 3. The counsellors are not averse to seeking consultation with traditional healers or religious leaders and practitioners of culturally different clients when appropriate. 4. The counsellors use the language requested by a client, and seek a translator if needed or refer a client to a qualified bilingual counsellor. 5. The counsellors are experts in the use of traditional assessment and testing instruments and they are also aware of the cultural limitations. 6. The counsellors should attend to as well as work to eliminate biases, prejudices discriminatory practices. 7. The counsellors take responsibility in educating their clients to the processes of psychological intervention such as goals, expectations, legal rights, and the counsellor's orientation.
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ADAPTATION TO A NEW CULTURE

According to Nelson-Jones (2002) there are many different groups for whom cultural and diversity considerations are important. Due to demographical reasons, in some countries indigenous people are actual and potential clients for counselling. Another broad client group are migrants and their children. Some countries also emphasise broader diversity issues including gender, sexual and affectionate orientation, disability, religion, socio-economic status and mixtures of these.

In the United States Multicultural Counselling Competencies refer mainly to counselling of ethnic minorities, whereas in Europe and in our context in Finland, especially, competencies are associated to counselling of immigrants. In immigrant counselling one central viewpoint is cultural adaptation and identity development. These viewpoints are emphasised originally also by Dr. Sue and his colleagues. Therefore, we

will use their theoretical framework as a basis in the following brief description of adaptation process to a new culture.

The term adaptation or acculturation was introduced by American anthropologists in 1880 in order to describe the process of culture change between two different cultural groups who come in contact with each other. It has been generally understood as a bi-directional process with the changes occurring within both cultures in contact. However, due to the fact that a newcomer as a person changes the most, basic research on the adaptation process has mainly focussed on the newcomer's thoughts and feelings, his or her conceptions, perceptions and relations to his or her own original culture and the new one.

Although there are significant individual differences, adaptation appears to be a psychological and social process that progresses in stages, usually lasting as long as a year (depending on the cultural distance of the cultures in contact). Adaptation usually begins with feelings of optimism and even elation. Eventually, these positive feelings give way to frustration, tension, and anxiety as individuals are unable to effectively interact with their new environment. Models generally assume that cultural conflicts must be solved before reaching some level of integration (see e.g. Bennett 1993; Berry 1997; Sue & Sue 1990).

The classic model by Sue and Sue (1990) is based on a variety of studies of racial and ethnic identity development in the United States. It is best viewed as a conceptual framework for interpreting the behaviours and attitudes of persons from various cultural and ethnic groups. Each stage involves four attitudes or belief processes: 1) attitude about the self, b) attitude towards other members of the same minority group, c) attitude towards others of different minority groups, and d) attitude towards dominant group members.

The stages of the model are as follows:

- *Stage 1. Conformity*, is characterised by intense excitement and euphoria associated with being somewhere different and unusual. The majority culture represents the desired outcome.
- *Stage 2. Dissonance*. Eventually, the fun and excitement associated with the "tourist phase" gives way to frustration and real stress. Failure events once considered minor and funny are now perceived as stressful. The new environment requires a great deal of conscious energy that was not required of the old environment, which leads to cognitive overload and fatigue.

- *Stage 3. Resistance and Immersion.* Strong returning to one's own old culture, which means that one's own and the new culture are seen as opposing each other.
- *Stage 4. Introspection or Reorientation.* Here people eventually realise that the problems associated with the host culture are due to a real difference in values, beliefs, and behaviours. This stage can also be called growing realism: good and bad is seen in every culture.
- *Stage 5. Integrative Awareness.* At this point, individuals actively engage the culture with their new problem-solving and conflict resolution tools with some degree of success. Usually it means integration of one's original and the new culture.

It is important to notice that people working abroad on a temporary basis also encounter similar processes. Furthermore, counsellors might experience these feelings when entering the field of multicultural counselling.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

Multicultural Counselling Competencies extended to include the viewpoint of the cultural adaptation process are also useful for counselling immigrants as well as other social minorities in our society. Although this means that we need to define culture more broadly as an integrated pattern of human behaviour including thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious or other social group (eg. Cross et al. 1989; see also Nelson-Jones 2002). In the following, some training implications of the competencies will be discussed more closely. At the end of this section some concrete ideas how competencies training might also be used for more diversity-sensitive counsellor training will be given. Please note that some of the methods presented in the following can also be applied to self-access study.

Recently, several training programmes, courses and methods have been designed to teach Multicultural Counselling Competencies to counsellor trainees. Although the single-course approach is most often implemented in training, most researchers agree that the single course approach does not provide the multicultural training needed to become proficient or competent (see eg. Tomlinson-Clarke 2000).

Torres et al. (1997) interviewed multicultural counselling experts and faculty focus groups about ways of infusing multiculturalism to the whole counsellor education programme. According to this study there is a variety of ways for enabling this infusion, as follows:

1. A Multiculturalism-centred programme, in which the theoretical and philosophical cores of the programme, as well as its content, are rooted in multicultural counselling perspectives.
2. An Interdependent curriculum, in which multicultural counselling content and training is a complementary component, but only one of several reciprocally interacting curriculum paradigms.
3. A Specialist degree, which conceives multicultural counselling as a separate training area.
4. A Multicultural menu, in which students choose multicultural counselling coursework from the catalogue menu. Courses may be selected from such diverse areas as Black and Asian studies, women's studies, and anthropology.
5. An Infused programme. Multicultural counselling content is infused into all existing coursework.
6. Special courses. In this programme one or more independent multicultural counselling courses are offered.
7. Coursework and multicultural experiences. In this type of infusion multicultural counselling workshops, speakers, or events supplement instruction offered in the formal coursework of the curriculum (Torres et al. 1997).

Carter (2003) describes in a more elaborative way a training curriculum, in which multicultural issues are infused into the curriculum of the counselling master's degree and doctoral programmes. Training consists of didactic (knowing that), experiential (knowing self) and skill-based learning (knowing how). The main challenge in this training, according to Carter, is to work through students' defensive reactions for engaging in self-exploration. Therefore, self-exploration is encouraged from the beginning of the course by assigning an autobiographical sketch as a pre-course requirement. The autobiographical sketch concerns five major reference-groups: gender, religion, social class, ethnicity and race. Students also prepare a genogram of their family and friendship networks. In small group discussions students examine the development and meaning of their reference-group memberships. Factual knowledge

about dominant and non-dominant groups is increased through lectures and readings. In addition, skill building involves mainly simulated counselling sessions.

Parker and Schwartz (2003) point out that examination of one's own values, biases, stereotypes, etc., often induces strong emotional reactions, such as feelings of guilt, shame, contempt and fears of being ridiculous. In order to offer a positive learning experience, they suggest that trainees should be prepared for the emotional reactions they might face in advance. It is also necessary to explain that participants may choose to withdraw from activities in which they are uncomfortable (for more details see Parker & Schwartz 2003).

On the basis of seven years' experience of a year-long multicultural training seminar for psychology and social work interns, Sevig (2001) suggests that trainers should find an optimal balance of cognitive and emotional learning. The experience should encourage critical evaluation of theories, societal structures, and belief systems as well as facilitate expression of confusion and emotional vulnerability when appropriate. Secondly, trainers should establish as early as possible a process of students' getting to know each other in the context of social group identity (for example, by assigning students to describe their family's history, their coming-out story, their religious beliefs, etc.). Thirdly, according to Sevig, it is important to assess students' multicultural competencies in the beginning of the course and then examine progress throughout the year, rather than waiting until an end-of-the-course evaluation. Fourthly, conflicts in the group should be addressed by emphasising tolerance for conflict rather than conflict resolution. He also encourages focus on students' field experiences and providing a place for questioning.

Experiential learning, such as field experiences and roleplays, has been widely recommended for raising awareness about multicultural issues, challenging students' personal frameworks about cultural diversity, and helping them develop cultural empathy (see Arthur & Achenbach 2002 and Kim & Lyons 2003 for a review). On the other hand, for some students, roleplay exercises might feel too artificial. In order to create more realistic roleplaying experience than traditional roleplays, Shepard (2002) supported students to act as clients by techniques that screenwriters use to create believable characters in a roleplay. These screenwriting techniques make roleplays more realistic, because in creating characters students develop a detailed portrait of their character's external world, internal conflicts, and developmental history. These techniques can at the same time protect students' privacy and provide students with real experiences of being a client. On the other hand, this kind of roleplay can give an

opportunity to express feelings like anger in unfamiliar ways, which might be disturbing. Therefore trainers should be sensitive to students' reactions.

In order to ease students' tensions when dealing with difficult issues such as ethnocentricity and racism, trainers should also use more playful educational activities like games. According to Crocker and Wroblewsky (1975) games help a student to sensitise behaviours which he or she has been unaware of, allow a person to confront feelings of powerless, offer opportunities to deal with norms that might differ from societal or personal norms and allow childlike playfulness. Kim and Lyons (2003) emphasise that it is necessary to introduce game as a learning tool for students. This means that even more important than the game session itself is the discussion about the experiences and feelings it induced. As Arthur and Achenbach (2002) state, experiential learning must be carefully chosen in conjunction with other instructional methods.

It is important to notice that the main ideas of training on Multicultural Counseling Competencies can be implemented in diversity-sensitive counsellor training. We can consider our values, biases, assumptions, stereotypes and worldviews also in relation to other social groups than racial and ethnic minorities only. For instance, students can be assigned to examine their stereotypes about poverty or disability. If we use this diversity-sensitive counselling, however, we need to ask ourselves as counsellor trainers, which social groups are important to be considered in our own society, for example, which groups are most at the risk of social exclusion. The final aim of the counsellor training would be in this case that counsellors are seen as social engineers and change agents, especially in regard to combating institutions and organisations which are instruments of cultural and diversity oppression (Nelson-Jones 2002).

DISCUSSION

Globalisation has been a central driving force behind trends in societal development in recent years. The changes taking place in society and working life have been reflected also in educational policy and they have substantially reshaped, in the last decade, the operation environment of counselling. Problems associated with marginalisation have been more common in the midst of this rapid social transformation. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union emphasises social inclusion, i.e., the process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the

opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life. So far, international multicultural counselling literature has mainly focussed on social inclusion of ethnic minorities and immigrants.

In Finland, just like in many other European countries, the number of immigrants and diversity of cultures are growing. It is estimated that at present Finland's population of five million includes over 110,000 foreigners living in the country permanently. In order to promote integration of immigrants, social inclusion practices for immigrants in Finland were enacted in the integration law in 1999. According to this law, the municipality assumes responsibility for arranging suitable training and support for immigrants. The municipality compiles an immigrant integration programme in extensive cooperation with local authorities, immigrants, citizen organisations, religious communities and representatives of working life. In addition, each adult immigrant draws up an integration plan with a representative of the municipality and/or of the employment office. In constructing the plan, the best ways to help the immigrants to integrate into Finnish society are considered together with each immigrant and representatives of the municipality. Given the differences between municipalities with regard to the services and resources available, the possibilities vary and have an effect on the contents of the plan. The Finnish integration law obliges different local authorities to construct collaborative working practices in order to facilitate social inclusion of immigrants. (see www.mol.fi/migration)

It is essential, however, to consider broader issues of social inclusion than only integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants. The framework of Multicultural Counselling Competencies can be implemented more broadly in counselling for other social minorities, too (Nelson-Jones 2002). For example, awareness of one's cultural background can be seen as exploring one's social identity in a broad sense – as understanding memberships of religion, socio-economic class, gender, age group, etc. Similarly, understanding the worldview of culturally different client might include, for instance, examination of world views and life contexts of different marginalised groups.

In our counsellor training curriculum at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, multiculturalism as well as diversity issues have been emphasised within the themes of personal awareness, societal change and multiprofessional collaboration. The emphasis of personal awareness can be seen to have similar elements as in the framework of Sue et al. (1992). Though, it is to be pointed out that counsellors must be able to take a more comprehensive approach to themselves. It is important to reflect on one's own attitudes, stereotypes, biases and worldview towards various social groups, life choices

and ways of life. Because a person's self and self-conception evolve in constant interaction with his/her environment, such reflection must cover also the different stages of life-course.

Second emphasis in our curriculum is societal change, which makes a re-evaluation of the rationale of work and the identity of counselling necessary. The combined effects of individualisation, globalisation and the disintegration of traditions have in many cases made life a risky project where people must experiment with different identities and life styles. In counselling situations, the counsellor and the counselee can interpret the issues from fundamentally different starting points. A counsellor's professional competency includes an ability to identify and take into account different conceptions of the human being and different worldviews. In a postmodern society, it is essential to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the questions that engage the counselees. In addition, it is useful to know something about the historical background of different viewpoints and to have a conscious orientation towards future.

Third viewpoint which is stressed in our curriculum is that needs of immigrants and other minority groups at the risk of social exclusion are too multifaceted that any profession could respond them alone. This viewpoint has been recognised also in current international discussion about counselling competencies (see eg. Hiebert 2004). Our approach to developing diversity-sensitive collaborative counselling competencies includes gaining theoretical base of a learning organisation and sociopedagogical frame of reference (see Hämäläinen in this book) as well as getting field experiences and space for reflection from various counselling contexts such as labour administration, social and health care, special schools and different EU-funded projects dealing with social inclusion.

Our students can also choose a specialisation-oriented module, which offers students an opportunity to expand their counselling expertise and theoretical thinking for multicultural counselling (Sue et al. 1992). Approach in this course roughly resembles the approach by Estrada et al. (2002), namely a combination of lectures, readings, experiential exercises, viewing counselling films and writing assignments. In addition, the module focuses on a critique of traditional theories of counselling and psychotherapy from a multicultural perspective. Students can also specialise in multicultural research and become multicultural counsellor-researchers. Besides developing multiculturalism in basic training, we also offer further training in multicultural counselling.

As a general conclusion, it is useful to notice that due to increasing globalisation, there is a widening gap between rich and poor, those with opportunities and those

who are marginalised in most countries. Social equality issues have become more and more important, even in the Nordic countries. Therefore we would like to adapt the statement by Arredondo and Toporek (2004): “Multicultural competency is becoming a way of life” – although we need to define multiculturalism more broadly to give equal attention to all social groups which are at the risk of becoming marginalised economically, socially or culturally.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

- 1) Create concrete ideas on how you can develop your own Multicultural Counselling Competencies (see Table 1). Try to evaluate which are the most important competence areas you should develop.
- 2) How would you describe your own cultural identity (in a broad sense)? Reflect, for example, on the following reference groups: gender, religion, social class, ethnicity and race.
- 3) Consider which social groups are in danger of being marginalised in your own society. What organisational changes or intervention strategies could be introduced to overcome these problems?
- 4) Reflect on the model of the adaptation process by Sue and Sue (1990) from your own experiences. What are the implications of this for your work with socially excluded clients?

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A social-pedagogical framework for multi-professional collaboration in supporting people in a multicultural context

Multicultural counselling is generally a multi-professional affair. The Western welfare system consists of several subsystems in which different kinds of experts and professionals are working with clients. From the client's point of view this can be frustrating and confusing. The subsystems are not always very well synchronised and one reason for the incoherence is the lack of a common conceptual framework. This article discusses if a functioning framework can be constructed in terms of social pedagogy. The main elements of a social-pedagogical model for multi-professional collaboration are considered through multiculturalism.

INTRODUCTION

Modern Europe has become more and more multicultural. Immigration and multiculturalism are certainly not new phenomena in Europe. Migration is characteristic of Europe and cultural diversity has become a part of the European heritage. Globalisation and the welfare crisis, as well as the features of contemporary conditions, are making a huge impact on people's lives and societies' infrastructures. The fact of multiculturalism being a part of European reality has not necessarily made public opinion or nations' policies 'multiculturalist'. As a stream of immigrants is flowing into Europe, the rise of multiculturalism is increasingly challenging European self-identity as the home of tolerance and civilisation (Williams, Soydan & Johnson 1998). In this context, various professionals are working with immigrants, and in a community or an environment that has to face new demands.

Social pedagogy offers opportunities to combine the social and educational aspects, and a social-pedagogical framework deals with the process of human development in terms of social participation, inclusion and integration. Multiculturalism includes these same concepts and people working in the multi-professional environment in multicultural counselling are operating with these ideas. In this article, the aim is to interpret multiculturalism and multi-professionalism. The article suggests and argues that social pedagogy could offer a framework for multi-professional work in multicultural counselling.

In modern welfare system dealing with clients in multicultural contexts, pluralism of professional frameworks produces professional multiculturalism in terms of differences in ways of thinking, professional languages, organisational cultures, professional traditions and hierarchies, legislation, professional values and aims of work. When welfare services in a multicultural setting are analysed, the dimension of professional multiculturalism needs to be discussed. Both ethnical and professional viewpoints are considered in this article.

MULTICULTURALISM – A NEW CHALLENGE FACING WELFARE SERVICES IN FINLAND

Finland is increasingly becoming a multicultural society. From the European point of view, the special feature of Finnish society is that it has traditionally been an ethnically and historically homogenous country, although there is the existence of so-called historical minorities, such as the Swedish-speaking Finns, Sámi and Romani people, Tatars, Jews and Russians, who have brought ethnic and cultural variety to the society at an early stage. Characteristic of Finland is also that after the World Wars, the amount of migration (i.e. those who have permanently or temporarily moved to Finland, immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers) has remained quite low and it has mainly included those who came to Finland through marriage or work permit procedures. There are no such huge immigrant communities in Finland (compared, for example, to the number of Turks living in Germany) and Finnish immigration policies have traditionally been quite harsh and selective (Forsander & Ekholm 2001, 84–108).

The situation in Finland changed crucially in the 1990s, when the amount of immigrants almost quadrupled. In the year 1990, the number of immigrants living in

Finland was 26 000. A decade later it had risen to 91 000. People from Somalia were among the first big migrant groups in the early 90s (Tiilikainen 2003, 51). Other reasons for the influx of immigrants were the remigration of Finnish-Ingrian people, the growing number of international marriages, exile and the positive change in public opinion towards immigration. In 2000, almost a fifth of immigrations to Finland were refugees (Forsander & Ekholm 2001, 108–110). Although the Finnish attitude towards migration has changed for the positive, there is need for relevant discussion and education in these matters (see Jaakkola 2001, 28–55).

Immigrants arriving in a new country are in contact with many professional groups. Those who are working in the field of multiculturalism – professionals, organisations and authorities – are also working in the multi-professional context (see, for example, Tiilikainen 2003, 98; Forsander & Ekholm 2001, 86–87). Working with immigrants is not merely working with individuals or families but the frame of reference is dependent on the immigration policy. The Finnish welfare system is based on the Scandinavian model where one of the central points is equality. In a situation where the amount of immigrants is rising, society (also in whole European context) has to find solutions for people from different cultures to live and work together side by side (Ikäläinen, Martiskainen & Törrönen 2003, 99).

Working in the multicultural context is a matter of integration and inclusion. It raises questions such as how to prevent immigrants from marginalisation or separation, how to guarantee rights of participation and opportunities for integration in society and how to secure, at the same time, valuable cultural diversity. Most of all, we have to consider how we could take multicultural work to a community level. The principles for integration are written in the Finnish law and integration work is done by multi-professional teams and networks, but Finnish integration policy is still taking shape (see Ikäläinen et al. 2003). The situation from the European point of view is also not very clear, as Williams, Soydan and Johnson (1998, xii–xiii) have pointed out.

WHAT IS MULTI-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?

Multi-professional collaboration is a widely used approach in providing municipal services in Finland nowadays. The fiscal and legitimacy crises of the welfare state have called into question the former sectorised, ‘bureaucratic’ and universal welfare state thinking and given rise to the widening of service providers in terms of the

welfare mix (Niemelä & Hämäläinen 2001). The rise of multi-professionalism and networking in the 1990s is linked to this. The far specialised multi-assistant system was seen as problematic because it did not properly meet the needs of the clients. New multi-professional working methods were – and still are – actively developed through diverse projects (Arnkil 2003).

Ideally collaboration helps professionals develop reflexive institutional practices, diminish fragmentation in the service or treatment chain, and cut back unnecessary costs (Nikander 2004). The aim of multi-professional collaboration is to produce more coherent knowledge of the target population and of their service needs than is possible in far specialised units alone. Collaborating networks can also create new intervention and care measures according to their multi-professional understanding and expertise in local issues and clientele.

Multi-professional collaboration means cooperation structures where several professional groups are working together within their professional roles. They partly share their professional functions and activities, disciplinary knowledge and skills, and responsibilities in providing services (Payne 2000, 9).

Cooperation structures vary a lot. Multi-professional collaboration can be practiced within one organisation (e.g., teamwork in hospital or in kindergarten) or between different organisations and institutions, where it is possible to use the term multi-agency collaboration (e.g., local prevention groups and integration projects for immigrants). Part of multi-professional collaboration is informal: phone calls, corridor chats and occasional consultations among different professions (Nikander 2004). Formal collaboration in organised teams, established committees or boards has become more and more common. The level of collaboration varies, too, and it affects the content of collaboration: while organisational managers may negotiate about the distribution of resources, fieldwork collaborators may negotiate about client cases or working practices.

Multi-professional collaboration may extend to multi-actor collaboration and community networks, where municipal authorities, paraprofessionals, third sector actors and citizens/clients share their knowledge and experience to attain some commonly defined aim. This is seen as important in policies that stress citizen participation and community action. Client participation in multi-agency teams is often linked directly with more dialogical and ethical service provision (see Bronstein 2003). The reason for searching for new dialogical measures is partly economic. Public expenditure is restricted by transferring care and supervision measures to civic society, and voluntary

and organisational sectors. It is said that the sectorised and far specialised multi-assistant system has been driven to a dead end and its resources have been drained. Solutions are now being searched for among networks of authorities and clients, a new kind of combination of network-like expertise and reflexivity (Arnkil 2003; Doolan 2002).

In practice multi-professional collaboration has many challenges: there are often problems in finding a common problem definition, goal and suitable measures for interventions in multi-professional collaboration (Määttä forthcoming). Differing professional traditions and languages, inherent power structures, deficiencies in communicational skills, time frames and scarcity of resources restrict the successfulness of cooperation (Nikander 2004; Burnett and Appleton 2004; Bronstein 2003). Professional ethic and also laws behind their actions vary from one service section to another. This complicates the cooperation. Collaboration is still characterised by the voluntary contribution of single professionals and the disconnected nature of work.

A SOCIAL-PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Social pedagogy is a vague concept, which is used in several contexts and includes different meanings. Therefore, it is rather difficult to build an unambiguous social-pedagogical framework for any welfare work. On the other hand, the concept of social pedagogy offers opportunities to combine social and educational points of view that are always important in human development. These dimensions can be seen as common elements of all welfare services regardless of differences in expertise between professional groups operating therein.

There are several country-specific traditions around the concept of social pedagogy which are influenced by cultural, social, economic and political factors. Generally speaking, social pedagogy can be interpreted in at least three different ways (see Hämäläinen 1989, 117):

- *A pedagogical tradition* emphasising the connection between social and educational dimensions in pedagogical theory and practice.
- *A branch of study* combining social and educational sciences conceptually, theoretically and methodically.

- *A strategy of tendency in social work* based on a way of thinking in which the interpenetration of social and educational issues in the helping process is stressed.

Social pedagogy seems to be based on the idea of conjunction of social and educational processes in theory and practice. However, according to Thomas Rauschenbach, a German theorist of social pedagogy, this discipline has had to justify its existence from the very beginning because the concept does not bring to mind very clear mental images (Rauschenbach 1991, 1). There are reasons for speaking about the “difficulty of catching” the concept of social pedagogy (Eriksson & Markström 2000) because of the diversity of interpretations, but the debate around the concept offers important theoretical elements for development of a social-pedagogical framework.

In many countries there are and have been several significant attempts to construct a comprehensive theory of social pedagogy based on different ontological, epistemological, anthropological, ethical and political standpoints, whereas in some countries the concept of social pedagogy has not gained a prominent foothold. Generally speaking, a social-pedagogical framework deals with the processes of human development in terms of social participation, inclusion and integration. Families, communities, organisations and institutions are considered and evaluated on the basis of their educational capacities and developed from this point of view.

Social pedagogy is often described in terms of professional socio-educational activities, as pedagogical work with social intentions and aims, as pedagogically oriented social work (e.g. Mollenhauer 1964; Giesecke 1987; Winkler 1988; Madsen 1996; Rauschenbach 1999). However, the relation between social pedagogy and social work is not clear (e.g. Hämäläinen 2003b). Social pedagogy is a multi-faceted field of theory and practice dealing with social and educational processes, problems and activities. Definitions of its functional position are located between social theory and theory of human action from the point of view of social and educational help (see Rauschenbach 1999). Social pedagogy is a system of social action integrating the elements of science, education and work activities (see Hämäläinen 2003a). It is described as both a mono- and poly-professional affair.

In the multiplicity of the conceptualisations there are differences in the way cultural, economical or even political factors are stressed within the social-pedagogical thinking and action. Famous educational theorists like Pestalozzi, Makarenko, Freire and others have been regarded as classicists of social pedagogy, even though they have not used the concept. This indicates that social pedagogy is primarily a certain way of

thinking with some particular characteristics; in other words, a tradition of ideas. A social-pedagogical framework expresses this tradition as being composed by philosophers and theorists of education with relatively different theoretical accents. At the same time, the framework has to deal with the social reality of the present, i.e., the prevailing social conditions and problems of society. A social-pedagogical framework is not a complete and rigid totality but rather a flexible and sensitive entity respecting cultural, social and political attributes of individual societies and welfare systems.

In Finland, social pedagogy is a relatively new concept. Of course, several activities have been developed for helping people with integration problems and promoting participation and inclusion similar to the social-pedagogical processes. However, education based on the concept of social pedagogy was not implemented before the mid-1990s. Today, social pedagogic studies are offered by two universities and several polytechnics. At the university level social pedagogy is developed as an academic discipline without a special professional focus (e.g. Hämäläinen 2003a). This gives an opportunity to develop a general social-pedagogical framework and to use the concept of social pedagogy in the multi-professional context. Students of different branches with various professional interests can study social pedagogy, both as a part of a degree and separately.

A social-pedagogical framework refers primarily to activities aiming at the promotion of people's capacity for participation, social integration and life management. These are considered from the point of view of human development, i.e. in terms of education and learning. People's living conditions, social actuality and cultural elements of their everyday life are respected. Emancipation is emphasised instead of adaptation, capacity for self-guidance instead of dependence, solidarity and togetherness of people instead of isolation, and pro-activity instead of re-activity in relation to everyday problems. A fundamental tendency in the tradition of social-pedagogical thinking and action is to promote people's awareness for the opportunities they have to steer their life course and to influence the social conditions determining their everyday life.

SOCIAL PEDAGOGY AS A RELATED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS

The modern welfare system is atomised. Generally speaking, it is a professionally and organisationally differentiated constellation consisting of many kinds of expertise without a common theoretical framework. Although multi-professional collaboration is emphasised, there are several obstacles, not least the lack of a common framework. According to several studies, there is a lot of competition, status problems, prejudice and distrust between professional groups and organisations (e.g. Nikkilä 1986; Nikander 2004; Burnett and Appleton 2004; Bronstein 2003). The obstacles to a functioning collaboration are not only administrative but also mental in terms of attitudes, values and understanding. People belonging to different professions do not even understand each other because of the 'argot'. Therefore, it is only reasonable to refer to a common theoretical framework.

Sometimes, social pedagogy is claimed to have a multi-disciplinarian nature, i.e. it is defined as a multi-disciplinary field based on theories of different sciences (e.g. Stensmo 1991; Eriksson & Markström 2000). On the other hand, it is also said that social pedagogy as a discipline can hardly progress on this basis without its own theory formation (Hämäläinen 2003a). These two diverse standpoints have to be reconciled in developing a social-pedagogical framework for multi-professional collaboration.

In practice, social pedagogy deals with different groups of people and the problems they might have in social participation, inclusion and integration. A social-pedagogical framework is seen to be appropriate in helping people of different ages with various problems of life management (Böhnisch 1992; 1997) and problems of life quality in their everyday life (Thiersch 1986; Kihlström 1998). There are analyses of social pedagogy within different target groups involving problem areas such as disability (Gustavsson 2003), juvenile delinquency (Stensmo 1991), intoxicants (Stensmo 1991), school problems (Kraav 2003) and family problems (Riemann 2000). In the modern welfare system there are several professional groups with versatile professional expertise dealing with all of these kinds of problems and target groups.

The conceptualisations of social pedagogy focus mainly on work with children and young people, but it is also emphasised that the concept of social pedagogy covers all stages of the human lifespan. In some conceptual interpretations of social pedagogy, methods are emphasised and it is defined primarily from this point of view. Methods are of course important in all professional activities, but social pedagogy as a theory of

social and educational help is not primarily composed of methods. It does not bring new methods to family or community work, counselling activities and other kinds of helping processes. Rather, it offers a particular way of thinking which combines social and educational dimensions of human existence and emphasises their interpenetration. It is more a perspective based on the composition of *homo socialis* and *homo educandus* being applicable in several social and educational professions that have methods of their own (e.g. Hämäläinen 2003b). This way of thinking might be inspiring and productive in developing professional methods and techniques.

In the German debate it is often emphasised that social pedagogy is an action science, i.e., a science dealing with the theory of human action in terms of social help (e.g. Rauschenbach 1999, 110–122). Although this standpoint is closely connected with the definition of social pedagogy as a tradition or form of social work, it can be fruitful for multi-professional applications as well. Every form of social help executed by different professions is being conceptualised on the basis of the theory of human action.

In many countries social pedagogy is defined in terms of a special professional expertise close to social work, for example in Germany, Poland and Russia. In these cases social pedagogues play a certain professional role in the multi-professional welfare systems beside other professional groups who have special tasks which complement others. In some countries other professional titles are obtained, like the *animateur socioculturelle* in France and *educator social* in Spain (e.g. Quintana 1992; Poujol 1996). When referring only to a single professional group social pedagogy cannot offer a theoretical basis for collaborative networks.

According to the Finnish experience it is reasonable and profitable to develop social pedagogy in terms of an academic discipline and general theory of social and educational help. It does not exclude organising special professional education on the basis of the concept and establishing a certain professional group of social pedagogues in the society. Generally, social pedagogy is neither just a framework of a single profession nor a set of methods. In the context of social work it seems to be justified to understand social pedagogy as a perspective based on the tradition of ideas combining social and educational standpoints (e.g. Hämäläinen 2003b). This might be the case with other helping professions as well.

A MODEL FOR MULTI-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION IN MULTICULTURAL CONCEPTS

A common framework helps to avoid desultoriness and incoherence in multi-professional networks. However, it is fairly difficult to implement any common framework for multi-professional collaboration because of the huge differences in professional socialisation and expertise. Instead of 'framework' it would be less complicating to speak about 'programmatic collaboration'. From this point of view social pedagogy may offer some important common elements for the development of programmatic collaboration among different professions promoting people's welfare.

Being based on the tradition of social-pedagogical thinking and actions, a social-pedagogical model of multi-professional networking consists of the key elements of this tradition. It deals with social and educational processes and problems in the relationships between individuals, communities and society in terms of participation, integration and inclusion, welfare and life management. From this point of view, it links all professional and non-professional activities related to these values and aims. It might be reasonable to say that these elements should fundamentally inhere in all welfare services offered by different professionals. They play an important role, especially in work with immigrants dealing with cultural conflicts and integration problems (See Figure 1).

A social-pedagogical modelling of the multi-professional collaboration within multiculturalism combines the special features of multicultural problematics with traditions and theory of social pedagogy. Working in a multi-professional environment could also be seen in itself as a multicultural action. Every expert and actor brings in his/her own working culture, theory and knowledge base for multi-professional work (see Payne 2000, 9). This is one example of how flexible the concept of multiculturalism is. In this article multi-professionalism is recognised in such multicultural contexts where it embodies working with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

However, the concept of multiculturalism is not very clear and there has been some critical discussion about whether to use it or not. In this article, multiculturalism is understood as a part of migration. When immigrants arrive in a new country, they are entitled to be equal with the majority in political, economical and social life, and they have right to treasure their own cultural background and language (see Ekholm 2001, 166–167). A multicultural community has the competencies to

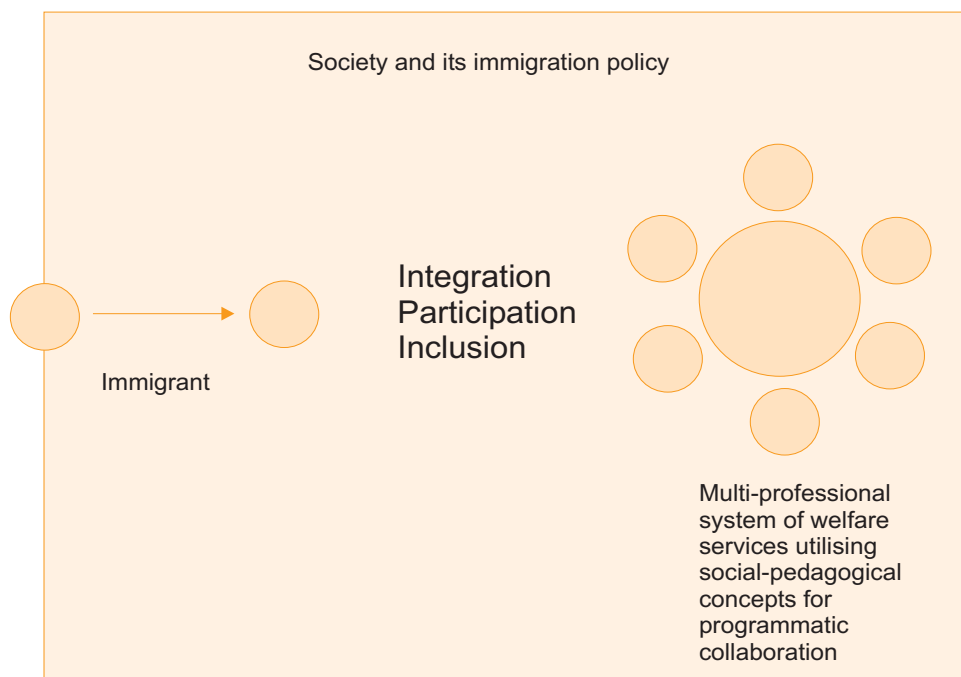


Figure 1. A model for programmatic collaboration in multicultural counselling

recognise cultural diversity. Cultural diversity can be seen as a connection between different cultures in which every culture is able to maintain its own cultural specialities. The idea of participation is included in multiculturalism, in other words, different cultures can appear together and act together (Clarke 1999, 217–218).

As Marja Tiilikainen (2003, 57; see also Clarke 1999) has pointed out, especially the influx of Somali immigrants into Finland in the 1990s has raised the profile of multicultural issues in public debate. So, the concept of multiculturalism is a relatively new concept in Finland. Somalis in different institutions such as schools, social services and the public health care system have raised questions concerning Islam. Altogether, increasing multiculturalism means that new challenges face Finnish society and also research, education and multi-professional work. Researchers have analysed and discussed the problems concerning working in a multicultural context. They have also referred to challenges and the need for further research (see for example Liebkind 2001; Forsander, Ekholm, Hautaniemi et al. 2001; Ikäläinen et al. 2003; Tiilikainen 2003).

When an immigrant is introduced to Finnish society he/she faces a highly developed welfare system that is established on fragmented hierarchy, multi-professionalism and extensive official networks. For a migrant, especially for one who comes from a totally different kind of social system, the Finnish model may be difficult to interpret: too complex and full of diverse expertises. It might even be impossible for him/her to find his/her way in an atomised system with his/her needs and problems. Sometimes immigrants might also be suspicious of the authorities because their earlier experiences might have involved corruption and injustice (see Tiilikainen 2003).

Multi-professional collaboration might contain negative aspects. Different professional traditions and insufficient resources can cause conflicts and there might be prejudices towards other professionals and fields. Multi-professional work in the multicultural context is characterised by a non-adequate comprehensive theoretical base. Working with migrants in different fields is supportive work. Social pedagogy is connected as a theory to the 'theory of social and educational help'. It is not a set of methods and techniques but, in any case, an approach of human action offering a conceptual framework for collaborative networks in the fields of social and educational help in theory and practice.

As indicated earlier, in discussion on multiculturalism, concepts like integration, participation and inclusion are important. In social pedagogy, the general theoretical basis comprises these very same concepts. In the same way, these concepts are relevant to those different professionals and actors in the field of multicultural work. Moving to another culture, whether involuntarily or voluntarily, will challenge a person's in-born self-identity (see Liebkind 2001). In a multicultural occupation, clients' identity difficulties are a part of the work. Social pedagogy, which concentrates on human development processes and sees growth as a continuing process, a transition from old conditions to new ones, can support a human being in this process.

Working in the multicultural context is also a matter of identity for professionals themselves. It is important that the workers have a consciousness of own cultural background and a sensitivity to observe cultural diversity in work.

CONCLUSIONS

In modern multicultural welfare societies, a comprehensive multi-professional system is organised for supporting people in a multicultural context. The clientele of

the welfare services is increasingly multiethnic, which means new kinds of professional requirements for the helping professions. But cultural diversity in terms of professional multiculturalism is also found in professional teams and networks. This opens up considerable opportunities for professional collaboration but produces several problems as well.

Ethnic and professional multiculturalism refers both to cultural diversity shaping people's identities, values, and to modes of action. They include the challenge of understanding otherness. Social pedagogy as a theory of help aiming at integration, inclusion and participation, stresses communication and integration between people who see the world from different points of view and paint it in different colours – either ethnic or professional. Social pedagogy is said to offer a conceptual framework which links together welfare and counselling workers dealing with multiethnic contexts from different perspectives.

Obviously, some kind of common theoretical framework could be helpful for bringing about interaction between different professional cultures, including paraprofessional and voluntary actors as well. A framework can be constructed on the basis of social pedagogy. The subject might be general enough for different actor groups dealing with welfare services. For example, in counselling activities a social pedagogical framework offers an opportunity to consider processes in terms of the social and educational dimensions of human development which are common to all different helping professions, welfare organisations and the third sector.

Several studies show that differences in professional cultures are a significant obstacle to functional collaboration between different professional groups. This factor not only includes professional jargons, but also very different ways of thinking and acting as well. A common framework binding different professional cultures closer together should be spacious enough to not hurt people's professional identity. The lack of a common framework makes it difficult to integrate paraprofessional and voluntary actors into welfare work. Cultural diversity in terms of professional multiculturalism shapes collaboration in professional teams and networks. This diversity can provide the leverage to ultimately help inform counselling practice, but it can also translate into barriers, associated with power differentials, lack of understanding between team members, distrust and suspicion. Without common elements of shared values, aims and joint vision, it is rather difficult to avoid such discrepancies and tensions.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

The following questions relating to the article above can be processed individually, in pairs and/or small groups.

- 1) Identify both mono- and poly-professional frameworks you are familiar with.
- 2) Identify obstacles to developing a common framework for multiprofessional networks and collaboration. Discuss with your colleagues the ways how one could overcome the obstacles.
- 3) Identify consequences of the lack of a common framework from the point of view of clients.

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**BEST PRACTICES
IN MULTICULTURAL
COUNSELLING IN
DIFFERENT CONTEXTS**

IV





Helena Kasurinen, Päivi-Katriina Juutilainen

Helena Mastoraki & Sakari Saukkonen

Counselling immigrant children and adolescents in educational institutions

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation is not only about vast changes in world economy and communication systems. Along with capital, products and services, people are moving to foreign countries where they assume they will find better job opportunities and living conditions. Each year thousands of people are forced to leave their home country as refugees due to regional and national crises. The growing amount of immigration demonstrates that global interdependence is part of our life today. From this point of view, it is necessary that educational institutions teach their pupils and students tolerance, respect and understanding to reduce prejudices against people from other cultures. Saying this, one must bear in mind that understanding is not always enough to eliminate sources of conflict between different groups, and education does not always produce successful or desired results (Moodley 1999).

The purpose of this chapter is to work out a general action model for counselling immigrant children and adolescents in schools, including a description of the counselling process from the counsellor's and counsee's perspectives. The chapter also aims to show that, besides some differences, there are many similarities in the counselling processes within the school systems of Greece and Finland, the two countries presented here.

Multicultural/culture-sensitive counselling as a professional expertise on the interactional level will be discussed first. The main ideas of this chapter are derived from constructivist ideas of empowerment and critical reflection. Furthermore, effective functioning of educational institutions will be dealt with, including how personal and organisational mutual understanding can be promoted. Supporting growth and development through holistic culture-centred counselling interventions is an important

topic, which will also be discussed. After this, educational and vocational guidance and counselling services delivered in the Finnish educational sector will be introduced. Moreover, the crucial phases in the study path of immigrant children and adolescents will be dealt with by examining a case study from a Finnish elementary school. Finally, there will be a general discussion aiming at outlining some key elements of how education as a vehicle can be used for social integration and inclusion.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING

Rapid changes in societies and increased plurality have been addressed by approaches labelled multicultural and intercultural education. Multicultural education deals mainly with knowledge about different cultures without any apparent interconnection between them. Intercultural education is considered to be more proactive and action-oriented and it implies cooperation and exchanges between the various groups (Vallandingham 2003, 64–65).

If school is defined as the place where not only knowledge but customs, values and beliefs are communicated to all of those who participate, then, given the current cultural mosaic, schooling has to ensure equal educational opportunities as well as results independently of any cultural, ethnic or religious background. In any other case, students, members of any minority groups, will experience phenomena of educational and social exclusion. Both the social and educational role of schooling need to be modified in order to respond to the changes which rapidly take place in the demographic, social, political and economic sectors.

From the social constructionist point of view concepts do not represent the world as it is (Gergen 1999, 14). On the contrary, concepts produce the meaningful world we live in. That is why it is plausible to use the concept of intercultural education and counselling for its emphasis on deep-woven, rich and inevitable productive relationships between different ethnic and cultural groups.¹ Intercultural education has also some resonance with critical pedagogy (see, for example, McLaren 1993; Giroux & McLaren 2001). Education should take a critical standpoint on offering people bet-

¹ Making this conceptual choice does not mean that the conception of multicultural counselling is overlooked. From the theoretical point of view the concept of intercultural counselling better serves the authors' purposes and hopefully makes the arguments clearer.

ter opportunities to succeed in society. Everyday opinions and power relations, economic structures and ethnic prejudices taken for granted should be questioned. Intercultural counselling is then about intercultural sensitivity and personal growth, identity, communication and interaction between different people, groups and cultures. Counselling should not be seen only as integrative but also as transformative. Counselling immigrants is not only a process in which the guidance counsellor or class teacher is trying to help “the others” integrate into the mainstream culture. We should be aware of the possibilities and benefits of mutual transformations in cultures and in ourselves.

INTERCULTURAL COUNSELLING AS A DIALOGICALLY EMPOWERING PROCESS

Empowerment in a counselling process refers to the strengthening of the client’s subjectivity and the increase of his/her agency. Although the starting points for agency have generally been defined through individual processes, they are, to a large extent, dependent on both the social and societal resources of an individual. In fact, agency can be seen to build upon knowledge of cultural meanings and upon ability to perceive, discern and mobilise resources. Functional ability or functional independence, therefore, closely relates not only to autonomy and self-directiveness, but to collaboration, responsibility and interdependence (Cooper 2003, 346; Hansen 1997, 23; Kosonen 2000, 316).

Mary Sue Richarson (2002) distinguishes three core components in the agency of an individual. First, an individual is able to set objectives for him/herself and his/her life and to define and justify his/her hopes. Secondly, he/she is able to harness and mobilise his/her personal resources to realise these objectives and thirdly, he/she is able to interact with his/her environment and to influence the environment in line with his/her own objectives. When it comes to immigrant students, the pedagogical and counselling challenges facing a school in promoting their agency are especially large. Although legislative and other norms directing schoolwork try to enhance the well-being and integration of immigrant students through many curricular means, most intercultural communication and interpretations are produced in various interactive situations and everyday encounters at school. In these situations the collective and individual meanings of otherness and diversity are produced and interpreted both verbally and non-verbally.

The interpretations produced by an immigrant student of him/herself and his/her environment can be analysed on a continuum, in which one end represents empowering experiences and the other exhausting and restraining experiences (see also Matinheikki-Kokko, Koivumäki & Kuortti 2003, 30). The essential interpretations along this continuum relate to identity, communality and everyday functions. If the student's experiences in the area of identity are empowering, his/her self-concept and conceptions of his/her cultural background and abilities will develop in a positive direction. In the opposite situation, the interpretations can harm or crush his/her self-esteem and experiences of self-efficacy. Collective experiences can enhance the immigrant student's feeling of belonging to the school and class community or on the other hand increase his/her feeling of not-belonging and disintegration. The experiences take shape in everyday practices and therefore peer interactions are experienced as positive and meaningful, for example, when learning together or when practicing a hobby.

The core task of empowering counselling practice is to support an immigrant student in his/her meaning-making processes. Since culture is not a static collection of values and practices (Human development report 2004, 4), the individual, collective and cultural meanings of an immigrant student are being constructed and deconstructed both explicitly and implicitly all the time. The core task of counselling is then to increase the student's awareness of the importance of his/her experiences and change processes during his/her life course. The aim is both to understand the individual cultural meanings as well as to construct collective meanings. This requires also that an individual becomes aware of the semantic systems of his/her social environment (Lyddon & Alford 1993, 52; Matinheikki-Kokko, Koivumäki & Kuortti 2003, 17). The meaning-making process is thus an important implement in deconstructing and reconstructing belief systems – the existing meanings are being evaluated and new meanings are being produced. The focus is on both belief systems as constructive elements of an individual as well as construction as a process element (see Neimeyer & Neimeyer 1993, 209).

The counsellor's work can be analysed with the help of the concept of an agenda (Juutilainen 2003). The agenda refers to the manuscript that is determined beforehand for a counselling session and which will be effected or realised as a procedure for a conversation despite, the narrative that the student is producing of his/her life. Agendas are formed out of the counsellor's conscious and subconscious "truths" and they take shape from the student's experience and his/her narrative in the counsel-

ling process. There is a risk that the counsellor's cultural knowledge is based on everyday beliefs and myths and then his/her way of encountering an immigrant student easily becomes stereotypical. The prior "knowledge" of the immigrant student's cultural background can function as a filter or block in hearing the client's narrative. The more truthful and real a construction is to the counsellor, the less he/she needs to question, inquire or check the foundations of his/her interpretations. The counsellor's openness to the client's narrative is determined by the "truths" that the counselling conversation is founded on. Asymmetrical status in a counselling relationship (Nummenmaa 1992), together with cultural and institutional power structures, set frames for counselling with the counsellor's agenda as its starting point. The process progresses on the basis of the reality launched by the counsellor and is not questioned without the counsellor's critical evaluation of and reflection upon his/her own values and beliefs (see also Nissilä, Lairio & Puukari 2001, 98–99).

The immigrant student's and his/her counsellor's shared or unshared constructions of the world affect the student's experiences of being encountered. These different experiences of encounters and non-encounters can vary and move along a continuum even within one counselling session. In other words, the counsellor's openness to the client's storytelling sets the foundation for experiencing the encounter. This openness is possible when the client's narrative or story does not threaten the counsellor's agenda or when there is no agenda.

The concept of negotiations emphasises the symmetric and collaborative character of counselling conversations – the counsellor and the client negotiate about the client's life situation and future. Affordance refers to the counsellor's actions through which he/she assists the client to widen his/her opportunities for acting in a new way (Peavy 2000, 18). The counselling conversation can be defined more symmetrically from the perspective of affordances (Juutilainen 2003). With affordance we mean the hints which are made by the student and which the counsellor can "grasp", stop at and analyse more deeply. Affordance thus means a point or a scene in the client's narrative which offers both participants a chance to widen their perspective and to critically reflect upon the situation. However, the more the affordance threatens the counsellor's agenda, the more easily the counsellor misses this point and opportunity. In other words: the more the client's hint contradicts the counsellor's views, the more important it is for him/her to stop using his/her agenda and be open to the client's experience and be willing to question his/her own interpretations.

The client's affordances form the challenges and obstacles for encounters in dialogue. The more critical these points and scenes are, the more they challenge or threaten the counsellor in his/her beliefs, conceptions and interpretations of the student, his/her life or the world in general. From the perspective of symmetric affordances, the dialogue and reciprocity in a counselling conversation mean a jointly produced and shared learning partnership (see Vanhalakka-Ruoho 1999), in which both counterparts bring their own affordances to the negotiations. Because both the counsellor and the student live in the middle of diverse truths, these affordances can enable both of them to critically evaluate the situation. The student can analyse the formation of his/her life story, and the counsellor his/her interpretations of the student's life space and the phenomena affecting it.

THE GREEK CONTEXT

The waves of immigration and repatriation have considerably changed the demographic composition of a number of geographic areas in Greece in the last few years. Thus people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds have to learn to live together, communicate and interact (Papastilianou 2000; Petrinioti 1993; Sidiropoulou 2003). This new demographic and social synthesis also reflects on the school population where new challenges emerge for both the educational system as well as the wider society.

It was only recently that the Greek Ministry of Education formally acknowledged that particular actions have to take place in current educational institutions in order to combat educational and social exclusion (Φ4/115/Γ1/791/18-9-01). Students coming from a different linguistic or cultural background are usually perceived as having deficits in terms of their formal education. Particular measures, focusing mainly on linguistic needs, have been applied as means for the integration of such students (see also Little and Willey, 1981). There is a lot of argument around whether these measures really smooth students' integration rather than marginalising them as long as formal schooling refuses (or resists) integration of features which also change its culture and not only that of its students (Katsikas et al. 2000; Sklavou 2004). School needs to develop and integrate practices which take into equal account the different needs of its beneficiaries, promote equal participation and action and not just trap many of them in the category of deficiency and, as a result, in compensatory measures.

Cross-cultural education provides the theoretical framework which enables schools to orchestrate organisational and educational changes needed as an effective response to the emerging challenges of our multicultural society. This is, then, not an easy task. Different levels of stakeholders and social actors have to be involved, such as central government, policy makers, local authorities, scholars, parents and educators (Kanakidou & Papagianni 1998). Furthermore, schools as organisations need particular internal and external conditions such as will, time, funding, and professional support so as to allow change to take place (Handy et al. 1986).

However, what is not needed is to deliver a special and distinctive education to students coming from minority groups; it is a holistic revision of both the curriculum and daily practices so as to take into account the fact that we are living in a multicultural society (Rex 1986). Bringing multiculturalism as a key issue in their daily agenda, schools strive to offer an environment in which social and educational learning can take place based on experiential opportunities, openness, self engagement, mutual communication and respect. This in turn prepares individuals to cope more effectively with diversity and survive in more complex, uncertain and demanding environments. It is this kind of culture that children and young people need to cultivate and prepare for, instead of *“an ideal fossil of culture based on utopian approaches of pluralism”* (Bullivant 1981).

It is argued that a school culture which probes and reinforces youth culture as well as their identity and their worth provides the conditions under which youngsters will increase their achievements and improve their basic skills. Nevertheless, basic questions in relation to the above hypothesis emerge: Which are the conditions for this kind of culture to be cultivated? How can different actors, in daily school life, participate so as to help such culture grow? In which ways can particular centralised principles and trends be modified by means of bringing changes in small localities?

The population in Greek schools is gradually becoming multicultural and as a result new measures have been introduced within the framework of cross-cultural education. However, it has been argued that these measures are too heavily linguistic-oriented. Even when one examines services that are provided in the broader area of the educational and social welfare sector, such as Career Counselling Services, small changes have been made in order to include the needs of the multicultural clientele in the daily agenda.

ETHNIC AND CULTURAL COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENT POPULATION – HIGHLIGHTING THE SITUATION IN GREECE

Greece has experienced a major change during the last fifteen years: a *mother country*, for waves of Greeks emigrating mainly to West Germany, Australia, and the USA during the 1960's, that has turned into a *host* country for a significant number of immigrants, the vast majority of whom come from Albania, the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. Greece, because of its geographical position and due to international political as well as social rearrangements, may either be perceived as an intermediate stop for some immigrants who come from the Balkans, Asia, Africa or Turkey, or as a more permanent destination for others (Mousourou 1991, Efxini 2002).

According to the recent United Nation's report, Greece will host 3.5 million immigrants during the next 15 years. It is also mentioned that developed European countries will host more than 100 million of immigrants during the same period of time (in Papanthropoulos 2000), whereas it is estimated that Europe will need 153 million immigrants until the year 2025 in order to keep its labour force numerically stable (in Hatzopoulos 2000).

Greece has become a multicultural and multilateral society gradually and rapidly. Eventually, the demographic synthesis of the current school population will share similar features. Immigrant and repatriate students make up 8.9 % of the total student population in the 2002–2003 school year (6.7 % and 2.2 % accordingly) (Gotovos et al. 2003). Greek schools are faced with needs and challenges that they have been unfamiliar with until recently. Greek educational policy had failed to form a uniform strategy which would have coped effectively with cultural diversity. So far, the student population has been perceived as being culturally homogenous before the educational law. Actually, two groups were clearly recognised as being different and having special needs: a) students with special learning needs for whom there are special educational institutions as well as other supportive measures, currently based on the inclusive education framework, and b) Muslim students², residents of Thrace, for whom the so-called public *Minority Schools* were established during the 1970's.

It was in 1983, that, for the first time, Language Reception Classes were implemented for both primary and secondary school level. (art. 45, act 1404/83). Such classes were formed in a limited number of schools, especially those located in areas where Greek repatriates, the so-called Pontians, from the former Soviet Union, were

settled. A limited number of public primary and secondary *Cross-cultural Schools* were also established at that time³.

New legislation came into force (act 2413/96) in 1996: The notion of cross-cultural education and its aims were defined and new measures were designed to respond to a wider variety of non-Greek speaking students' needs⁴: Moreover, IPODE, the Institute of Education for Homogenous Greeks and Cross-cultural Education, was founded.

This current educational Act marks a clear shift towards an *open and formally phrased* recognition that students' cultural background may vary and formal schooling has to acknowledge that and take particular actions based on inclusive approaches. There are more opportunities for schools to operate language support programmes at different levels and of varying duration, dependent or not on core curriculum, either independently or in cooperation with professional institutions, such as universities, under initiatives in pilot projects (Markou 1996, 1997).

Even though it is not in the scope of this article to examine and present extensively how Greek educational legislation deals with cultural diversity and with the possible danger of oversimplifying policy makers' motives, the author argues that centrally proposed practices mainly focus either on these 26 cross-cultural schools or on how

² This is not a homogenous group, though (Kanakidou 1993). In accordance with the Treaty of Lozane in 1923, which defines a Muslim Minority in Thrace, and the common Protocol which was signed between Greece and Turkey in 1968, Minority Schools were established. It is worth mentioning that these schools could be evaluated as a Good Practice example of intercultural education. However Muslim students seem to drop out of schooling, women in particular, not to participate in higher secondary education, to have low school performance. These negative outcomes are related to a number of factors such as teachers' training, socioeconomic status and so on (Kanakidou et al 1998).

³ A total of 26 cross-cultural schools have been set up throughout Greece since 1996 (13 out of which are primary, 9 junior high schools and 4 senior high schools). These schools guarantee equality of opportunity to every student in the country, while the cutting-edge approaches to teaching and learning utilised in these schools have a positive knock-on effect on the Greek educational system as a whole. A school can only be defined as cross-cultural when repatriated Greek and/or foreign students account for at least 45% of the total student body. The educators in these schools receive special training, and are selected on the basis of their knowledge of the subject of cross-cultural education and teaching Greek as a second or foreign language (see also www.ypepth.gr).

⁴ Official papers claimed that the aim of cross-curriculum education is to set up and run primary and secondary classes that provide education to young people with a specific educational, social or cultural identity. In cross-cultural schools, the standard curriculum is adapted to meet the specific educational, social or cultural needs of the students attending them (art.34, act 2413/96).

non-Greek speaking students will acquire pragmatic, organisational and strategic competencies in the Greek language as a means of their integration (see also Mitilis 2004). There is a lack of culture-centred interventions with a long-term perspective in order to accommodate students and cope with their diverse needs. Some initiatives which may take place in particular schools, such as cultural events, parents' group meetings, etc., are fragmented, short-term and rely more on school awareness and recourses rather than on well-based practices being integrated organically into the daily life of schools.

CAREER COUNSELLING SERVICES IN THE GREEK EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM – CHALLENGE TO WORK WITH DIVERSITY

Educational policy is directly related not only to curriculum and school organisation but also to any other aspect which interferes with, facilitates and counter-balances school life. Following the contemporary trend in school development⁵, which is to deliver more individualised educational services meeting a broader variety of needs, a number of educational services and initiatives have been established with a welfare orientation to their objectives, such as Youth Counselling Centers, Centers for Diagnosis and Assessment, Career Services, to mention but a few.

Focusing on the developed Career Services in the Greek educational system, a commonly accepted definition of its objectives can be as follows: School career guidance (SEP) aims to offer counselling support to students during their various developmental stages in combination with reliable and up-to-date information regarding the offered educational and vocational opportunities to allow them to take decisions that facilitate their harmonic and active integration in the changing social context (art. 10, act 2525/1997; Mastoraki 1999a).

During the last educational reform (act 2525/97)⁶ a coherent and multilateral system of career guidance services has been developed in Greek secondary schools.

⁵ This view can be perceived as being more market-oriented, due to economic and political changes but also to social pressure (see also Kassotakis 2000, Dimitropoulos 1998a).

⁶ It was actually the first time that Career Guidance became a central issue in an educational reform, in accordance with EU-defined priorities, and relevant initiatives were seriously funded by EU Social and Structural Funds (EPEAEK I, 1996-2000).

This system consists of three kinds of services in relation to school curriculum (Mastoraki 1999b): a) services which are *fully incorporated* into the curriculum, such as school career guidance as a taught subject or as cross curriculum activities; b) services which *complement* the curriculum, such as Career Days, special programmes for career education, school-based Career Offices; and c) services which operate separately from the curriculum, such as locally based Career Counselling and Guidance Centers and the National Center of Vocational Guidance (EKEP)⁷.

At the same time, the Greek Ministry of Education in cooperation with professional bodies prepared a variety of materials, such as educational and informational material, psychometric tests, web-based resources as means for professional career counsellors' practice (Pedagogic Institute 1999a, 1999b, 1999c). Additionally a Career Counselling and Guidance Center for youngsters with special needs and for those who face the risk of social exclusion was also founded in the Pedagogic Institute as a pilot service.

Meanwhile a considerable number of experienced secondary school teachers were trained within the vocational guidance and counselling framework⁸ and a number of research projects were undertaken so as to develop experts' knowledge of particular areas of interest, among them, career pathways for youngsters coming from a different cultural background. Research findings illuminate the substantial problems which these groups experience during their schooling and labour integration⁹. The risk of social exclusion and marginalisation easily becomes a feature of their accessibility to services and to the use of public commodities, such as education, training and so forth (Pedagogic Institute 2000).

Most of the above mentioned initiatives were fully applied during the last five years (1999–2004). So far there is considerable quantitative data regarding demo-

⁷ Ekep's central aim is the improvement, the promotion and the coordination of the services concerning career guidance and counselling at a national level.

⁸ Looking at the curriculum of these training schemes, issues such as cultural diverse groups of clients or culture-centred counselling were separately examined, but not fully incorporated in the syllabus, though. One can argue that in the short run an assimilation perspective in multicultural counselling is stressed more than a multicultural and equality perspective as aimed in actual integration policy (Matinheikki-Kokko 1997). This also seems to be the case for the curriculum of the two existing post graduate programmes (one run by the University of Athens and the other by ASPAITE).

⁹ Most of this material can be found at www.pi-schools.gr

graphic characteristics of School Career Services' clientele¹⁰. However there is no clear evidence on the cultural or ethnic background of these clients.

Drawing on a quite recent experience of the author, it seems to be commonly accepted among School Career Counsellors, particularly those who work in school-based Career Offices (Mastoraki 2001) that working with students from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds is one of their current main challenges, for which the majority feel insecure and not fully equipped. This issue does not seem to be of the same importance for Career Counsellors working at peripheral Counselling and Guidance Centers. There are a number of factors that may explain this. The author argues that these centers are not easily accessible for these particular groups of students. Actually, this may be the case for a number of social services when it comes to minorities' accessibility. Firstly, these people may lack information about the structure of the public sector, existing organisations, their rights to use available services and so forth. Secondly, these services may represent *Authority* and *Power* (Coulshed 1994). Then people who have experienced discrimination and uneasiness in becoming familiar with the new social context, in turn feel discouraged and reluctant to seek help and advice even in cases where they do have the relevant information. This is one of the main reasons why the social sector has to develop policies based on networking in both formal and informal ways, door-to-door techniques, cultural mediators, to mention but a few, so as to enable those in need to reach them (Mastoraki 2004).

However, drawing evidence from daily practice, this does not seem to be the case for the local Career Counselling and Guidance Centers. Looking at the centres' main objectives, these are in particular: a) to deliver Counselling and Information Services for Secondary School Teachers, Parents and Students, b) to plan, implement, manage and coordinate Career Guidance Activities in the Prefecture (both school and non-school based), c) to train and, monitor Teacher-Counsellors, d) to support activities in relation to the Vocational Guidance Subject 'taught' in the Classroom, and e) to

¹⁰ Depending on whether these services are based either in schools or in local communities, their clients can be either student, parents and guardians and teachers of that particular secondary school (in the first case), or broader categories, of the aforementioned groups, including youngsters following or not following any educational or training scheme up to 25 years of age, local educational authorities and school principles, other educational or social services working at local or national level.

cooperate with organisations in both the Public and Private Sector¹¹. Basically, the source of the centres' clientele seems, almost exclusively, to be secondary schools: namely, local educational authorities, students, teachers, parents and guardians. Even though the centres' practitioners develop outreaching practices, they mainly focus on schools and in some cases on the wider local community.

When the focus is on local communities, practitioners choose to deliver small campaigns, short seminars, awareness meetings¹² and not a long term strategy in order to track down and attract those groups who are falling through the social and educational net. When the focus is on the school community, the career counsellors' main task is to deliver career services, such as information and support around career matters (Ministry of Education 2003). As a result counsellors, in cooperation with schools, organise school-based informative group meetings with students or parents or else they are available for centre-based individualised sessions with particular students or families who ask for a more *in-depth* support. For a young person to reach the centre, it is either his/her initiative or school referral.

It has already been mentioned that there is no overall data with regard to clients' cultural background. However, looking at the social background of those who had individual sessions with the career counsellors in the local centre of Peristeri, there have been 21 cases out of almost 900 in the last three years which are reported by the counsellor as being ethnically or culturally different (Greek repatriated, Albanian, etc.) (KESYP 2004). The latter does not reflect by any means the current synthesis of local student population in secondary education (see Gotovos et al. 2003).

Additionally, with the exception of the different methodology in both cases, as mentioned above, there is an underlying assumption: the career counsellor is perceived as an *external* expert who comes into play to work with young persons when career information and support is needed for students experiencing uncertainties, lack of information and difficulties in making career plans and reaching particular decisions whilst being at a stage of transition (Dimitropoulos 1998a, 1998b).

¹¹ Among their objectives is the Provision and Implementation of a system of Internal Evaluation which has not been implemented yet. As far as evaluation is concerned, practitioners submit structured descriptive reports for the proceedings in both the Ministry of Education and Pedagogic Institute yearly. It is the Pedagogic Institute which publishes relevant overall quantitative data for particular services provided by the Career Centers.

¹² Participants in these kinds of arrangements are usually people who have already been aware, in some ways, of career guidance and its role in an individual's life plans (Mastoraki 2004).

However, Career Counselling is a lot more than that. It is centred around cultivating general skills to adjust and adapt, to become flexible, critical and aware of one's own context, to be autonomous and happy with one's self (see also Kosmidou et al. 1996; Dimitropoulos 1998a; Kassotakis 2000). It is not only an individual's responsibility to develop in this direction. Individuals are organic parts of organisations and of different social settings (Morgan 1986). Thus it has to be a core commitment for those organisations that play a central role in shaping an individual's development and growth, such as families and schools.

The Greek educational system is heavily centralised (Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs 1995, 15) as well as knowledge-centred (Solomon 1994; Kassotakis 2000). These parameters also shape school government and culture. Simultaneously, taking into account career counselling goals, the latter raises a major challenge for central educational policy in the area of Career Counselling and Guidance area. If educational career services' main goal is to contribute effectively in order to promote individuals' development and self-reliance, then it becomes crucial for relevant interventions to focus not only on the *Person* but also on the educational context where this person lives and grows.

THE FINNISH CONTEXT

Finland has traditionally been a rather closed society with a relatively homogenous culture. The number of immigrants in Finland did not grow until the 1990s (Met-sänen 2000, 81): from some 25 000 foreigners permanently living in the country in 1990 to 107 000 in 2003 (Ministry of Labour 2004), which in percentage terms equals some 2 % of the overall population of Finland (5,2 million).

Finnish educational policy has tried to foster intercultural awareness, participation and sharing, especially among young people. In the curriculum guidelines for basic and secondary education, globalisation, intercultural awareness and knowledge of different cultures form themes which permeate every subject taught at school.

The Finnish National Board of Education sets the goals and general content for core curricula of basic, upper secondary general and vocational education. In those guidelines the term immigrant pupil or student is defined as referring to children and young people who have moved to, or been born in, Finland, and have immigrant backgrounds (National core curriculum for basic education 2004). The instruction of

immigrant pupils and students has special objectives. It supports children's and adolescents' growth into active and balanced membership. A learning plan for an immigrant pupil or student should be formulated so that it serves as a part of the cultural integration plan.

Immigrant children (age 6–10) can get preparatory teaching before starting basic education. The aim of this preparatory teaching is to promote the development of the child and integration into Finnish society. Each child has an individual learning plan. The pupils in preparatory teaching are integrated into basic education teaching groups according to their age. This integration promotes the development of social knowledge of language. Each municipality can decide whether they offer preparatory teaching or not. This is why the organisation of education and teaching for immigrant children varies in different parts of Finland (Exploration of teaching of immigrant pupils 2004).

Immigrant children and adolescents can study Finnish or Swedish (the second official language in Finland) as a second language. Moreover, immigrants can have teaching in their native language. According to the core curriculum for basic education (2004) teaching of the native language supports the pupil's integrated personality growth, the formation of social relationships and world concept. In order to develop thinking, language usage skills, self-expression, and communication, study of the native language is essential.

Those immigrant young people who are over sixteen years old are too old to start studies in basic education. Still, they need teaching in the Finnish language and a knowledge of the Finnish educational system and society. Municipalities have special units for these immigrant young people (Vainio-Mattila 2004). The aim of these units is to educate the young persons to have enough skills in the Finnish language to be able to apply for a study place in vocational, upper secondary or higher education depending on what kind of educational background they already have. The teaching of these groups includes career counselling as well as support in life management skills and integration into the surrounding society.

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

The new national curriculum guidelines of Finnish basic and upper secondary education describe the overall goals of guidance and the minimum level of the content of the curricula (Vuorinen et al. 2003). Additionally, the municipalities are required to provide a strategic and operational plan for guidance provision and the regular evaluation of services. The curriculum guidelines form a framework for delivering guidance and counselling services in different educational settings according to the holistic approach (Esbroek, van & Watts 1998). Student counsellors have the main responsibility for delivering guidance and counselling, and group advisers are responsible for tutoring their own designated group of students. Furthermore, each teacher is responsible for guiding the students in study skills and in supporting the growth and development of the students. The headmaster of the school is responsible for organising teaching and counselling facilities to allow the utilisation of different counselling methods and the implementation of different ways of producing guidance and counselling services.

Counselling of immigrant students is based on a holistic standpoint. Life history and cultural background and their influence on students' plans and interests should be taken into consideration. Cooperation with family members is stressed in the new curriculum guidelines. Multi-professional and cross-sectoral cooperation is needed when counselling immigrant students. Because the number of immigrants has only recently increased, schools and municipalities have been forced to develop models for cooperation between different stakeholders.

The basic goals of the curriculum guidelines for guidance and counselling are described in the following. These goals should be adhered to with each young person and with immigrant students. There should be special attention paid to the problems and needs which emerge from their background.

The goals (Merimaa 2004):

1) To support the personal growth and development of the students.

The support of growth and development is essential during the first years in comprehensive education. Later on supporting growth and development is connected with counselling in various difficult situations on the students' study path

and is, thus, a part of student welfare care delivered by a multi-professional group of experts.

2) To promote the development of study skills and to help in learning difficulties.

Students should receive counselling and teaching in different learning methods, support in learning difficulties and developing their learning skills. Self-reflection and self-assessment is included in the teaching of different subjects. Students need guidance and counselling when they are planning their individual study programme.

3) To counsel and guide the students in educational and occupational orientation.

The transition phases of the educational system are crucial for young people. The guidance and counselling should be considered as a process which helps the students make decisions and choices dealing with their future education and career. The idea of lifelong learning and counselling is one of the main goals of the new curriculum guidelines.

The background theory for the new curriculum guidelines is socio-constructivist learning and counselling theory. The students are subjects and autonomous learners who need guidance and counselling in developing their study skills and planning their life career. The new curriculum guidelines stress the importance of learning to use different information sources, especially computer-literacy and use of the internet are considered important.

One of the indicators of effective guidance and counselling services is that the students have enough tools for making reasonable decisions in the transition phases of their study path. This means that they have enough information about educational opportunities, they have learnt by experience what working life is like and they know about different occupations. For immigrant students it is essential to have the possibility to visit different working places and educational establishments, maybe to spend some weeks or days in them before applying for a study place.

The guidance and counselling services in different educational settings are seen as a process which prepares students for transitions and future society and gives students tools for lifelong learning. This means that the whole study path from comprehensive school to secondary education and to working life or further education should be

taken into consideration when writing local strategies for guidance and counselling services. They should include a description of how cooperation is realised between educational stages, for example, when students move from comprehensive education to upper secondary education. In the local curricula details should be given of how the follow-up system is organised. This means that networking between counsellors and teachers in different educational settings is promoted.

Multi-professional cooperation is defined by the new legislation for student welfare care in comprehensive and secondary education. The same legislation stresses that the schools should write strategies for cooperation between school and home, as well. The active role of parents is promoted in the Finnish school system by the legislation coming into force at the beginning of August 2003.

Pupil welfare services include attending to the child's or young person's basic learning prerequisites and physical, psychological, and social well-being. Pupil welfare services consist of both community and individual support. The objectives are to create a healthy, safe learning and school environment, protect mental health, prevent social exclusion, and advance the well-being of the school community. (National core curriculum for basic education 2004, National core curriculum for upper secondary education 2003.)

Through pupil welfare services, an operating culture of care, concern, and positive interaction is promoted in the school community, and an equal opportunity to learn is ensured for all. Pupil welfare services help to maintain the individual's and the community's ability to function in situations that threaten physical and psychological security. Pupil welfare services promote the learning and balanced growth and development of the child or young person. The objective of pupil welfare services is the prevention, recognition, amelioration, and earliest possible elimination of obstacles to learning, learning difficulties, and other problems connected with attending school.

The guidance counselling evaluation project carried out by the Finnish National Board of Education in 2002 brought to light significant differences in the availability of guidance counselling (Numminen et al. 2002). As a follow-up to this evaluation, the Ministry of Education started a development project for educational and vocational guidance in the educational sector. One of the objectives of the guidance and counselling development project is to promote multi-professional co-operation between regional and local participants, as well as the different administrative sectors. The project also aims to improve the capabilities of educational staff to meet the increasing need for guidance counselling among students. Measures aiming to pre-

vent marginalisation are being taken in order to increase the effectiveness of guidance and counselling and student welfare services. The measures should fulfil the criteria set for early identification and should enable early intervention. Another important objective is to reduce instances of dropping out of education, to facilitate an easy educational path, including transition points for students, and to develop monitoring tools. A special priority of the project is the development of guidance and counselling for the upper grades in basic education. Moreover, within this developmental scheme an Equal project (2005-2006), one goal of which is to develop multicultural counselling practices, has started.

A FINNISH CASE: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AS COUNSELLORS FOR IMMIGRANT PUPILS AND THEIR FAMILIES

One elementary school with some 500 pupils (age 7–13) in the city of Jyväskylä in Central Finland was examined to identify class teachers' notions and experiences of intercultural counselling. Nearly 10% of all the pupils in the school are originally from abroad. The case study is based on interviewing three class teachers who were colleagues of one of the authors at the time he was working in the elementary school.

The fact that the author has worked together with the interviewed teachers for six years and has experienced the same reality in this particular school, gives him a chance to look into things more "from the inside" for research purposes. Still it needs to be emphasised that the author is doing his best to be as neutral and objective as possible to avoid describing his own experiences in this article, although they must have some significance and some echoes of them are certainly included in the following interpretations.

Research methods and materials

Semi-structured thematic interviews were used as a data-gathering method. The discussion topics were determined beforehand. Also some main questions were formulated quite strictly to be sure to receive answers to them. The central questions were divided into discussing teachers' intercultural teaching experience, their attitudes towards immigrant pupils and their families, and the intercultural education and training the teachers had received. The characteristic best describing the interviews was "like

chatting together” and the teachers spoke “with their own voice”. Sometimes they were asked to specify and clarify their statements to ensure that everything was correctly understood. The interviews were held in the school and each interview lasted about 40–50 minutes.

Notes of the interviews were made and they were transcribed word-for-word on the computer as soon as possible after the interviews. The rewritten texts then formed the materials for the context-sensitive text analysis (Fairclough 1992, 75; Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 135–145; Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, 300–302) or as Hoikka-la (1993, 37–38) has put it, “close-reading technique”. The essential features of the teachers’ conceptions were analysed by reading the interviews from the contextual point of view. Because of the limited size of the text material, it was not necessary to use any rigid and/or formal analytical procedure. In practice, this meant a careful reading and interpretation of the textual material without using any formal linguistically-based coding (see Cohen et al. 2000, 299).

The analysis had three stages. At the first stage, the major themes common to all interviewed teachers were defined. At the second stage, each theme was looked at separately to find out similarities and differences in the teachers’ notions. After gaining a clear interpretation of the themes and diverse notions, the conceptual and rhetorical means of teachers’ meaning making were analysed. The focus of the analysis was on the words and arguments used and the rhetorical devices. Because of the rather limited text material it was not possible to delve very deep at the third stage of the analysis.

Analysis of the data

In analysing the interviews the text material was categorised into the following three major themes:

1. Teachers’ definitions and experiences of immigrant pupils

How are pupils described? What kind of personal characteristics are usually associated with them? How much have the teachers worked with immigrant pupils and what kind of experiences have they had?

2. Teachers' definitions and experiences of immigrant families

What has everyday interaction with the immigrant families been like? What are its main features – problems, challenges and solutions?

3. Institutional support and co-operation

Has there been any intercultural training for teachers? What kind of support has the school and the city offered? What are the school's resources, plans and practices for intercultural education?

At the second stage of processing the interviews, the focus was on analysing the similarities and differences among the individual teachers. At this point it seemed clear that all the three teachers interviewed had a quite similar professional and intercultural training background (none of them had any significant training in intercultural education and counselling). They also shared quite common notions about immigrant pupils and their families. The differences in opinions, experiences and notions were so marginal that it is possible to speak about the notions as a whole.

It was slightly problematic to decipher "the deeper meanings" of utterances from such minimal text material at the third stage of analysis. Therefore, no general conclusions can be drawn from the last stage while the first and second stage analysis will be related to some core intercultural education literature in the interpretation phase. This allows opening up both practical and theoretical perspectives on intercultural education and counselling from the point of view of one Finnish elementary school.

Findings and interpretations

Teachers' descriptions of their immigrant pupils are mainly positive. If there is anything negative to be said, it usually has some kind of explanation not always related solely to the pupil. For example, the reason for immigrant pupils coming to school late is not explained by the pupils' laziness, but through "we have this punctual Nordic society" to which the immigrant families have not yet become accustomed. The immigrant pupils are described as studious and eager to learn. They also respect their teachers and it seems that the immigrant families value school more than the average Finnish pupils and their families do.

Immigrant students' behaviour is divided according to their gender. The girls are quiet and shy. They seem to be quite reserved, even depression is sometimes suspected by teachers. The boys are quite the opposite. They are lively, very keen on sports and they make a lot of noise if not strictly controlled. Yet they all seem to obey their teacher as long as the teacher is present. But when a teacher is not around, a "little something" goes on behind the teacher's back and usually the boys are to be blamed for such pranks, etc. This feature is given a kind of cultural explanation. Double-dealing is seen as a part of the immigrants' oriental masculine cultural heritage. But, to be fair, these kinds of qualities are also associated with some Finnish boys. As one of the teachers said: "Many times these Finnish rogues generate more problems".

Somehow it seems that for the teachers the problem is how to help immigrants integrate into Finnish school culture. How to teach them to be punctual, make them understand that we do not use corporal punishment and that women teachers have the same authority as men. Yet some doubts are expressed about our cultural habits. A teacher may ask "if it is always so desirable to be so punctual". All in all, teachers seem to have very open and positive attitudes towards immigrant pupils. At the same time they are concerned how to secure equal learning opportunities for all pupils and how to support the immigrants in becoming culturally better integrated.

Some similarities to the study of Miettinen & Pitkänen (1999, 12) can be seen here. They found that although Finnish teachers have a positive attitude towards immigrant pupils, the overall context of teaching is solely Finnish. Plurality is favoured, but from the point of view of Finnish culture. Teachers' interpretation is that equal treatment means that everybody is to be treated the way we Finns have learned to be fair and reasonable. It is hard to see how features of foreign cultures could be incorporated into the Finnish culture. Interaction is aimed at producing more or less one-sided assimilation, not mutual transformation.

Of course, one should not be too straightforward when interpreting teachers' intercultural practices at school. The school context in general favours uniform practices without considerable variety (Saukkonen 2003, 62–64, 72–76). Sociologists use the concept of hidden curriculum to describe the conditions at schools where the context of actions gives very few alternatives to both teachers and pupils. Everything is usually done traditionally and/or in a bureaucratic manner. Seeing or thinking differently is judged to be much too radical, and challenging the routines is not usually accepted.

The interviewed teachers interact quite a lot with the immigrant families. If the teachers' work with the pupils is mostly traditional teaching, the interaction with the families has more to do with counselling. Immigrant families do get a lot of advice from different authorities, but because of the close relationship with their children's teachers, the school serves as an integrative counselling agent. Sometimes for an immigrant parent it is easier to ask "dumb" questions of a trusted teacher than of some not so well-known social worker. One teacher formulated it in this way: her role is not only to be a teacher but "a kind of everyday life counsellor". Teachers are asked about climate, clothing, job and career opportunities, medical services and recreational activities. To meet such challenges the teachers feel that they need much more knowledge and training.

The interviewed teachers were frustrated with the poor training they have in intercultural education. From their point of view the city of Jyväskylä has not offered proper training at all. By the same token, they have the experience that the whole school system for immigrants lacks a solid basis. They recognise the good will and well-meaning plans of the school authorities, but in daily school life these are seen as empty phrases. Teachers describe how "every problem has to be solved each in turn without any prior guidelines". Work has trained them to solve the everyday problems and with good, reciprocal collegial support they have managed to cope.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has described teaching and counselling policies and practices in two different countries. Despite differences in the educational systems and cultures of these countries, it seems that the challenges and problems are quite similar when it comes to counselling immigrant children and young people. How do we guarantee the availability, sufficient scope and high quality of guidance and counselling for immigrant young people and adults or those persons who have a different cultural background studying at educational institutions? Each evaluation project dealing with guidance provision has proved that systematic action models should be developed. This means that there should be a local model for how the transition phases of young people are guided and supported by counsellors and teachers. This also means that cooperation between multi-professional experts as well as cooperation between school and home are included in the plans of these action models.

This chapter has discussed the counselling of immigrant students as an empowering process. This kind of a framework in counsellors' profession means that the initial training and in-service training of school counsellors should include themes dealing with multicultural counselling. Various methods that are best suited to multicultural counselling processes should be developed and consequently school counsellors should be trained in how to use these methods in their daily practice.

It has been proved that teachers' work with immigrants can be considered quite challenging. The fact of minimal institutional support and lack of training, combined with the expectations to act as a teacher and a counsellor at the same time, make the teachers' job very demanding. Cooperation inside schools and in delivering structured in-service training for teachers at national level is the way to help teachers meet these challenges.

It is fair to say that the relationships between teachers and pupils as well as between teachers and immigrant families are mostly warm and confidential. That puts the teachers in a unique position. They get to know and share many daily problems of the immigrants. On many occasions they are expected to solve these problems or at least give guidance. This raises the serious question of how an elementary school teacher can be supported in this task. There are professional networks – social workers, psychologists and school nurses for example - and collegial help available. Yet the teacher is very much on his/her own nowadays. More attention should be paid to proactive planning of immigrant education, supportive networks for teachers including solid expertise from counselling professionals and more training in intercultural education. This would provide teachers with more intellectual and moral resources to meet “the others”, and not only as a group to be integrated. For a critical pedagogue the objective should lie in mutual transformations that can enrich both cultures and all participants involved.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

- 1) Are career counselling services in your country easily accessible for students with a minority cultural background?
- 2) In which ways can the career counselling system bring change to and facilitate the process of empowerment and inclusion for minority students? Think in concrete terms and reflect on your country/your own working context.
- 3) What is the current situation in your country in terms of cross-cultural education and training available to teachers and school counsellors?
- 4) What is needed to form a unified strategy that would effectively cope with cultural diversity in everyday life at school?
- 5) Based on your own experience, is it common that teachers and school counsellors feel that they are left without proper institutional support when working with immigrants and/or ethnic minorities?
- 6) What kind of practical solutions can be found to teachers' problems regarding cultural diversity issues described in the chapter?

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Counselling immigrant adults at an educational institution

INTRODUCTION

The principle of promoting free mobility of citizens has been written into European educational policies. Additionally, the philosophy of educational equality has been clearly included in the educational statutes of most European countries. Furthermore, at the beginning of the twenty-first century the ideas of lifelong learning have been defined to be the goals of improving practice within the educational systems. This means that teachers all over Europe are increasingly encountering students with various ethnic backgrounds of all ages, who have varied educational backgrounds, life situations and work-experiences and, accordingly, are in need of diverse educational support within educational settings.

The growth in demands for equal educational rights for all inevitably strengthens the demands for the development of the skills of the teaching and counselling staff in order to meet the individual needs of learners that arise for diverse reasons and to counsel them accordingly. However, with this new concentration on the needs of diverse students emerging on issues like immigration, age, race, gender, special educational needs or the like, there seems to be some uncertainty with regards to what the development of these skills might mean for the practices of educational settings, their teachers and other staff and, accordingly, for training professionals for educational settings.

In this article we will provide the reader with a couple of examples of how these challenges have been met within educational settings. Besides offering some examples of good practice of working with immigrant adults we also focus on the challenge of training professionals and in particular of training teachers working with immigrant adults in educational institutions. In putting the focus on teachers, we would like to

underline the importance of every teacher having the counselling attitude and skills in his/her everyday practice with immigrant adult learners besides the work done by actual counselling professionals. However, we start our article by addressing briefly the subject of adult learners and some grounds of working with immigrant adult learners in educational settings. This starting point provides the conceptual framework for the practical examples to be presented. The first two of these examples deal with counselling immigrant adult students. They are followed with examples of some learning tools used in training teachers to work with multicultural adult students.¹

IMMIGRANT ADULTS IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Adults as learners

Adulthood is one of the basic factors that brings certain aspects to working with students and shapes the educational process. It is essential to consider how we see the different aspects of adulthood and what meaning we give them in counselling. Adults as learners bring the following matters into the process:

1. Malcom Knowles (1984) has identified some characteristics of adult learners. He stresses that adult learners have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. This matter is extremely important and relevant as a basic assumption when working with immigrant adults. The context and content of experiences can vary a lot between individuals, but the fact is that adults have experiences.

Adults have much experience in education. A good number of them have obtained more than one degree or other qualifications during their adult years. The

¹ This article has been written in close cooperation with all three authors. However, Irmeli Maunonen-Eskelinen has had the main responsibility for writing about adult learners at educational settings and examples of good practices in training vocational and further/higher education teachers to counsel immigrant adults; Pamela Clayton's main responsibility has been on writing about the challenges that overwhelming cultural diversity brings with it and introducing the two English examples of training immigrant adults with some essential comments; and Leena Kaikkonen has had the main responsibility for writing the introduction and conclusion as well as structuring the article in general with the bridging comments and discussions between different parts of the article.

need to educate oneself comes from the changes in society and working life, which demand new know-how and create new jobs and occupations, while at the same time old jobs disappear. Increasing lifelong learning opportunities in adult education also offer easier access to education for the adult population.

Immigrants often have difficulties finding adequate work related to their education. Accordingly, they search for alternative ways to become full members of society through educational possibilities. There are wide differences in educational experiences among immigrant adults. Education systems, educational thinking, the roles of teachers and students, levels of use of technology in education are just a few examples of differences between countries. The educational culture, which the adult immigrants have learnt, affects the students' actions in a new environment. The learners' prior socialisation to learning has to be taken into consideration (Lee & Sheared, 2002).

2. Adults have gained work experiences, which strengthen and deepen their knowledge, and professional and other skills. They have learnt how to manage in different kinds of work communities and environments.

3. Adults have life experiences, they have learnt to live and deal with different matters, joys and problems.

4. Adults are involved in many arenas of life at the same time. They have arenas of family, work, hobbies, studies and social activities and these all include different roles and responsibilities. The socio-cultural context of the learners' lives is something to take into account in the learning process (Swaminathan & Alfred, 2001).

5. Immigrant adults often have to study in their second, third or even fourth language. This fact has an impact on the educational process.

6. According to Knowles (1984) adult learners are in general autonomous, self-directed and goal-oriented. Immigrant adults quite often need a lot of support and guidance. In a new environment and new circumstances they have to relearn how to be autonomous and self-directed, how to find possibilities and through that how to set goals and to evaluate the relevance of different actions.

7. Adults need to be shown respect (Knowles 1984). Immigrant adults need to be treated as adults and as equals in experience and knowledge.

All of these matters bring several opportunities and resources into education and counselling and that is the way they are seen in our case. On the other hand, we are aware that these matters also present challenges that will have to be overcome during the educational process. Adult learning theories form a relevant and useful basis for counselling immigrant adults. We often first come across the lacks, limitations and incapability in terms of self-direction and autonomy but instead we have to base our cooperation on the strengths of the immigrant adults, like those of any other adult.

WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT ADULTS – FOUNDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

It has been highlighted that educators working with immigrants should have a multicultural perspective. What is meant by a multicultural perspective? Wurzel (1984) defines it as a critical and reflective understanding of oneself and others in historical and cultural contexts, an awareness of both differences and human similarities. For educators and counsellors, it means infusing practice with an awareness of their own personal and cultural background and experiences as well as those of their students or clients (Kerka 1992).

Kerka has formed five strategies, which synthesise approaches to multicultural education, career education and development from a number of sources. The strategies are related to the atmosphere of the learning environment, curriculum, bilingualism and the language used in teaching, teaching and counselling methods, and a balanced view of students as individuals and cultural group members. We agree with Kerka that the issues mentioned are relevant in multicultural education, but we want to stress those strategies that we have found essential in adult education and working with immigrant adults.

1. Educators establish a climate of acceptance (Kerka 1992). Students have to be able to be themselves in the group. Teaching with a multicultural perspective encourages appreciation and understanding of other cultures as well as one's own (Gomez 1991).

2. The promotion of a positive self-concept is essential. Seeing every student as a unique individual, with something to contribute, is an important strategy (Gomez 1991, Kerka 1992). The sense of progress and success is one of the support factors.

3. The group is an educational resource for all. Adults with very diverse backgrounds bring a lot of different knowledge, skills and views to the group. Multicultural adult groups are mixtures of different occupational fields, expertise, cultural backgrounds, languages and a wide spectrum of life experiences. It is valuable that the students learn to share their expertise and experiences.

4. Network building during education is one of the key strategies that promotes the establishment of relationships with working life and colleagues working in different organisations. The members of a diverse and multicultural student group are part of the network, which the students can turn to during the education and later on after their education. This is very important especially for immigrant adult students, who very often lack contacts, friends and relationships with surrounding communities and working life.

5. The curriculum is a kind of framework for the students. It is flexible and gives space to approach the wider issues from the students' own point of view, which is meaningful for each of the adult students and their professional development. It is extremely important to develop a curriculum that addresses the lived experiences and real concerns of the programme participants (Lee 2001). Lee also stresses that the underlying assumption is that if a curriculum is relevant to its participants and reflective of their needs, learners will be more motivated to participate. According to Gomez (1991) the appropriate curriculum for understanding diverse cultures is a multicultural curriculum. It promotes recognition, understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity and individual uniqueness. This curriculum is based on concepts such as cultural pluralism, intergroup understanding, and human relations. It is not restrictive or limited to a specific course, set of skills or time of year.

As a concluding remark it can be said that diversity is characteristic of adult education. There are big differences among adult learners in ages, occupations and educational backgrounds, working life and life experiences, worldviews, attitudes, values and present life situations. Free and easy mobility within Europe and the rest of the

world, in addition to war and oppression, increase immigrant populations. Furthermore, a paradigm shift has taken place in education: ideas of inclusive education emphasise that all kinds of students should have access to education, including different ethnic groups, people with disabilities, sexual minorities, etc. Thus, adult student groups have become increasingly diverse and multicultural.

Having raised some general aspects relating to adult learners, we shall now continue by providing a couple of specific examples how these challenges have been met within educational settings related to adult immigrant students at the university level education. Educational settings in UK cities have already faced the questions of a really diverse student population for a long time and no doubt the history of dealing with these questions has invented a magnitude of educational approaches. Therefore, Dr. Pamela Clayton enriches us with some of these good practices found within educational provisions in London.

BEST PRACTICES FROM CULTURALLY DIVERSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Overwhelming cultural diversity challenges

The following two examples are both from universities in London, a city with the most diverse population in the United Kingdom and hence where multicultural counselling offers great challenges. Potential service users could speak any one – or more – of any of the world's languages and follow any religion, or none; have proficiency in English ranging from zero to complete; be recent migrants or asylum-seekers or be born in the United Kingdom of parents from overseas; be men or women; be of any age from sixteen upwards; have any level of formal education from none to doctoral; have no work experience or extensive professional careers; and so on. In other words, stereotyped preconceptions of a given individual based on country or ethnic group of origin are unhelpful. At the same time, however, a working knowledge of other cultures and their similarities with and differences from British culture is essential in understanding the journey of an individual from one environment to being at ease in another. To support this transit requires some kind of map – but a very complex one which recognises that 'culture' itself is many-faceted and that within a single country layers of different cultural practices and beliefs co-exist, overlap or are in conflict.

One particular culture sphere is that of the university itself. British (or more specifically, English) universities on the whole can be seen (from inside and outside) as elitist, esoteric, dominated by white middle-class males, distant from 'real' work in the sense of not producing useful goods and services but incomprehensible knowledge, and distant from the people who live close by but are not a part of the university's sphere. Academics are presumed not to live in 'the real world' or to have 'real knowledge' (or 'really useful knowledge'); and whatever their mission statements might claim, universities are not seen as working for the good of society or even of the local community. These are stereotyped perceptions, of course, but as with all stereotypes there is at least a grain of truth in them, however distorted.

If the 'native' population sees the university as alien, how much more so do the many migrants for whom there are the additional barriers of language, accepted entry qualifications, finance and the general strangeness of being perceived as an 'outsider' with tenuous rights to the benefits open to citizens. The unapproachable image of the university is not, of course, shared by many international students or highly-qualified migrants who already have a university education or come from countries where university attendance is more 'normal' than it is in the United Kingdom.

There is an apparent gulf, nevertheless, not only between community organisations and the university but also between many migrants and the university; but one bridge into the university for 'ordinary people' is via adult and continuing education, which forms an accessible and acceptable interface between 'town and gown'. The education offered can range from short courses taken for interest to master's or doctoral degrees and may include access and pre-access courses for mature students who opt for academic preparation before entering degree courses. Such a department should have a guidance and counselling worker – and in a country with an increasingly diverse population, such a person should be skilled in multicultural counselling. The two case studies which follow are of universities which specialise in meeting some of the needs of an ethnically diverse population through such multicultural counselling, the first to support educational progress and the second to support labour market entry. Where the term 'integration' is used, it means being 'at ease' in the new country and does not mean assimilation.

The first example is from *The University of East London*. With campuses in Stratford, Barking and Docklands, it is ideally placed to offer multicultural counselling. London's population includes people from every part of the world, every religion and possibly every language group. Many of these live in the East End, where over

one hundred and fifty languages are spoken and where the majority of people in many areas are from ethnic minorities, whether born outside the country or in the United Kingdom to parents from outside. Indeed, the borough of Newham has the most diverse population in the United Kingdom. The University itself reflects this diversity in its activities, its staff and its student body. It offers the Africa Studies Centre, the Asian Women's Project, the African and Asian Visual Arts Archive, the Refugee Council Archive, the Refugee Studies Centre, the Centre for New Ethnicities Research, the East London Research Group, the Health for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees Portal (HARP WEB, in partnership with other agencies) and postgraduate degrees in refugee studies.

Its staff includes experts from a range of schools on racism, multiculturalism, human rights, migration issues, 'mixed-race' identity, multi-ethnicity, diasporas, race and community care, refugees and displaced people and migration; on bilingual children, multilingual families, multicultural education and trans-'racial' adoption and fostering; on African enterprise; and on Islamic law and feminism.

There are two aspects of the University of particular interest here. It offers counselling psychology training to a multicultural group of students by staff who are experts in multicultural counselling; and it offers multicultural counselling to individuals and groups of women, for example through programmes like New Directions².

Counselling activities include:

- an Immigration Advisory Service on all three campuses (drop-in or by appointment by phone or email); this is available not only to registered international students but also to prospective students, including asylum-seekers and refugees;
- information, advice and guidance on post-16 education in partnership with local communities and community organisations.

² I would like to thank Jasbir Panesar for introducing me to some of the women who completed one of these programmes and for much of the information on the counselling of migrant women, including that contained in *Migrant Women*, edited by Jasbir Panesar and Tony Wailey, published in 2004 by SoftNet Books.

The second example of good practice summarised here is the *Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU)*. It is located in London Metropolitan University, which is the largest unitary university in London with over 37,000 students. It has several sites, in the City and in North and East London. With students from nearly 150 countries, and located in areas of in-migration, both recent and historic, its research includes migration, integration and citizenship; social inclusion, ethnicity, access and participation in education; and human rights and social justice. Through its London SME Centre it focuses on business development and support in Black and Minority Ethnic businesses, Women Entrepreneurs and Social Enterprise organisations. As far as this paper is concerned, however, its most interesting aspect is RAGU.

The Unit was set up in 1995 for refugees and asylum-seekers arriving with higher-level and professional qualifications and seeking employment. The majority of forced migrants in the United Kingdom are well qualified but their chances of finding good-quality jobs are extremely low. The Unit aims to improve these chances through a number of measures.

For example, it works with London employers to find work placements for highly-qualified refugees. These placements are unpaid but they are supported and well-structured and, following preparatory workshops at RAGU, last for a minimum of three days a week for three to six months, thus allowing a useful depth of work experience. Another activity consists of a one-to-one advice and guidance service for highly-qualified refugees (and asylum-seekers with permission to work) who live in Greater London. This is a tailor-made programme which can last up to twenty-eight weeks and covers all the relevant aspects of seeking education, training and employment.

The RAGU team, headed by Azar Sheibani, comes from a range of ethnic and national backgrounds and the provision of a welcoming and empowering environment is one of its core values. It is not only the highly qualified whom it aims to help. It also supports and provides training for refugee community organisations and enables refugees to access higher education.

The focus of this short account, however, is a training course which leads to the Certificate of Professional Development and lasts six months. It is aimed at refugees and asylum-seekers with permission to work, who have, or had started, degrees from their own countries, or who wish to discover where their skills and abilities fit into the British labour market.

The methods used are the Assessment of Prior (Experiential) Learning in order to identify each individual's strengths and abilities and enhance self-confidence and self-esteem; targeted training; one-to-one guidance and advice; and continuing support in the quest to find appropriate education and employment.

At the heart of the APEL process are the value of the students' past experiences and the self-discovery of their existing skills and competencies. These are the foundation stones of the future employee or university student and over the course are written up into a portfolio of evidence that can be presented to employers or used to gain exemption from some university requirements or courses. On to these are added: personal development through the identification of further or more developed skills needed for employment or education; self and group awareness; improvement of communication and IT skills; labour market preparation; and cultural re-orientation to British systems and practices, including the higher education system and equal opportunities law, policy and practice. There is a combination of group and individual activities, with an individual advisor for each student and one-to-one tutorials for portfolio-writing.

THE ESSENCE OF MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING FOR MIGRANT WOMEN AND QUALIFIED REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

The scope will now be broadened after having focused on multicultural counselling with migrant women (whether forced or unforced migrants) and qualified refugees and asylum-seekers. All migrants risk a degree of fragmentation and disorientation in their lives: for women, the journey to be made might include some change in gender identity, if she is to take advantage of the relative freedom of women in Europe. Migrants come from a range of backgrounds in terms of class, wealth, education, religion, codes of behaviour, social activism and so on. It must be stressed, therefore, that the following points are general and it is hoped that the language used reflects this:

- *The metaphorical framework*

Migrants are travellers who may make many journeys before achieving their aims. Maps are essential, including a detailed map of the new country's institutions and structures. The counsellor's role is that of translator and travel guide. Whatever the

starting point on the journey, the goal is a person who can direct his/her own life and organise his/her own learning. Active citizenship is at the core of this goal and is the welcome sign at the gateway to integration. Family pressures are the biggest single impediment to women's travel and for many women, marriage is an important, and can be a difficult, transition on that journey. One useful route may involve collective action with other women.

- *Approach*

Empathic: students feel that their qualifications and experience are of value, and these feelings must be encouraged and supported - it is common, for example, for a refugee doctor to feel disheartened and disillusioned to learn that he/she cannot begin practising medicine again without overcoming difficult hurdles.

Practical: students need to learn that their qualifications, whatever their actual value, may not be accepted in the United Kingdom and that they may require further vocational education and training in communication skills; they also need to learn about the education and employment systems in the new country.

- *Practice*

The implications of the heterogeneity of migrants need to be taken into account, for example, in the handling of mixed groups and in the choice of counsellors and outreach workers. Women-only group sessions may be essential for some women and desirable for others. The starting point for counselling is the person's own experiences and knowledge, gained at different stages of the journey – he/she is not a blank slate. It is desirable for staff to have the same ethnic background as counselees, but where the population is very diverse this may not be practical in the short term – this has implications for the training and recruitment of counsellors. Accessibility is key – of location, of timing, of atmosphere, of support for childcare, of bilingual support. Even where a migrant speaks English, there may be occasions when he/she will benefit from communication in his/her language of origin.

- *Knowledge*

Inequalities, albeit perhaps of a different nature, exist at both ends of the journey, from, for example, sex discrimination in the country of origin to racist and sexist practices in the new country – the counsellor needs to understand the nature of

inequalities at different stages of the journey. Differences between groups even from the same country need to be understood thoroughly. In addition, knowledge of the educational systems and qualifications in the country of origin is essential for translation. Knowledge of the system for assessing overseas qualifications in relation to British awards and knowledge of the labour market is also needed.

- *Networking*

Close relations with employers and institutions of higher education are needed.

As a concluding remark on the examples of counselling immigrant adults as described above by Pamela Clayton it can be said that the growth in demands for equal educational rights for all inevitably strengthens also the demands for the development of all teachers' skills in order to meet the individual needs of diverse learners. With a new concentration on ideas such as the educational needs of immigrant students, there seems to be some uncertainty with regard to what the development of these skills might mean for all teachers and, accordingly, for teacher education.

Based on our own experiences as teacher trainers, prospective teachers or teachers involved in their in-service training often ask questions like how they should meet a student with special educational needs, how an adult student can benefit from previous experiences, or how to support the immigrant student's transition into society. Teachers face this kind of questions in their daily work and often want to find quick solutions for them. However, from the point of view of teacher education we would like to emphasise these questions not only from the point of view of practical solutions but also through wider or more in-depth thinking and additionally, considering how this kind of issues are dealt within teacher development programmes.

Consequently, our article continues with considerations by Ms. Irmeli Maunonen-Eskelinen about facing the questions related to diversity and especially immigrant adults within teacher education in Finland, a country which cannot truly be claimed to be a real multicultural society. Accordingly, the issues that teachers face with multicultural students on a daily basis are quite different from those of their London colleagues and as described above by Pamela Clayton.

Through her examples Irmeli Maunonen-Eskelinen claims that improvement of teacher education programmes can help teacher trainees to meet these challenges. She provides us with some examples of these improvements. She emphasises especially the use of the Personal Learning Plan (PLP) and counselling discussions while using them

in training vocational and further/higher education teachers at Jyväskylä Polytechnic in Finland. PLP and counselling discussions are both based on, for example, current constructivist educational theories, on ideas about shared knowledge and expertise and on respecting adult learners. However, their usage also provides teacher trainees with the practical experience of being counselled themselves, which enables them better to counsel their own students in the future.

TRAINING VOCATIONAL, FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS TO COUNSEL IMMIGRANT ADULTS

When discussing what counselling is, how it is implemented and what the key principles are, we have to keep in mind that it is only one element of the learning environment as a whole, but an important one nonetheless. Counselling arises from the educational thinking, philosophy and theories that become visible through the curriculum, teaching strategies and methods, facilitation practices and support factors of learning as well as the learning atmosphere. In this article we approach counselling from the immigrant adults' point of view, using the Finnish experiences of Jyväskylä Polytechnic, Vocational Teacher Education College, which have been acquired over more than ten years of teaching and working with immigrant adult students training to become teachers. In the following example we highlight a few foundations and principles behind the everyday practice of training teachers and introduce the Personal Learning Plan (PLP)³ as a tool in counselling. In this context, counselling is considered as a normal part of teachers' work, a way of facilitating students' learning, and as an element of the students' learning process. It is worth emphasising that even though the following example is from teacher education, we prefer to focus more on the usage of PLP as a suitable tool also for other students. Therefore, instead of speaking about teacher trainees, we just talk about students.

³ PLP has been used as a tool in teacher training in Jyväskylä Vocational Teacher Education College since the beginning of the 1990s. It was first introduced within an experiment of training teachers for adult education (see; Mutka & Rousi 1992) but was soon transferred to all vocational teacher education (see; Rousi & Mutka 1994; Laitinen 1994) including training of teachers working with students with special needs or adults with severe learning difficulties (see; Kaikkonen 2003) and immigrant adults studying in internationally oriented teacher education, the last one being the basis of the example described in this article.

The Personal Learning Plan as a tool of counselling

How can the diversity of the students, in addition to their different needs and strengths, be taken into account in education? What are the arrangements, strategies and tools in multicultural teaching and counselling? We would like to stress that working with multicultural groups requires a wide range of methods from educators (in this article we introduce only one tool) that have been successfully used in teacher education in Finland with multicultural groups. The starting point is that the teacher has to be able to make a class a community and involve the learners in thinking about what they want and need to learn (Lee & Sheared 2002). Lee & Sheared argue that in so doing the teacher can begin to capitalise on both the formal and informal learning arrangements that affect students' learning and academic achievement.

In the following paragraphs we will describe the nature and aims of the Personal Learning Plan. The Personal Learning Plan (PLP) is a plan concerning the content and form of studies: how each student can reach the aims of the education, taking into account their starting point. From the very beginning of the studies the intention is to explore those issues through which the student constructs the contents of his/her own studies. Drawing up a PLP is based on continuous and active reflection on and assessment of the goals of education set. The aim of the PLP is to analyse and follow up the individual progress of the student's studies.

At the beginning of their studies the aim of the PLP is for the students to outline the paths of their professional growth and become more aware of the roads taken by analysing their background: what kinds of professional and educational phases the students have had in their life and how they have moved on through them to this education. Simultaneous with this aspect of looking back, the PLP includes a strong future perspective. The intention of initially mapping out one's professional growth is to guide the students into analysing those skills, knowledge and attitudes that they have already learnt during different phases of their life and to find new learning challenges in the context of this education (Rousi & Mutka 1994, 13).

It is important that through the PLP students analyse what they have learnt during their life, which competencies they have gained, what views they have developed and get support for their self-esteem accordingly. The other important side of the PLP is the future building aspect: the contents of education, learning methods and assignments have to be defined from the point of view of working life. Thus, the opportunities, demands and requirements of working life are present in the PLP

process. The core idea of the PLP is to help the students to increase their awareness of their knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes and interests, and also increase awareness of working life opportunities and demands, and to work on a concrete plan to meet these demands through education (Laitinen 1994, 12–17).

The Personal Learning Plan includes three parts: 1) the student's study orientation, 2) the content issues of the education and 3) a concrete plan of studies. It is essential that students start to work on the PLP right at the beginning of their studies. The following questions help the students to get started in defining their study orientation:

- What phases of my educational and professional career have been especially meaningful and given direction from my development point of view? Why? What phases have been especially problematic and stifling? Why?
- What are my motives concerning this education?
- What are the most important goals in my professional development? Why?
- What are my strengths as well as developmental needs and challenges as a professional?
- What are my personal goals in this education? How can I reach them? What are my expectations? What am I, myself, ready to contribute in order to reach the goals?
- What matters will I resist during this education process? Why?
- What is my view of the educator's role and my own role as a student during the educational process?
- How suitable are the methods of the educational process (for example technology integrated learning, group working) and the implementation of self-directed learning for me, and what do they demand from me? (Mutka & Rousi 1992; Rousi & Mutka 1994, 15; see also Kaikkonen 2003; 74–75)

Multicultural education begins with the premise that students must see themselves reflected in the curriculum and must see the potential for themselves in the field in question or various fields (Iowa Department of Public Instruction 1986). Making the PLP means commitment to the educational process and to one's own professional development.

Although the PLP is an individual tool for the students, they have to include their multicultural group as a resource in their learning plans. The great diversity of stu-

dents' groups highlights the need for understanding and accepting the differences among all people. A multicultural group offers an excellent cultural learning arena for the students. In the PLP, multicultural experience is part of the learning process.

Counselling discussions in using Personal Learning Plans

The PLP is a tool of continuous dialogue between educators and students. The dialogue starts on the very first day of the course and ends when the course is finished. The counselling discussions are based on the idea of shared expertise: both the teacher and the adult learner are experts (Vänskä 2000, 2002). The expertise of the teacher is that s/he is an expert in the learning process – for the learner's own part he/she is the expert on his/her life situation and context. During the counselling discussion the use of both sets of expertise becomes possible. For the educator a PLP provides much information. The role of the educator is to bring up questions and to ask the students to clarify, deepen and reconstruct their PLPs during their studies. The educator helps the students to widen their views, see alternatives and possibilities and solve problems. The educator also helps the students to recognise their progress and successes.

Vänskä (2000, 2002) has developed a counselling discussion model that allows the implementation of the idea of shared expertise. The model aims to analyse teachers' or counsellors' action in terms of learners' learning process and its different phases.

In the model (Figure 1) there are two basic dimensions: 1) On the one hand, a teacher's or a counsellor's action is considered in terms of his/her background thinking about counselling, and 2) on the other hand, it considers the intention of the counselling discussion – i.e., the purpose of discussion is to orientate the student's context or to contribute to it. The teacher's or the counsellor's ways of counselling are viewed from the point of view of charting, inquiring into the relationships between different parts of the chart, reconstructing and supporting transformation possibilities.

The progress of the counselling discussion and the selection of counselling methods depend to a great extent on the concept of learning and, through that, the concept of counselling that a teacher or a counsellor commits him/herself to. At opposing ends of the spectrum of learning lies the constructivist and behaviourist concept of learning. The dimension of counselling contains empowerment at the one end and the traditional approach at the other.

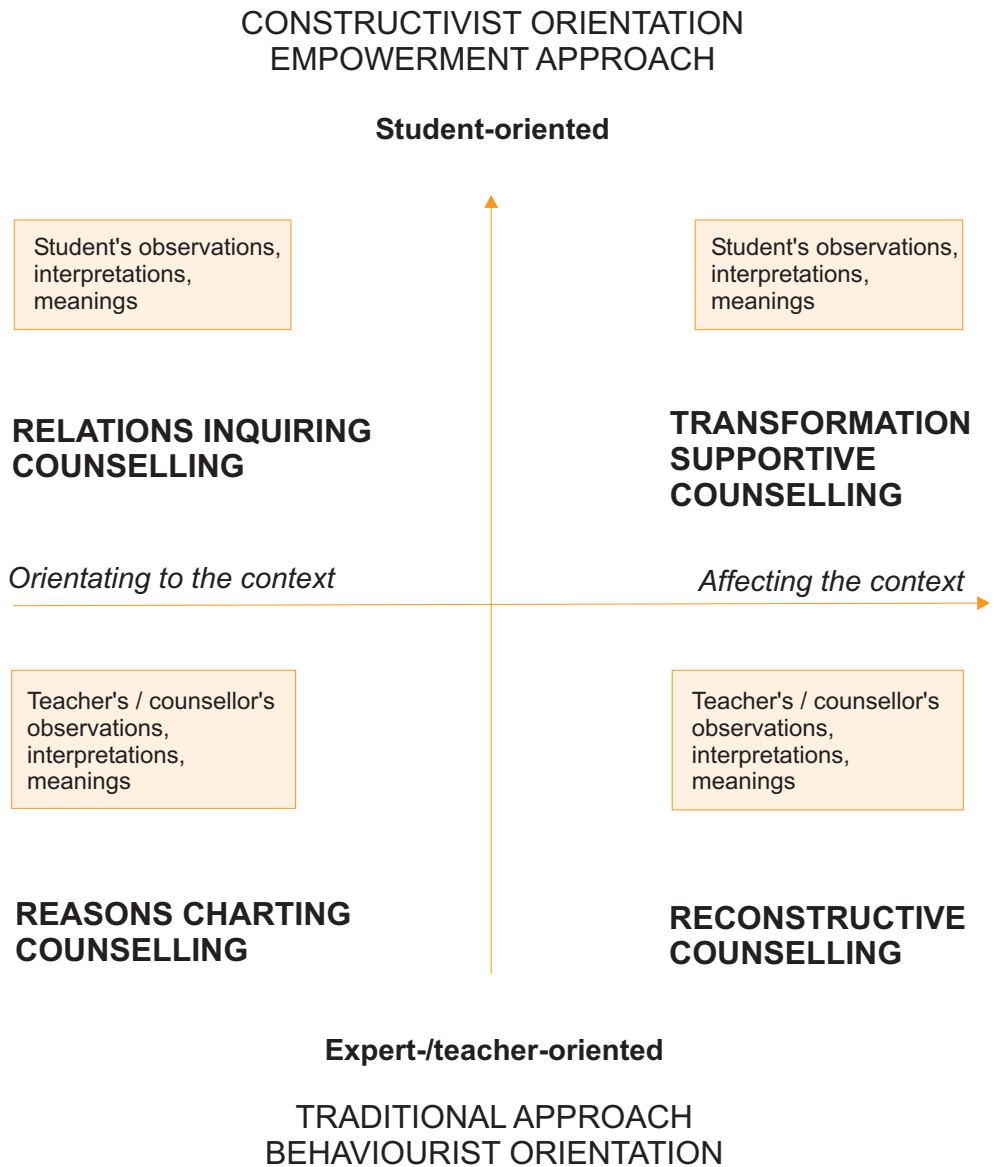


Figure 1. Shared expertise enabling counselling model (Vänskä 2000, 2002)

The counselling discussion starts with orientation to the student's life context. The teacher or the counsellor becomes acquainted with the learner's thinking, language and everyday life. The teacher listens to the learner's story, history, the themes, questions and viewpoints that the learner wants to bring up in the discussion. The aim of active listening is to find a common language and develop a mutual counselling reality as much as possible, in addition to building up a confidential and respectful atmosphere and helping the student to engage in the counselling process.

Orientation to the student context could be either expert-oriented or student-oriented. In the expert-oriented way of working the teacher brings up his/her own interpretations and observation of the learner's reality, and the counselling situation continues from the basis of meanings defined by the expert, i.e. the teacher. In student-oriented counselling, the learners provide their own meanings for their reality and the ways they work, as well as clarifying, analysing and questioning their actions. The discussion continues from the learner in a student-oriented manner.

If the aim of the counselling is to affect the student's context, the teacher or the counsellor can choose as the basis of their counselling thinking to employ either a reconstructive counselling approach to the student's context or supportive counselling of a learner's transformation. When the teacher chooses a method, at the same time he/she chooses whether he/she supports the learner's autonomy or dependence. In reconstructive counselling the teacher acts as an expert giving information, advice, models, alternative courses of action and instructions on the basis of interpretations and observations formed during the discussion. In transformation-supportive counselling the shared expertise is emphasised: the teacher acts together with the learner, activating the reflexive thinking and action of the learner. Together with the expert (the teacher), the learner creates new meanings, new possible ways of action and discusses the applicability of them to his/her own reality. The meanings, interpretations and understanding given by the learner for his/her own actions are essential in the discussion. The learner is truly concerned in the decision-making process and action related to him/her. This way of counselling requires of the teacher an empowerment approach and a constructive view of counselling.

CONCLUSIONS

With these few examples we have tried to show that Europe is very diverse in its ways of meeting and living with multiculturalism. There are big differences from one country to another, between separate areas within a country and even within neighbouring districts of the same town or city. We have countries that are not only richer in their population in general but are also really multicultural, and indeed small countries with very large proportions of immigrants. In contrast, there are countries with smaller populations and only a small number of immigrant citizens. There are also countries which do not have so many immigrants but whose population consists of several ethnic groups. Accordingly, educational settings within these diverse areas face different challenges related to the provision of education and training for multicultural students. These settings are themselves at a different stage of development with regard to the needs of multicultural students from the point of view of their history and the skills and experience of their staff.

Additionally, when talking about multicultural counselling, it is worth emphasising that European countries and their educational settings not only differ in their 'stages' of being multicultural but also the question of counselling itself varies from country to country. There are countries where the questions of counselling with its wide dimensions have been included in educational policy and theory and have also been adapted to educational structures and daily practices, as might be interpreted from the examples provided earlier in this text. On the other hand, there are countries where these kinds of structures are yet to be developed. It is not worth trying to evaluate which of the countries, areas or individual schools might be 'on the top' in this process. More likely, we should carefully reflect on what we can learn from the many diverse ways of meeting the challenge of counselling multicultural adult students. In addition and most inevitably, we will be faced with issues of developing our educational settings as organisations to better respond to these questions.

For an individual teacher the challenge is to understand the needs of learners and to combine this knowledge with his/her teaching. Organising one's own teaching to meet the diverse needs of adult students profoundly challenges teachers' professional skills. This refers not only to pedagogical skills but also to the skills related to the content of what he/she is teaching, be it mathematics, language, carpentry, cookery or high technology. However, in the case of the learners from a multicultural background, our mind might be bound in such a way that it prevents us from

seeing beyond the ethnic issues. To take a more holistic approach to educating and training our immigrant adult students might lead us – or even force us – to rethink the entire function of our own work as teachers as well as the practices of our school or university.

Building this type of courage and skills for teachers should be one of the basic foundations of pre- and in-service teacher training programmes. There are no ready solutions for the education of multicultural students. As teachers we are facing the lifelong task of considering the most reasonable goals for learning and teaching. The basic question, however, is about human life and learning. The way in which we understand learning also opens up goals for ourselves and requires that we consider the ways in which these may be achieved.

The changes towards improvements in the quality of life for immigrant adults start primarily from the changes occurring in their environment. The starting point is to change the attitudes of those working with immigrant students. This forces us to consider at least two things. Firstly, we need to find and develop working methods (such as those described in the examples in this article) to better realise immigrant students' strengths and opportunities for learning and find clear aims and methods for reaching these. For this the teacher must have the sensitivity to detect the individual needs of someone who might be dependent upon them. The challenge for teachers in developing their own practice is targeted largely on gaining more personal understanding. To learn to acquire more autonomy is a lifetime challenge both to immigrant students and to those who are teaching and counselling them. Secondly, and maybe even more importantly, we must place more emphasis on how we organise learning processes. The big issue is how to build developmentally oriented networks and learning arenas so that they support, not only individual learners or immigrant adults to learn but, all partners of these processes to share expertise, learn new skills and also improve their thinking and attitudes.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

The following questions can be discussed in pairs and/or small groups after having read the article above.

- 1) Imagine you are a refugee or a migrant who has just arrived in a new country. You can speak the language well enough to communicate with a guidance counsellor. You want to be able to get a job when possible. What do you need to know?
- 2) Imagine you are a guidance counsellor and a refugee or migrant has just walked into your office. S/he speaks your language well enough to communicate, and wants to get a job when possible. What do you need to know in order to be able to give the best guidance?
- 3) Imagine you are a trainer in vocational guidance and counselling. You are developing a course in guidance for refugees and migrants. What activities will you design for your students?

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USEFUL WEBSITES

Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit, London Metropolitan University:

www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu/home.cfm

University of East London:

www.uel.ac.uk

The Equal Development Partnership 'Asset UK':

www.asset-uk.org.uk

Mainstreaming vocational guidance for refugees and migrants:

www.gla.ac.uk/rg (in progress)

Development of European Concepts Concerning the Qualifications and Competences of Women Immigrants Useful for their Vocational Training:

www.gate-hh.de

Vocational teacher education in Jyväskylä, Finland:

<http://www.vte.fi/eng/teach/teach.html>



Ritva Johansson, Tarja Ståhl & Kai Koivumäki

A sosiodynamic approach to crosscultural career counselling

This article will focus on describing and analysing some experiences that the authors have had when applying sociodynamic counselling methods in a crosscultural context, e.g. when the client and counsellor represent different cultural backgrounds. The case of Juan¹ comes from Sweden and the case of group counselling for immigrants from Finland. Both cases deal with the issue of career counselling for adult unemployed immigrants who are trying to find their pathways to the labour market in their new home countries. The authors of this article belong to the international network for sociodynamic counselling that was created during Vance Peavy's lifetime and that, also after his death in 2002, has been organising seminars and meetings to maintain and further develop Dr. Peavy's work.

WHAT IS SOCIODYNAMIC COUNSELLING ?

R. Vance Peavy was born in Colorado, USA, in 1929 and he got his Ph.D. degree at the University of Oregon. In 1967 he emigrated to Canada and became a professor in counselling at the University of Victoria. He wrote several books and was a beloved lecturer in Scandinavia and in the Baltic countries, Europe and Australia. Sociodynamic counselling has its roots in the constructivist family of theories. It emphasises more the rights and resources of the client than the culturally and socially bound expertise of the counsellor. In constructivist theories every human being is believed to have his own concept of reality and the purpose of the counselling process is to study this concept together. The focus for the counselling dialogue are the interpre-

¹ Name is changed

tations of this reality - made both by the client and the counsellor. The counsellor brings in new perspectives concerning the subjects that are discussed during the counselling but the client alone makes the final decisions concerning his career and takes the consequences of them (Peavy 1999).

The introductory guidelines for sociodynamic counselling are the following (Peavy 2000):

1. Counselling is primarily a learning process; both counsellor and help seeker must be open to learning and change in order for counselling to be effective.
2. People learn ideas and skills best when they participate actively and in a meaningful way in the learning process. Participation and learning are best when “guided”, not imposed. This is the constructivist “learning by doing” principle.
3. Counselling, including career, employment, vocational, and work assistance counselling is defined as a general method of life planning. “Planning” includes helping others to clarify, develop, and organise their ideas about capacities, life activities and preferred futures so that they can move toward goals which they value.
4. The most powerful tools for counsellors to use in helping others build more successful lives and achieve chosen goals are the tools of language/communication. This includes words, meanings, conversation, metaphors, symbols, models, stories, and mapping. Communication is used to construct the counselling process, make decisions, and to create and revise self-identities.
5. Counselling is a capacity building process. In the counselling meeting, counsellor and help seeker build their conversation around dimensions of the questions: “How do I wish to live my life”? “Which capacities do I need?” For example:
 - a. What ideas/data do I need to move forward toward a goal I value?
 - b. What skills do I need if I am to find a place of meaning in society?
 - c. Which values and attitudes serve me best?
 - d. What are my possible futures?
 - e. Can I see myself as a “project under construction”?
 - f. How can I better understand and interact with my context?
 - g. What limits do I face? Can I overcome them? How?
 - h. Am I taking a self-responsible position?

The basis for counselling is the *relation* between the individual and society. Selves and personal identities are created in communication between the individual and society.

They are constructed out of stories, meanings and practices. Thus, it is important to include in discussion also the client's activities and everyday routines. Human activity is basically social and cannot be studied separately from the environmental framework. With reference to the integration of immigrants in their new home countries, this implies at least two factors for careers counselling. Firstly, one should understand what kind of internalised ideas, attitudes and values concerning working life and professional competencies the client has got from his former home country. Secondly, one should discuss potential activities and new ways of social communication that could give the immigrant opportunities to construct new ideas about his career in the future. Communication – in the form of speaking and listening, visualising, and writing and reading – make up the principal “cultural tools” for constructing selves, meaning, and social life. Sociodynamic counselling is organised around the principle of “self creation.” Self, relationships and society are viewed as co-constructed and thus also a counselling process using sociodynamic methods is an example of conscious co-construction.

CASE 1: LIFE SPACE MAPPING WITH JUAN

Tarja Ståhl & Ritva Johansson

This case of life space mapping comes from Sweden. To achieve an integration it is of great importance that newly arrived people find their place in society as soon as possible. Educational and working life guidance plays an important part in this work. Both authors have had difficulties in their everyday work guiding people with very limited knowledge of the Swedish language. There are a number of methods for guidance, but when it comes to helping people who know only a little Swedish, the usual methods are often only confusing for the help seeker. Also, *career counsellor* is a totally new concept to many immigrants. Working life in Sweden may look very different from working life in the client's former culture. The new society imposes demands and expectations on the client that are not always clearly stated and many things might feel difficult to grasp. One should, by all means, try to make things more concrete, lucid and manageable for the help seeker. To get to the core of the problem, visualisation – especially drawing and writing – during the conversation has been used to overcome language barriers and increase understanding between the

counsellor and the help seeker. In the following the case of Juan, who was one of the clients participating in a larger research project, will be presented.

Description of the method

A research method where the conversations were videotaped and then watched and analysed both by the counsellor and the help seeker has been used. The purpose was to find out how the guidance was experienced and what the client and the counsellor felt during the guidance conversation. Vance Peavy's method "Life space mapping" was applied. The original mapping technique can be examined in two films where Peavy himself plays the part of a career counsellor and illustrates the method: two circles are drawn on a large paper with one of them representing the "present situation" and the other "future possibilities". These two round spaces are combined with a bridge (or a ladder), which represents the steps that the client needs to take before he/she can reach the potential goals. The first two trials with clients gave the authors the impression that something was missing in the visualisations. After some consideration and thinking, a third circle was added to the left of the circle representing the present. The third circle represents the past (see figure 1 below).

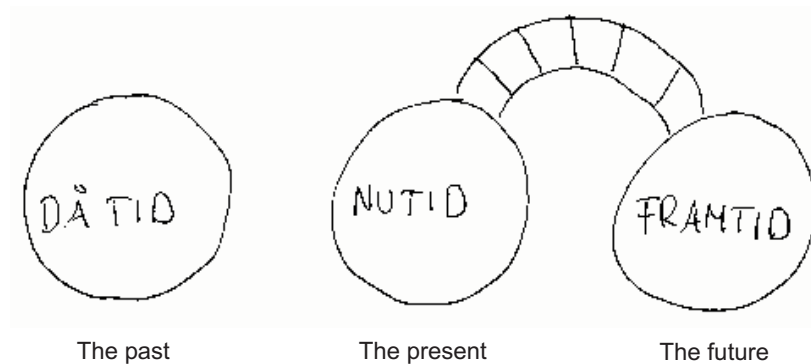


Figure 1. The three circles of Life Space mapping

Description of Life Space Mapping

Life Space Mapping is a visual representation of significant phenomena in the life of the individual. Mapping is an important tool in sociodynamic counselling. The counsellor cooperates with the help seeker to examine his/her situation and looks into his/her dreams of the future and the potential ways to fulfil the dreams. Mapping is a joint activity in which the participants guide each other. Together the helper and the help seeker visualise the help seeker's present situation. Further, they jointly construct possible futures and plans for how the help seeker can move toward preferred futures (Peavy 2000).

The mapping technique implements important sociodynamic principles such as:

- **Cooperation:** The counsellor and the help seeker examine the help seeker's situation together. Both contribute to the process.
- **Language** is used as a means of communication and different interpretations of the phenomena are examined.
- **Communication through Dialogue:** The counsellor's initial state of "not knowing" means that he/she lets the client educate him/her and he/she gives the impression that he/she is genuinely interested in the other person's life as a fellow-being.
- **Clarifying Questions** bring the help seeker's experiences and interpretations of matters to light. For example: "What attracts you about being a singer?" or "When you think about continuing your studies for several years ahead, how does it feel?"
- **Comprehensive Thinking:** The circles represent the life contents of the individual. Everything could be included here but you will have to make a selection and only include what is relevant to the subject of discussion.
- **Metaphorical Thinking:** The circles are visualised symbols of actual phenomena in the life of the individual. The counsellor may, whenever suitable, ask the help seeker to describe something metaphorically.
- **The Equalized Relationship:** Both persons' knowledge is equally important for a successful result.
- **The Different Expert Roles:** Counsellor – help seeker conversation is a meeting, an experience that both persons share, participate in and experience to-

gether, though in different ways as different individuals. The counsellor creates a structure of communication and guides the other in the process of solving problems. The help seeker guides the counsellor in his/her own life experiences.

- **Active Participation of the Help Seeker:** The help seeker's interpretation of the situation and his/her experiences appear in the guidance session. The contents of the discussion become concrete and linger on what is really important, i.e. the help seeker's situation.
- **Meaning Making:** The different ways to describe reality (speaking, writing and visualising) facilitate understanding of what personal meaning things have for the individual and how these affect each other. Furthermore, Peavy believes that mapping helps us grasp complexity. It makes our experience visible and shows connections.

Counselling discussion with Juan

Juan moved from Spain to Sweden about two years ago. He was nearly 30 years old, single and he lived with his brother. Juan participated in the research after seeing the authors at the SFI-school (Swedish For Immigrants) that they visited to find persons for this research project. He knew that he would get some help from the counsellors to plan his future. He was also aware of the fact that the meetings would be recorded. He had one earlier experience of career guidance from the SFI-school where he had met the career counsellor once to plan his education there. Juan spoke informal Swedish quite well and he was studying Swedish for the last term of compulsory school level.

The conversation began by charting his present situation. The counsellor asked him to bring to light persons and events that were important to him right now. He told about his brother's family that lived in Sweden and drew the family members on the paper. He was brief but spoke very fondly of them. He explained that he moved to Sweden, because he believed in a better future here after becoming unemployed in his home country. He also brought up friends who were very important to him. He mentioned a friend of his who is a native Swede. He told about his brother's company where he sometimes helped out. This led us to his profession: he was an electrician by education. That was the transition to the "past circle". Juan talked about the education, which was not really what he wanted, but more like a practical

solution for him and his parents. What he really wanted was to become a telecommunication-technician, but that was not possible for him at the time. Lingered in the past, he continued to tell us that he played the tuba for 8 years in the local orchestra, and that meant a lot to him. A large part of his social life revolved around playing with all the friends and trips he had made. His relationship to friends was totally different in Sweden from what it was in Spain, he reckoned. In the little village where he lived, everyone knew each other and contacts with people felt more natural. "You always met a friend when you went out".

He went on to describe his family in Spain and then drew a circle while presenting them with the warmest words. It became clear to him that everyone in his family had moved at least once and that moving was almost second nature to them. Most of his friends had moved from the village as well. It therefore felt natural for him to move to Sweden when his brother suggested it to him. He told about his jobs in Spain and how he felt very uncomfortable with them. One of the jobs had been quite dangerous, involving powerful electricity (high-voltage as he said) and the other one was very stressful. For both job positions he was employed as an electrician.

But what he missed the most about his home country was the orchestral work and his friends. Juan returned to evaluating the present and he talked about friends in Sweden. All of his new friends were Spanish, apart from a Swedish girl he mentioned earlier. His relationship to this Swedish girl has been complicated, he said, because it has been difficult to communicate with her. "Maybe she has too much education, because I cannot understand what she says." He observed that this might be a language issue. Another thing was that he felt that their friendship was genuinely based on her wanting to help him and that she wanted to know him just because he was Spanish. He expressed the feeling that he could not really be himself in her company. The counsellor asked him why it was so important for him to gain Swedish friends. He replied that it was because of the language, and because he was interested in knowing how the Swedes think.

Another important aspect in his life was the school where he studied Swedish, though right now he was on sick-leave due to an injured hand. It was brought to light that he also had a job as a night time paperman. He did not enjoy the fact that his leisure hours were detrimentally affected by this job, but it brought in money. When asked what he wanted to do in the future, Juan answered that he would like to start his own company, repairing electric wires. The work would be largely similar to what he had done in Spain (he points at the picture). When asked why he would

consider a job that he so disliked before, he replied that it earned good money and that it felt more important to him than being comfortable at work. The problem was that he did not really know how to enter that kind of business in Sweden. If he could choose whichever job he preferred, he would be a professional tuba player. When the counsellor pointed at the old ambition to work in telecommunications, he answered that it was not his present interest as he was not keen to study anymore. “Before I had no money, but now I’ve got enough to buy clothes and go out and stuff.”

When asked what he will be doing in four years, there was first a long silence. Then he said that he would probably move. “I need the sun, “ he says, “but I like the snow as well ...” he shrugged. Furthermore, he said that he would like to continue his education at Komvux, in Tumba, and continue meeting people. “I study and maybe the information will come along later”. Suddenly, Juan remembered something important. It is his invention that he has developed a long time ago. It is a device that creates electricity. He drew the machine and explained briefly how it worked. He called it the “Ampere amplifier”. He drew the device in the circle and his thoughts were also led to the future. He explained that he wished to have a family and children in the future, but first he would have to get a girlfriend.

At this point the counsellor drew the bridge with the ladder to the future and at the same time she explained this to Juan. They discussed how the stairs should look. In the first set of stairs they wrote a girlfriend, then tuba playing as a second. Juan is asked to find out where he could be able to play the tuba in Stockholm. In the third set of stairs is Komvux, adult education. He was encouraged by the counsellor to join a body of students where he could meet and get to know new people and participate in the various activities. He was also encouraged to contact the career counsellor at Komvux and discuss his further studies. Step four was to continue to refine his invention and investigate the possibility of starting his own business. The last step said that he should gather more information about the other options for his future career (see figure 2).

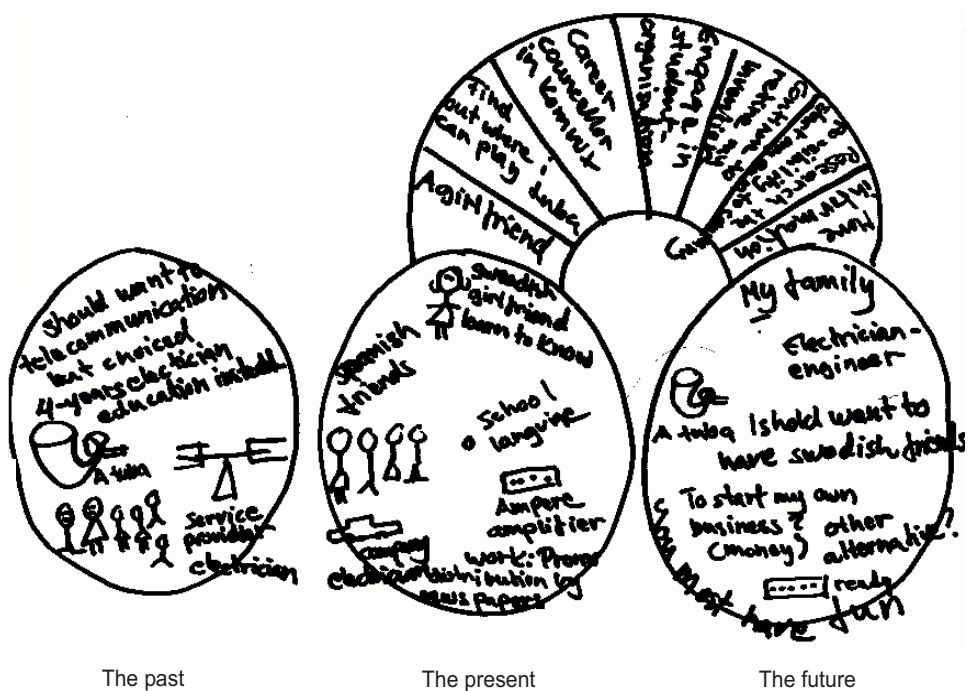


Figure 2. Juan's three circles

Interview with Juan

Juan felt that the conversation was something positive and meaningful. It was a new concept for him to write and draw this way. He felt that he was better in touch with his future this way. "I have gone through this in my mind, but never expressed or mapped it before, it was very helpful to see it in front of me." Compared with his earlier contacts with counsellors he felt this was different and definitely more rewarding. "You suddenly remember things like family and playing music and other positive things and it helps you not to exclude anything that might otherwise be forgotten." According to Juan, all the important things had been included. He also felt that it was easy to grasp and follow the conversation. The use of pen and paper made it easier for him to think. "You get closer when you're able to see it." He felt that everything

became clearer. “You can see yourself and what you are up to and what you want to become and what you want in the future. Concerning the bridge with stairs, Juan comments that it inspired him to a new kind of thoughts, like the possibility to once again take up the tuba and the possibility of obtaining more information.

Concerning the relationship with the counsellor Juan said that it was easy to talk to her. She felt more like a friend. He explained that he normally has a problem with talking to strangers about personal things, but this was quite easy. Another thing that made him open-up according to him was her professional attitude. When asked what he planned to do now and in the future, he replied that, if he was going to stay in Sweden he would continue his studies and do all those things he spoke about with the counsellor. After a recent trip to Spain, however, the thought of moving back has rooted in his mind. His last comment was: “Life changes every five minutes.”

Interview with the counsellor

The counsellor was happy with the mapping conversation. She felt they had connected well. Juan was drawing and writing quite unimpededly. She felt that they had gone through areas like sparetime activity, studies, work but also other things that felt significant to Juan. Because Juan was so verbal and open, the visualisation had helped him to bring structure to the conversation. The guidance counsellor felt that it was natural to use this method with Juan, and she also thought that without the visualisation some important aspects might have been forgotten, like the tuba playing. She also felt that the method increased their understanding of each other’s language and the advantage of her being able to point at things she wanted to know more about.

Observations

The fact that the third circle would so clearly represent the help seeker’s home country was a new experience. It became natural to talk about and observe the differences and similarities between the new country and the home country. Many people brought up cultural differences but also differences between countryside and city, among others. According to Peavy the counsellor should take an open and interested position towards the help seeker’s culture. Both the counsellor and the help seeker felt that they had a good connection. The conversation was a display of mutual respect and openness. Both were active and contributed to the discussion. The help seeker

told his story and the counsellor contributed with her knowledge and experience to the discussion when she could.

For Juan it felt natural to use pen and paper, but the method might not be as suitable for everyone, and of course that has to be respected. It might feel new and unnatural for the counsellor to use a guidance method that includes the whole life situation and life experiences of the individual instead of just concentrating on certain areas like past jobs and/or education. This has to do with how the counsellor looks on his/her professional role. The authors' experience is that this method activates both the help seeker and the counsellor. It also contributes to increased understanding and enriches the guidance process significantly. Juan's last statement about the variability of life says a lot about the true nature of counselling. We never know where the future will take us – not even the immediate future – but if we can find a tool to deal with reality and become aware of the fact that life has many possible routes that we can actively choose from, we have come a long way.

CASE 2: GROUP COUNSELLING FOR HIGHLY EDUCATED IMMIGRANTS

Kai Koivumäki

The experiences that will be reported in the following were gathered in a research project that was completed in Finland during the years 2002–2003. It was an action research study where the researchers were at the same time counsellors and researchers. One of the aims of the group counselling was to make the participants more conscious of their professional competency, to support their professional identity and thus enhance their participation in working life. The sociodynamic method has been applied in individual counselling in Finland and the counsellor-researchers were interested to see if the method could also be used in group counselling. There were altogether four (4) counselling groups organised: in Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Tampere and Lahti. The majority of the participants were Russian-speaking but for example in Helsinki the group consisted of 7 different nationalities. The project team elaborated a preliminary programme that was common to all groups. It consisted of the following phases: 1) Goals of the group counselling, 2) Analysing and mapping of participants' life and career, 3) Analysing the current career options for the participants, 4) Career planning, and 5) Follow-up.

How was the sociodynamic method understood?

According to Vance Peavy (Peavy 1999) sociodynamic counselling can be defined by three words: *imagine, hope, act*. These were the three words that were also in our minds when planning the group programme. We tried to gain understanding about the participants' lives by listening to their *ideas and attitudes about working life*, their *wishes and hopes* concerning the future and what they *actually did* in reality to gain their goals. Discussion was the main method that was used in the groups, but in addition a wide range of different kinds of homework, exercises and mappings were also used. In the following some examples will be presented.

Getting to know each other

One of the exercises used in the beginning of the counselling process was *the World Map*. An imaginative world map was created on the floor and all the participants placed themselves on the spot where they had been born. Everybody presented him/herself by telling his/her name and some facts that they were proud of concerning the geographical place they came from. The answers had to do with nature, climate, food, culture, etc. Then followed *an Interview in pairs*: everybody interviewed his/her partner and then presented him/her to the rest of the group. The questions could be anything about the family, moving to Finland, work, hobbies, etc. In one of the groups they used an exercise called *The House I Was Born In*. Everybody could think about their childhood home and tell some facts about it to the others. Especially this exercise made the participants tell long and emotional stories about their backgrounds and the group leaders had difficulties in keeping to the time limits. The group ended up by talking philosophically about the meaning of leaving one's original environment. The idea of these exercises was to offer an opportunity for the participants to tell something personal about their former home countries. All the exercises functioned well, they made the atmosphere relaxed and created a trustfulness in the room in spite of the video cameras. Plenty of time was used to get to know each other. According to this group's counselling experience the exercises motivate the participants to integrate themselves into the group and thus encourage the individuals to concentrate on the main goals of the group.

My Life

Even though the main goal for the counselling was to clarify the professional goals and enhance the professional development of the help seekers, the discussions in the groups were not only restricted to the labour market and educational issues. Vance Peavy talks about the human being as a whole, work is only one part the person's life space and the other parts (hobbies, family, etc.) can contribute much more to the general well-being of the person. A wide approach to the life space often provides a framework for the professional dimensions in life as well. In one group the life space exercise, as described also in the Swedish example, was applied (Peavy 2001, 45–49). The group members could draw, write or express in another way their life space on paper: work, studies, family, hobbies, etc. One group member described his experiences during the exercise: *"This task showed me how relative everything is – hobbies have become the centre point in my life and have helped me keep myself together even if I don't have a job. I have never thought visually, it sure helps you understand your life."*

Another exercise that was tried was *the Life Line* (Peavy 2001, 51). This was given as a homework task for the next meeting. Everybody could freely illustrate on paper his/her life from the birth till today on paper. The group members were, though, asked to concentrate on critical turning points in their lives concerning their careers: school starts and changes, choosing the career, occupational crises, working experience, etc. They were as well asked to tell about the process of moving to Finland and about the cultural differences they possibly confronted during that process. Also other critical events in their life could be taken up. They could freely choose the way of presenting their life. Most of the participants had made their life line on a large sheet of paper but some had prepared very detailed life lines by computer and presented very sophisticated transparencies. Many emphasised the working experience they had gained in their original countries and were sorry about the fact that Finnish society did not seem to value it as highly as they wished. Many had not been able to anticipate the cultural differences that they encountered. A man who had come from an African country to Finland to study at the university relates the following: *"I had it really difficult the two first years. People treated me as a refugee, they asked me often if I had enough food ..."* Another participant had drawn on the paper a different line for her professional development (a green one) and a different line for her emotional life (a red one): *"The green line did not crash when I came to Finland but the red one did..."*

Planning the Future

All group members elaborated a plan for their own professional development. It could include further education or a vision of the future workplace. We used *My Preferred Future or My Alternative Futures* exercises as instructions (Peavy 2001, 56–57). In the first one you only draw one future vision on paper and then you try to find out what kind of steps are needed to fulfil your vision. In the second one you can have several future visions which you then compare with each other and try to figure out which one is the most attractive. These tasks seem to work best in individual counselling – future visions are often very personal and sharing them is intimate. When this exercise is done in individual counselling the counsellor enters into the personal world of the client and can share the ideas and aspirations of the client with him/her. Going through these exercises is also time-consuming and, especially if the group is big, it can take too much time.

Observations

The size of the counselling groups varied a lot. Nine (9) persons seemed to be absolutely too many in a group where a lot of written or drawn exercises are gone through. The participants were often very motivated to tell about their personal lives and experiences and going through many rounds with nine persons sometimes proved to be too arduous. The rounds demand patience both from the other members and the group leaders. When planning this kind of group counselling in the future, new kinds of tasks and exercises should be designed. In the beginning of the group process longer presentations concerning personal life stories are needed and justified, but the better the group members know each other, the more you could go through the exercises, for example, in pairs or smaller groups. It is not necessary to share everything with the whole group.

Co-construction should be emphasised instead of rounds. Talking, for example, about adjustment to the new society and cultural differences could mean that the group together produces a scheme for a typical integration process by comparing individual experiences with each other. This could also mean that the group could be given much more responsibility for planning the group programme – normally the group leader designs the programme and the participants do what they are told to do. The scenario for the programme should be flexible and open to contributions

also from the group members. Thus, the ownership of the counselling process is moved over to the clients.

The results showed that counselling groups can function as empowering communities of practice and give support to the participants on their way to the labour market. Anyway, depending on the planning of the group programme, the number of participants, the background of participants, the meeting frequency, etc., the group dynamics and the experienced support from the group can vary. In general, we can say that counselling as well as other employment services can prevent the clients from becoming totally marginalised – the clients stay motivated for further training, they see the meaning of subsidised work, working practice, etc. It has to be admitted, though, that only few of the participants succeeded in their final goal: finding a permanent working place in the open labour market.

What could then be the solution? We came to the conclusion that counselling and the public employment services can offer help to the immigrant job seeker only to a certain point. When the person has reached a satisfactory knowledge of the local language and he/she has a (relatively) clear vision about his/her career goals and the professional future, the responsibility for the employment has to be moved over to the employers. The experiences that our participants had had, for example, about the Finnish recruitment practices were not at all positive. There is still a lot of work to be done on the attitudes of employers towards immigrant job seekers. Also the procedure of validating the competencies has to be improved. The employers do not appreciate foreign university degrees – not to talk about the informal and non-formal competencies of immigrants. There also seems to be a lack of knowledge of how to use different recruitment methods (interviews, psychological assessment, etc.) in a culturally sensitive way. One of the main suggestions of the research project was to organise more training sessions for employers. Also the trade unions could be approached – they could be an important actor enhancing multiculturalism and cultural sensitivity in working places.

CONCLUSIONS

The experiences we have described above show that the holistic approach to a person's life – that is typical for sociodynamic counselling – works well also in cross-cultural contexts. The client is seen as a whole person living in cultural and social networks

and these dimensions will also have to be taken into account when planning important career decisions. The exercises – both in individual and group counselling – should, anyway, be modified according to the client's needs. In case of Juan it proved to be very useful to add a third life circle where some ideas and thoughts concerning the home country could be projected. This gave Juan a possibility to make personal comparisons between the former and the present home countries and try to see the positive sides in both of them. The same idea was fulfilled in the example of group counselling in "The Life Line" -exercise. To offer a possibility to this kind of reflections concerning the client's experiences in the original culture and his/her future visions in the new culture is crucial in cross-cultural counselling.

One contra-indicator against the use of sociodynamic counselling could be the lack of reflective thinking. The client needs some kind of meta-cognitive abilities to be able to understand the meaning of the exercises. To make concrete visualisations about your life problems can, on the other hand, be useful also for a client, who is not very used to analysing his/her everyday life. It is, anyway, very important that the counsellor explains thoroughly why it could be useful to use pen and paper instead of only talking about the problems. Some immigrant clients can also have negative experiences about authorities - including psychologists and counsellors. Also for this reason it is important that the counsellor explains the purpose of the discussions and makes a common "agreement" together with the client which includes the preliminary goals and time limits for the counselling.

The methods used for illustrating the life problems should always be carefully adjusted to the needs of the client. Some clients are more inclined to talk, some like to write, some want to draw. Sometimes it is important to give the client an opportunity to use his/her own mother tongue when producing material about the issues that are under discussion. In these cases an interpreter can be needed. Also in sociodynamic counselling – as in all counselling – the client and the counsellor have to have a common language. If there is any chance of misunderstandings because of language problems, an interpreter should be used.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

The following questions/issues relating to *Life mapping* can be processed either individually, in pairs or in small groups.

- 1) Why is it important in all guidance and counselling to take into consideration the individual's whole life situation? Make a list of at least five reasons and discuss the reasons with your partner/group members.
- 2) How would you personally continue the guidance and counselling process with Juan as described in this article? Try to be as concrete as possible and list the issues that still need to be processed with Juan and think of alternative ways to deal with those issues.
- 3) Think about cases when the *Life mapping* technique might not be suitable for mapping out a person's life situation. Discuss your ideas with your partner/group members.
- 4) How do we give guidance and counselling to people who have received very little education, have limited language skills and have no prior experience in abstract thinking?
- 5) Try to invent new exercises which are *co-constructive* instead of individual counselling in group. In co-constructive exercises the product is always common to the whole group.
- 6) Have you any experiences in giving group guidance and counselling for immigrants? Compare the similarities and differences of your experiences with those described in this article and discuss them with your partner/group members.

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WEBSITE

*The sociodynamic counselling website is available at
<http://www.sociodynamic-constructivist-counselling.com/>*



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Counselling immigrants in working life – Good practices

INTRODUCTION

The following three Finnish projects concentrate on different phases of the path from immigration to a stable position in working life. The Palapeli project focuses on the training offered to immigrants during their first months in the new host country, the Majakka-Beacon project on entering working life and the MORO! project on supporting the integration of immigrants in working communities. In other words, there is a built-in view of integration seen as a process of an individual, rather as a working hypothesis than as a theoretical fact of individuals being the essence of the society. On the contrary, there is an implicit view of complex and increasing connections between individuals and groups in a diversifying society as, for example, Kymlicka (1995) sees it.

The Finnish Integration Act¹ adopted in 1999 forms another essential basis for the projects. It defines the national integration policy as well as activities that support the individuals' societal integration through education and labour market measures. The law binds municipal authorities, local employment offices and the persons concerned to make an individual integration plan for the first three years for each adult non-EU/EEA immigrant if unemployed. The plans may include overall, vocational and language training as well as supported employment or practical training periods. Municipalities are also obliged to establish general integration programmes.

These projects, despite their different emphases, obviously have three factors in common from the point of view of counselling:

¹ Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers 9.4.1999/493.

1. Social environment – the surrounding context around individuals including the working community
2. Networks – connections between individuals and institutions in this environment supporting individuals
3. Individual (immigrant) – the person in the hub of a network concerning his/her own life

From this perspective the projects have a common challenge: the double bond in counselling between the individual and the surrounding social environment (including the working community). Thus, for enabling personal advancement in a new context, the counsellor must take into consideration both the personal goals and readiness of each individual as well as the factors and changes in the social environment that is seen as a constantly developing network. The particular challenges and good practices of the three projects are described in more detail in what follows.

PALAPELI (PUZZLE)

Palapeli is a project offering training to immigrants, financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and managed by the Employment and Economic Development Centre (T&E Centre) of Central Finland. Palapeli is continuing the work of the ‘Paletti’ project that operated in Jyväskylä already in 1999–2001. These projects have been created to complement the education that is arranged for immigrants during the first three years² after their arrival in Finland and that promotes their access to the labour market. Since the beginning of 2001, education comparable to education and training promoting employment has been organised in the Palapeli project, first as part of ‘Kotopolku’ project and then during 2004–2005 as an independent project.

The strength of Palapeli is an extensive education programme. “The foundations of the integration-education for adult immigrants. Recommendation 2001” (Aikuisten maahanmuuttajien kotoutumiskoulutuksen perusteet. Suositus 2001), drawn up by the Ministry of Education has been used as the basis for the education programme. The development of the education programme has been based on the

² Decree on integration of immigrants and reception of asylum seekers. 22.4.1999/511.

cooperation between different partners as well as the writer's (Mammon) own multicultural work experience. The actual teaching is carried out cooperatively, which contributes to achieving a good quality integration education. The cooperative network of the project includes the Employment Office, Immigrant Services, other projects, the Central Finland Municipalities' Training Federation, Jyväskylä University establishments, Jyväskylä Polytechnic, the Institute of Central Finland, the Alkio Institute, third sector organisations, the City Congregation and companies. The cooperative network is continuously expanding.

The Palapeli activities aim at producing sensible and feasible integration plans for immigrants and at facilitating their integration process with the professional support of the network. Palapeli offers periods of practical training, preparation for working life or work experience to students, exchange students, adult and immigrant students from the university or any other educational establishments that belong to the cooperative network. The immigrants pursue studies that aim towards various goals, which they have considered interesting and useful. In addition, the immigrant trainees can work as remedial teachers, group supervisors and/or language aides helping the other students in different situations.

One of the project's operational aims is to reduce racism by raising the general awareness of cultural diversity among Finns through information provision. Palapeli has disseminated information on different cultures, customs and traditions in local newspapers as well as in the local television news and in the nationwide programme called MOL.FI. Native Finns have actively taken part in lectures, discussion events and other functions organised within the Palapeli project.

The project's theoretical framework

The theoretical background of the Palapeli project is based on the ideology of life-long learning present in the everyday life in the society. Many research results indicate that, in the rapidly developing and changing world, today's adult learns something new almost every day without noticing it. In the project, an adult's different ways of learning are taken into consideration in supervision and teaching.

Aaron Antonovsky's (1979) concept of "the Sense of Coherence" has been applied to the project. It emphasises that everything that happens to an individual person is significant; he/she wants to actively participate in his/her life. It is also necessary for the individual's well-being that he/she feels, at least in some way, able

to influence his/her own life. Additionally, there must be a well-functioning support network that the individual can rely on in all situations of his/her life. The individual's internal and external resources should serve his/her private and professional goals as well as make it possible for him/her to find a place of his/her own that he/she feels good and easy to live in. The Sense of Coherence puts an emphasis on the importance of life as a base for motivation.

Vance Peavy's sociodynamic counselling approach (see Peavy 1997), where an immigrant is assisted in finding his/her own resources and working towards reaching his/her own goals, is used in the project as theoretical background for career planning, personal and group guidance. The keywords of Vance Peavy's guidance are: imagine, want and act. These keywords also well describe the principles of career guidance offered through the Palapeli project.

Case 1: Individual and group counselling

Psychological research has shown that personal goals are associated with psychological processes and that they affect human emotions and actions. In the project, immigrants coming from different countries and cultures are taught to understand the importance of goal-oriented planning of their own life. For the immigrants this often means adopting a new way of thinking and approaching things. In Palapeli the guiding process of planning one's own working life is considered like a project of "I – Myself". This is why the immigrant's motivation for studying is regarded crucial in the project.

Developing a positive self-image, obtaining a healthy self-esteem and strengthening one's own professional skills are supported by personal and group guidance. The cosy atmosphere within the Palapeli project contributes to immigrants' motivation for learning, their well-being and their rapidly developing professional skills.

The discussion topics for personal and group guidance include the education system for young people, adults and education and training promoting employment in Finland, the importance of education and the opportunities for an immigrant to get into education. Choosing a realistic route for education in the rapidly changing world is also discussed together with the immigrant client. It is vital that the immigrant can be certain of having both the internal and external resources that he/she will need for facing the demands of working life.

In group guidance – through discussions, different exercises and homework – the immigrants learn to consider, understand and see life as a continuing process that each person, to a certain extent, will be able to control and influence. During the integration process, it is necessary to promote flexible and continuous search for new learning and survival strategies. This will help the immigrant build his/her feeling of being able to control his/her own life, even in such an unfortunate situation as being/becoming unemployed, for example.

Each person acts, of course, according to his/her own social surroundings. Every immigrant makes his/her own choice how to apply received guidance into his/her own life.

Case 2: Right timing for different courses

From the very outset, the immigrant teaching in the project is constructed in a kind of spiral way going through several different areas of life. This makes it easier for students from different cultural backgrounds to gradually get to know the expectations of the Finnish education system and working life, where the importance of one's own plans, personal engagement as well as active use of existing skills are strongly emphasised. The training course provision in the project is based on the above-mentioned theories: the Sense of Coherence and Sociodynamic Counselling.

The education offered to immigrants in the Palapeli project, which is considered equivalent to education and training promoting employment, means in practice that with 25 hours of weekly lessons, the immigrant can receive financial integration benefit and an added maintenance allowance from the state. The timetable is usually drawn up, either for a group or individually for an immigrant, for two months at a time. The personal timetable is planned together with a project worker, the immigrant and the members operating in the cooperative network.

The 5–6 groups in the project are formed on the basis of their linguistic level and 15–16 immigrants are taken into each group. Finnish language studies (12–14 hours each week) are the most central element in the project's education programme. Social and cultural studies (11–13 hours weekly), personal and group guidance and practical training are also part of the curriculum. The teaching of the Finnish language is carried out using various methods, including teaching materials developed by the teachers in the project. The social and cultural studies inspire and help the immigrants understand the development of their self-image. The studies also emphasise the

need for developing a new professional identity as well as the importance of each immigrant's own initiative and activity. Learning based on cooperation and experience as well as independent work has been used in the study groups.

The course includes 8–12 sessions of teaching during the period, two hours at a time, and moves forward theme by theme. The lessons also include going through vocabulary relating to each theme. The studies include the following courses: human life (lifespan), the Finnish education system, adult education, education and training promoting employment, information technology, work and occupations, trade union activities, personal occupational vocabulary, career guidance group, the social security system in Finland (KELA), goal-oriented planning of one's own life, social and welfare services, intercultural communication, Finnish culture and history, readiness for working life, and leisure activities.

Case 3: Counselling and cooperation to create paths to work

The guidance offered in the project supports the immigrant's life and work experiences gained in his/her home country, respects his/her knowhow and provides an opportunity to test his/her own skills in a real Finnish work environment through practical training. With the help of guidance, the project worker and the client together try to find the immigrant's strengths and potential for personal and professional development with the aim of the client succeeding in Finnish working life in the future. The development of occupational identity includes realising the importance of the terminology in one's own field. The learning of the occupational vocabulary is started soon after the foundation course in the Finnish language (language level of 1–2), where learning takes place independently as well as in small groups supported by guidance and counselling available to the clients.

The immigrant's own initiative is the basis for the studies. As far as it is necessary, the timetable is tailored to each immigrant student so that it includes Finnish language studies also in other educational establishments and/or testing occupational skills, learnt already in the home country, in the Finnish working environment. Through functional learning, the immigrants' capacity for cooperation with students, teachers as well as with other staff and collaborating parties is developed. The Palapeli activities emphasise that, as an adult student, the immigrant him/herself is responsible for his/her own studies and life in general in the new country, but it is worth having a wide social network for his/her support.

Immigrants have been working as supervisors of study circles. English and intercultural communication have been learnt in the circles, which have also involved discussions, for example, on the essence of entrepreneurship. A video of Palapeli's varied activities, both everyday and festive, has been made with the support of the project and on the immigrants' initiative.

Case 4: Supported practical training

At the beginning of the studies, the immigrant's education, work experience, individual strengths, willingness to act as a voluntary supervisor of a club or a group when necessary, knowledge of foreign languages and hopes for the future are identified. When there is sufficient knowledge of the Finnish language and the immigrant has become familiar with the terminology of his/her own line of work and he/she has received personal guidance, the client and the project worker together agree on the practical training. A suitable workplace is looked for during the discussion. Initially, the project worker meets with some employers, after which a meeting is set up with a possible employer together with the trainee. An agreement on practical training is drawn up between the employer and trainee, if the trainee meets the professional requirements of the employer. Once the employment office has accepted the agreement, the trainee can start working for the employer.

In the project, a timetable is drawn up, tailored according to the immigrant's needs, which includes 2–3 days of practical training on those days that suit the employer and 2–3 days of Finnish language teaching and other things in the project. The project worker keeps in touch with the workplace and thus gets feedback on how the training is going and on its success or any eventual problems that will then have to be solved mutually.

The practical training for the immigrants in the Palapeli project is organised all the time. Good employers have been, for example, small businesses that have given positive feedback on the trainee as an employee and a colleague. The immigrant, on the other hand, has experienced success in the Finnish work environment and with his/her duties in the company. The trainees have also noticed differences in practical training compared with the experiences in their home country and, at the same time, they have discovered the need for a continuous occupational education and the need for learning Finnish.

MAJAKKA-BEACON

Majakka-Beacon (www.kuntoutussaatio.fi/majakka-beacon/english/) is a development partnership between nine organisations³ within the Helsinki-region. Funded by the CIP Equal of the European Commission, it aims to develop new employment and rehabilitation services for immigrants resident in the capital area. The services are targeted at immigrants whose everyday coping and employment are impeded by health and social problems and/or language or cultural barriers. As the unemployment rate of immigrants is threefold in comparison to native Finns, the partners recognised the need to search for more efficient and innovative employment models.

Project's theoretical framework

The key concepts underlying Majakka-Beacon are **supported employment** and **empowerment**. Supported employment means gaining employment in the open labour market with the help of **individual support**. The original model of supported employment was developed in the USA during the 1980s as an alternative to sheltered workshops and as a means of integrating people with disabilities in mainstream society (see Bond et al 2001). The basic principle of the model is to find a job from the open, competitive labour market and provide support services at the workplace by drawing up an on-the-job training plan with both the client and the employer⁴. Individual support required to facilitate the process is provided and has to be tailored to the client's needs. Bond et al (2001, 313) describe supported employment as "a well-defined approach to helping people with disabilities participate as much as possible in the competitive labour market, working in jobs they prefer with the level of professional help they need." Often a minor adjustment of thinking in how to go about a certain work task can be a ground breaker that will enable the client successfully handle the work task. A fresh look at alternative perspectives is often welcomed by the working community, too.

³ Municipalities of Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo, the Rehabilitation Foundation, the Vocational Adult Education Centre Amiedu, the Ingrian Centre, the Iran and Iraq Employment Association, the Finnish Somali League and the University of Helsinki research and training centre Palmenia.

⁴ For more information in Finnish see Härkäpää et al 2001.

In Majakka-Beacon the feasibility of the approach for immigrant employment services is being tested. What are the issues of low employability in connection with multiculturalism? How can the model help overcome these issues and produce successful employment results⁵?

Many of Majakka's job-seeking clients have more than one disadvantage in regard to their desirability on the labour market, therefore many types of support may be needed in order to secure the job. In short, support at the workplace can be carried out by the job coach supportive of the "natural training" of the workplace, the Finnish language teacher and occasionally the case manager dealing with health related issues, for example. The goals are set together with the client and the employer and are reviewed on a regular basis. Continuity of support, good timing and flexibility have proved to be of utmost importance in the process. For example, when the client gets his/her first pay slip, the coach may go through it with the client. It is also needed for tax purposes and possible housing benefit, if the client receives any. All these can be taught and explained beforehand, but for many clients the importance and practice is best learned by doing. This also serves the employer's purposes assuring him/her that everything is running smoothly and that there is no need to anticipate problems.

Empowerment in this context can be understood as both the client's process of becoming stronger and increasing his/her control over life but also as the result of this process, i.e. increased self-determination, making of independent choices and citizen participation, to mention a few. The project staff's role is that of a partner, not a know-it-all specialist. The staff work with the client and help him/her achieve the goals. Ideally, as the project's support gradually diminishes, the client knows how to successfully take care of things in the future. Empowerment also takes place on a larger level: working communities accumulate means of appreciating diversity.

For many employers immigrant background combined with a disability may seem like a lot to deal with. Innovative and forthcoming working communities have welcomed the clients, as the following case examples will show. While the job search could well be described in length, these case examples concentrate on good practices of on-the-job support.

⁵ The final report of the project will be published in 2005 by the Rehabilitation Foundation.

Case 1: On-the-job support, learning the more difficult tasks

One of Majakka's clients started working delivering mail. His core work tasks were sorting the mail first by street and then in his particular delivery district by apartment. He was also supposed to deliver the mail and forward and sort out any misdirected letters, cards and packages. His superior explained at a follow-up discussion that he felt unsure whether the client could be trusted with the more complicated routines. He was concerned about negative customer feedback since people tend to call him quite eagerly if their mail is misdelivered.

Reaction: The project's job coach joined the client when the more complicated tasks were taught by a colleague. Together they first observed the process and then sorted the district's mail. The client soon took total responsibility for the task while the coach's role was to encourage the client to ask if there were any unclear cases. The coach's presence assured the employer and also made the work load a little lighter for the client so that he didn't have to worry about the pace of his work. He could first concentrate on learning the task.

End result: After three days the client had demonstrated that he could perform the task. No calls had come in.

Case 2: Language teaching at the workplace

The foreman felt unsure whether the immigrant client had understood the directions and advice on how to perform a given work task. Learning this task was vital, since it was one of the core tasks the client had. If he didn't learn it, the continuation of his contract was at risk.

Reaction: The issue was talked about in a follow-up discussion and it turned out that most of the superior's uncertainty occurred because the client had not been able to explain linguistically what he was asked to do in order to demonstrate he had indeed understood the advice. They were unable to create mutual understanding of what was going on. It was arranged for the Finnish language teacher to join the client at his workplace. While the client was performing his tasks, the teacher gave a running commentary on what he was doing. Later on the client spoke with the

teacher about the task and learned the names of the phases and the instruments used in it.

End result: The client was able to speak about his tasks with the superior, who now felt relieved to know the client was able to put into words what he was doing. The training took place in paid working time, which also showed the client that the employer supported his language studying. The client signed a work contract.

Case 3: Joining the working community

Integrating and feeling at home at work is not always easy. Many of the project's clients have got their first job in Finland after being unemployed for several years. The first concern for many is how to manage the work task. On the other hand, when almost all contracts start as temporary, it is equally important to gain one's place in the working community, since acceptance by colleagues is important and is also reflected in how well one adapts to the workplace. A very hard-working client never took breaks or only did so when almost forced by his colleagues. The client didn't know when the morning coffee break was, for instance, nor did he feel the weekly meetings were meant for him. Instead, he remained in his unit while everyone went to the meeting. The client was worried he would appear lazy if he wasn't busy working. The superior was worried about how everyone was getting on.

Reaction: The job coach explained to the client that it was his right to take a break and encouraged him to join the others during the break time. When the coach visited the workplace, she subtly pointed out that the others seemed to be going out for a cigarette break, etc. As the client was a smoker, he soon got acquainted with the other smokers during the cigarette breaks.

End result: The client learned to ask other people to take a break with him in Finnish. The client got to know his colleagues better and felt more at ease, joking and spending time with people. Also his uninterrupted working throughout the day stopped raising eyebrows.

Case 4: Mediating and model learning at the workplace

In some working communities there have not yet been any employees with an immigrant background. Even if curious and positive, the indigenous Finnish employees may feel unsure or uneasy about speaking to a person who looks foreign. Finnish politeness is often described as “negative”. In practice it means that people feel uneasy if attention is drawn to them, it is considered more polite to leave someone be than put him in an awkward situation, with the risk that they do not, for example, understand each other. In some workplaces the job coach noticed that people did not really speak to the project’s client who was working there, but were keen on asking the job coach questions about the client and his/her background. They lacked courage to approach the client and needed a buffer person. The coach then directed the question to the client, who replied.

Reaction: Little by little the colleagues became more encouraged and started talking directly to the client. The coach also encouraged the client to start conversing, suggested small talk topics and casually modelled them at the workplace.

End result: Later when the coach visited the workplace, all eagerly explained how much better they now understand each other and how much the client’s language skills had developed. The co-workers’ boost of courage was understood as the client’s developed language skills.

Case 5: Communicational needs analysis

The project’s client started working in a school. Her job tasks were very specifically defined: instructing children sharing her linguistic background. Her Finnish skills were quite poor. In order to be able to explain practices to the children, she needed to understand and talk about them herself as well. The Finnish teacher needed to know what kind of communication situations there are at work and what the communicational needs arising from the situations and the community are.

Reaction: The Finnish teacher joined the client for some days at her work. By “shadowing”⁶ the client’s daily working routines, she got acquainted with the communication needs. She also interviewed the teachers and the client about their views on the

matter. As a part of their language study routine the Finnish teacher and the client always studied the content of the information board, which contained important information about training opportunities, etc.

End result: The teacher reached a better understanding of what the learning goals were. Since both the client and the colleagues participated in the process, they all had a chance to increase their insight into the language learning and skills needed in a given work tasks. The client was able to get information about what was important in her professional field.

As can be detected from the case examples above, nothing had actually gone wrong when the staff's support proved worthwhile. In order to open up opportunities it is important to have support measures standing by, just in case. In many cases the initial causes that have been worrying both the employer and the employee have vanished within the first working days. Nevertheless, in some successful cases if the option for support had not been there, the contract would not have been signed.

MORO! MULTICULTURAL RECRUITMENT AND LEARNING

The MORO! project (Multicultural Recruitment and Learning, www.tak.fi/moro) was one of the Finnish projects funded by the Community Initiative Equal during 2002–2004. It was implemented in three different localities (the cities of Tampere, Lappeenranta and Joensuu) in Finland with European partners from London and Rome. The project aimed at:

1. Improving recruitment practices for hiring more people with an immigrant background in Finnish economic life.
2. Combatting discrimination and promoting the benefits of multiculturalism in working life.
3. More effective use of the existing professional skills of immigrants.

⁶ Different methods of communication needs analysis are described in Grünhage-Monetti (2003).

The core concept of the MORO! activities was “positive action in the workplace”. In the Tampere region the project was implemented by Tampere Vocational Adult Education Centre and it took several forms, which were actually different models of learning:

1. Training of working communities in different organisations (companies, municipalities and educational institutions) in diversity issues and supporting them to develop their own skills in meeting the issues of multiculturalism.
2. Training of 30 intercultural mediators with an immigrant background to meet challenges in diversifying working communities in different professional fields in the Tampere region.
3. Learning Finnish in a small group during apprenticeship training.
4. Counselling of different actors as a horizontal theme through all of the previous activities.

The training of working communities consisted of short awareness-raising occasions or longer training programmes during which the employees were given information on immigration, legislation and different cultures, opportunities to discuss and improve their intercultural competencies, recruitment processes and introduction of new employees. The duration and topics depended on the readiness and needs of a working community. The training sessions were supported by interviews and discussions with managers and superiors and a recruitment guide for employers was produced by the project for promoting equal opportunities in their organisations. Also the training programmes were designed to become products which can be used by the instructors after the project.

The connections with the management were supplemented by the Joensuu sub-project, which produced material for diversity management training and self-learning. The material was produced in cooperation with local public sector organisations in Joensuu with a multicultural circle of customers.

The training of intercultural mediators prepared 30 professionals with an immigrant background with similar kinds of knowledge and skills as the employees in the working communities above. In addition to the above, this group was able to make internal connections and have discussions with people from different cultural backgrounds, which was an important part of the training and gave the participants new opportunities to develop their intercultural competencies and use each other's know-

ledge in their own workplace. These people are mostly the first employees with an immigrant background in their working communities and must partially act as icebreakers in their homogeneous environment. The training also opened up new connections with employees, unions and the third sector by functioning as a discussion forum between different actors.

In addition to this, a couple of employees in apprenticeship training took part in a weekly training session with the permission of their employer. This was found to be very important because there are few opportunities to continue learning Finnish after leaving immigrant training and entering working life. Courage to use the language, development of professional language skills and speaking in everyday situations especially were found to be important by the students. The training will continue in new apprenticeships once the project is over.

In the Lappeenranta sub-project training for immigrants was given in IT skills and certain professional fields to improve job finding prospects. This was supplemented by diversity training for instructors and awareness-raising among trade unions, companies and the public sector.

All of these models of learning can be connected to other modes of positive action by employers, educational organisations or the public sector, e.g. financial support for recruitment during the initial steps in Finnish working life, support to employers in making their recruitment processes more transparent, cooperation with immigrants' own associations and affecting decision makers.

Project's theoretical framework

In the Tampere region the framework of the project was described as follows:

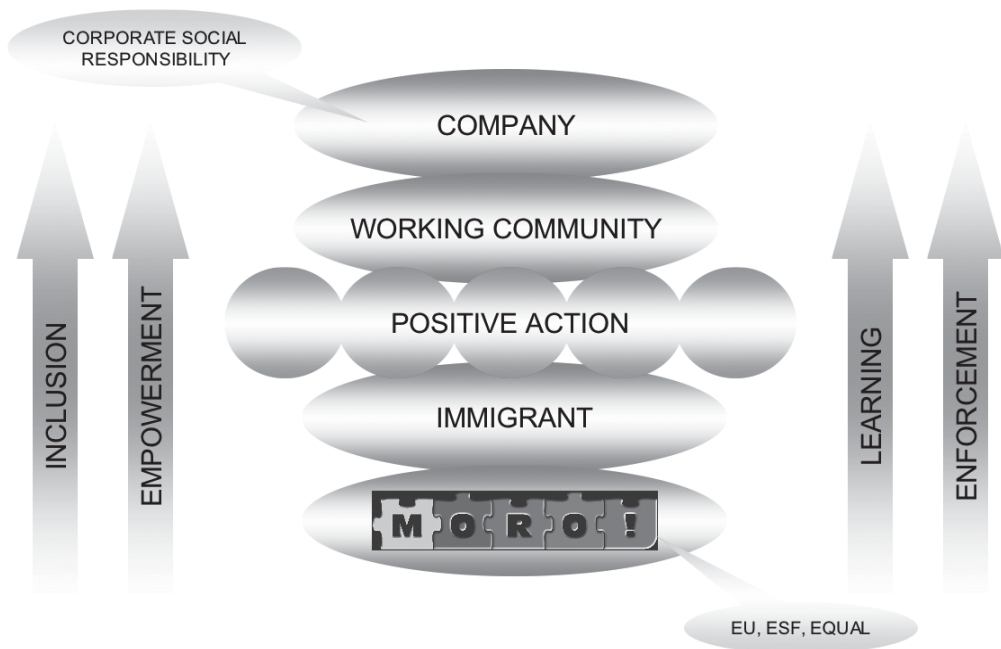


Figure 1. The framework of the MORO! Project.

The framework is based on systems theory, information theory, complexity and theory of networks (see Barabási 2002). The core belief is common learning between different actors maybe completely without any previous connections to each other. By empowering all of the participants by learning and new connections, they are believed to develop in intercultural competencies and practical skills. The system is given resources by the European Union and it is supposed that the companies who desire success will connect their learning process with corporate social responsibility driven by the companies and their unions themselves. All of these activities should lead to positive action by all of the actors together and to increasing the willingness of companies to promote inclusion as their key to the well-being of their working communities, as well as to their future success in the global market.

The evolving positive action is supported by counselling and consulting by the project workers. During the project the borderline between counselling and consulting has largely faded away and consulting of working communities during training programmes has become a more essential part of counselling work than during the

traditional on-the-job training periods in the immigrant training of the adult education centre. No part of the framework works or develops without personal counselling of individual students and consultation with working communities, managers and superiors.

According to Etienne Wenger (1998) different groups and organisations form communities of practice for common learning and newcomers are adopted into them by learning discussion and only after that by learning competence. Counselling, and consulting as a form of it, can be seen as methods of steering and balancing these processes in a network of different learners and learning organisations.

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING AND MENTORING

Project work is about developing and development, occupational growth, and learning; therefore it is best described as educational activity. For this reason, the activity leans on the theory of educational philosophy. The aim of the individual counselling and mentoring carried out within the project is learning to learn (Rauste, von Wright & von Wright 1994).

The opportunity to give individual counselling has been provided for students of cultural intermediary studies and for those who have participated in the work practice of the project. The counselling is always an individual process. It is based on interactivity and trust between the counsellor and the counselee. During the counselling the student can use the counsellor's professional skills for mirroring aspects of his/her own professional growth. One of the most important aspects is which branch of industry is best suited for the individual's professional skills. Counselling can often take an advisory or supportive nature (Onnismaa 2000).

Another dimension included in the counselling sessions is the possibility that the employer participates in the conversation as a third party. This leads to an evaluating discussion about how the work practice has succeeded in the working community, under which conditions the work practice could continue or evolve into permanent employment. Sometimes these conversations have become consultative when the employer has wanted to increase the diversity of the working community. The employer has shown interest in training to increase the professional skills of the members of the working community. Sometimes the employer has needed information on social benefits facilitating recruitment.

In some cases the employer has expressed interest in how language barriers could be lowered in the working community. For this purpose some apprentices with employment received individual or small-group tutoring in Finnish at their workplace during the project. The students found they benefited from the tutoring. They said that they found working more meaningful, the tutoring helped work management, they could also express their own thoughts at work. They discovered the importance of unprompted learning.

In addition to the employees of the adult education centre, people employed for the duration of the project participated in it. The target was to support the project personnel's professional growth through mentoring. The purpose was to create an investigative approach to work and it included constant evaluation of working methods and practices. The goal was to pass on experience, vision and knowhow in the working community.

Mentoring can take place in many different ways. In this project it was carried out in the form of dialogues. Those persons working in the project with less experience were invited to take part in pair work as actors in a close relationship with a more experienced project worker. The more experienced participants worked as mentors on a voluntary basis.

The themes of discussions were connected to the contents of one's own work, one's own role as an employee, problem solving, creative thinking, and change. Mentoring was also used for transmitting experiences and silent information between the project and its mother organisation. The profitable aspects of mentoring include the new and different dimensions introduced into the dialogue as a result of the multi-professional background of the project workers. At its best this kind of situation allows for further professional growth and even benefits society in addition to the individual (Keski-Luopa 2001).

THE COMMON LEARNING PROCESS

The whole work of the projects can simply be seen as a common learning process and quality work between different actors according to Deming's PDCA cycle (e.g. Lecklin 1997, 56). A single project may only be a single cycle in this development, but through European cooperation over several years we are able to find good practices and disseminate them all across the continent. International cooperation is crucial, both for learning and dissemination.

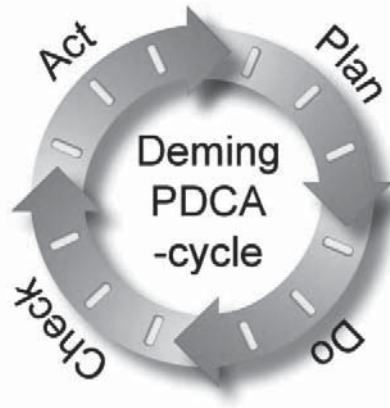


Figure 2. *The Deming cycle*

However, the challenge for counselling is that people's mental processes prevent learning in the ideal way Wenger tells us. Bias and hatred exist in the minds of every part – employers, immigrants, instructors, counsellors and civil servants – and these are based not only on false information that can partly be affected by information and training but also on mental levels we do not want to speak about or do not even have explicit words for; levels on which we have learned implicit explanations and developed processes of rejection and in many cases unconscious defences.

Fields in which we do not want to work or do not suppose others want to work, fields which are suitable for immigrants, access to leading positions – inclusion and exclusion of different groups or different persons according to their background or personal characteristics – all lead us to create new subgroups and recreation of inequality. Because the processes take place in our minds and not in open discussion and decision-making, they are all recreated since very early childhood and become part of our mental structure – in certain situations readiness to exclude, hate, destroy and isolate – in a public or, more often, in a hidden way.

Equality and effectiveness in working life – as in any other field of life – cannot become reality if we do not uncover at least some aspects of these mental processes. Saying “I’m not racist” or “I do not have any prejudices” is not enough – we do have them both in our minds. We have to open new paths to knowing and overcoming our limitations by studying group formation and the psychological and social processes leading to bias and hatred.

One of the first steps on this 21st century path is Dr. Farhad Dalal's (2000, 2002) approach to understanding the social roots of personal bias and hatred. Dr. Dalal's view makes it possible to understand the significance of belonging to a group, power relationships of belonging and not-belonging and definitions of "us" and "not-us" derived from these premises as the main causes of both collective and individual thinking and behaviour leading to exclusion of "others". There are also other ways to proceed on this new path like Dr. Aaron Beck's (1999) view in which dysfunctional thinking processes leading to emotional and behavioural expressions of hatred against other people, even if they are close to us, are seen as the basis of malfunctions in human life from personal to international level.

The crucial point of the future projects may actually be finding practical solutions to these theoretical frameworks in cooperation with working communities and minority communities: how to make theories explaining the significance and effects of groups and mental processes visible in outreach, well-established development programmes, counselling/consulting and monitoring.

CONCLUSION

A successful model for employment consists of a triangle between the immigrant, the employer and the supportive authorities and educational organisations. Both the problems with skills and mutual integration must be solved in order to promote inclusion in the working community. The core of success is counselling/consulting leading to positive action by the actors themselves.

The good practices of these three projects give several different views to motivation, learning, support, empowerment and inclusion. The Palapeli project emphasises the motivation of an individual and lifelong learning, and makes this view complete by introducing different supportive activities for immigrants who aim at coherence in their life in the new society and working life. The Majakka-Beacon project is based on supported employment and empowerment as tools for entering working life, and it illuminates these views by giving examples of the opportunities for individual support as a means for success in interaction and finding solutions in the new workplace.

The MORO! project emphasises taking positive action in the workplace as a tool for mutuality and inclusion, which is not possible without a proper network of different authorities, educational organisations and workplaces. Effective individual coun-

selling in this network is based on interactivity and trust between the counsellor and counselee, which can be supported by other practical activities. Whether the process is successful or not depends very much on common learning and mutual support. However, the issue of immigrants entering working life cannot be thoroughly solved until more in-depth studies are available on group formation and on the behaviour of individuals as the basis of inclusion and exclusion.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

- 1) **The beginning of the integration process.** The Palapeli project draws a picture in which the concepts of self-image and motivation are seen as crucial factors for success in integration. Discuss with your colleagues and immigrants what kind of counselling immigrants need from this point of view during the first three years after entering a new country. What kind of personal responsibility does the immigrant have in finding his/her own place in the society? How can an immigrant build and utilise his/her own network in the new environment?
- 2) **Crossing the threshold to working life.** In the Majakka-Beacon project supported employment and empowerment are considered as tools for both interaction and practical solutions in the workplace leading to integration. To clarify this view think about a job that you know well. Describe the tasks and divide them according to their frequency. Which tasks form the core of the job? Which are just occasional? What kind of language skills (reading, speaking, listening, writing) must one have in order to get by? Name a few functions, such as asking or making a suggestion, that are essential if one wants to perform this task well. How can you best explain the significance of this kind of discussion to both the employer and the employee?
- 3) **Positive action in the workplace.** The MORO! project suggests using positive action as a tool for making integration a mutual process leading to deepening inclusion of all employees in the working community. For that

reason form a small group and plan ideas for a positive action programme in an organisation you know well for promoting equal opportunities and access to career development for all employees, regardless of their background. Plan some initiatives for developing and monitoring the recruitment process and career development as well as strengthening connections to different minority groups as jobseekers.

- 4) **Counselling in a network of diversity.** These three projects strongly promote cooperation, mutuality and networking of different actors as means for efficiency and success in counselling work. What are the practical means and actions that can strengthen such networks and put obstacles away between the local partners?
 - a) Discuss with your colleagues and partners. Describe the network of different actors working with vocational training, employment, apprenticeships, recognition of skills and workplace integration of immigrants in your area. What kind of roles do they have in the network? How strong or weak connections do they have together and with both immigrants and employers? Who are the actual beneficiaries of the services provided? What kind of counselling services do they give (information, guidance, counselling, consulting of employers and working communities)? Who takes care of mutual integration in the workplace leading to inclusion?
 - b) Discuss with immigrants/immigrant groups and employers/employers' unions. Describe the network in your area as a chain of services seen by the users of the services (training, employment and recognition of skills). What kind of obstacles are there in exploiting the services available (insufficient information or cooperation, resources, mental obstacles, exclusion of part of the clients)? How is the view of employers and immigrants different from the view of the counsellors (benefits/disadvantages and possibilities/threats)?

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Torture and war survivors – Some considerations on counselling and therapy

INTRODUCTION

Cross-cultural counselling is a greater challenge than one can imagine, and even more so when meeting torture or war survivors. Many dimensions of one's existence are tested, among them and the most powerful is the subconscious mind, inhabited with its angels and devils, hopes and fears, creative and destructive desires.

This paper is about counselling people who have witnessed the darkest side of the human heart, the vilest of human behaviours: war, torture, rape. People that have been obliged to leave their homes, relatives, jobs, and have settled in a new country, with new neighbours, a new language, far from all that was familiar, living between a fading past and an uncertain future. Where does the counsellor meet with such a client? What is the common base of communication? Torture has the ability to reduce one to silence; to be asked to share views and to be listened to, cared about, and believed can be a powerful healing experience in itself for these survivors (Gerrity et al. 2001). However, these tasks require some extra reflections on the different dimensions implicated in the communication with torture, war and rape survivors. In this paper the author will be reflecting on cross-cultural issues with special focus on the phenomenon of counter-transference in the counsellor when being forced to look straight into the eye of the evil.

Cross-cultural communication has been the object of studies mostly when marketing goods and services to consumers worldwide: not being able to communicate with other cultures has become unprofitable in the business world. Cross-cultural communication has also gained importance in international peace negotiations. But when it comes to refugees and asylum-seekers cross-cultural communication has been considered a matter of inferior rank, there is no money incentive in learning to com-

municate with foreigners. It has been taken for granted that it is the foreigners' duty to adapt and integrate to "our" country, learn "our" rules and language. The author's hope is that people would understand what a great opportunity and challenge cross-cultural encounters are for our own personal development towards freedom, creativity, self-fulfilment, and maturity. And how important it is for our society to become a more alive, stimulating, dynamic and diverse place where all could live a satisfying life.

"Liberty demands not only equality of opportunity but a variety of them. It also means a tolerance for those who fail to conform to standards that may be culturally desirable but are not essential for society to continue. Present day society often fails to offer this tolerance".

(Bruno Bettelheim, 1985. *The Informed Heart*, 95).

IDENTITY

The concept of identity continuously comes across whenever discussing cross-cultural issues. The author is particularly fond of the definition of C.G. Jung (1941) that identity is the presumption of the subconscious mind of a similarity with the environment. Identity is, according to Jung, specific for the primitive mentality (the "partecipation mistique" of Lévy-Bruhl) and of an infantile development phase and gives the premises for *projection* [projection: a defence mechanism in which one tends to attach uncomfortable inner images or feelings to another person (vessel)]. Jung states that in the name of identity people try to improve in others what they should rather change in themselves, and that the eventuality of a possible suggestion and psychic contamination is based on identity. However, according to Jung, identity can have a positive role if it is intrinsic to a conscious social attitude that find its representation in higher moral values, like in the command "love thy neighbour as thyself".

Identity implies knowledge of oneself, the mastering of communication with the environment, and a sense of coherence. The process that leads the individual to the above mentioned is called by Jung the process of Individuation and it consists in the striving of the individual to gain wholeness. The achievement of wholeness consists in the integration of opposites like good and evil, masculine and feminine. As Jung himself writes, *"there is no light without shadow and no psychic wholeness*

without imperfection. To round itself out, life calls not for perfection but for completeness; and for this the thorn of the flesh is needed, the suffering of defects without which there is no progress and no ascent.” (cit. in 1974, 233). According to Jung the individuation process can be impaired by identification with a specific culture, nation, tribe, etc., because these identifications are only mere surrogates for the real process of individuation. To identify with a group or an ideology makes it easier for the subconscious mind to project undesirable features that are difficult to integrate in the personality onto an external target-group. Finally, Jung states that it is the duty of each human being to integrate the dark and the light side of the personality and not project uncomfortable subconscious fears or phantoms onto others.

The diagnosis that survivors of war and torture most often get is called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and it is strictly related to identity. The most extreme form of post-traumatic dissociation is seen in patients who suffer from Dissociative Identity Disorder (van der Kolk et al. 1995). Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a natural emotional reaction to a deeply shocking and disturbing experience. It is a *normal* reaction to an *abnormal* situation. According to van der Kolk, the goal of treatment is to find a way in which people can acknowledge the reality of what has happened without having to re-experience the trauma all over again. For this to occur, merely uncovering memories is not enough: they need to be modified and transformed, i.e. placed in their proper context and reconstructed into neutral or meaningful narratives. Thus, in therapy, memory paradoxically becomes an act of creation, rather than the static recording of events that is characteristic of trauma-based memories (van der Kolk et al. 1995). Table 1 and 2 illustrate how simple and complex PTSD affects different realms of existence.

TORTURE

The aim of torture is to intentionally inflict severe pain and suffering on a person for specific purposes. Using torture, a regime can obtain information or force a confession. Torture can also be used as a punishment. The mere knowledge of the possibility of torture being used creates terror and fear among the population and is therefore often used as a means of political mass oppression. The purpose of torture is not to kill, but to cause both physical and mental injury. Degrading and painful

means of torture are used to gradually break down an individual's personality, and to make him/her feel shame, guilt and self-contempt.

In the *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment*, which was adopted by the United Nations in 1984, torture is defined as follows:

“For the purposes of this Convention, the term “torture” means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.”

All states that have signed the Convention have committed themselves to prohibiting torture in their own countries as well to providing victims of torture with necessary treatment. By ratifying the Convention, Sweden has undertaken to support and help tortured refugees, to provide adequate training in care and treatment of victims of torture and to strive to expose and bring torturers to justice.

According to several sources, among others the International Rehabilitation Council for Tortured Victims (IRCT) in Denmark, torture is still used in more than 100 countries. Even in countries that have ratified the convention (The Swedish Red Cross Centres for Victims of Torture 2003).

The consequences of torture on a human being are multifaceted and several psychosocial conceptual models are needed to explain the issue in its whole, such as learning theories, information processing, social-cognitive models, social support models, developmental models and learned helplessness (Fairbank et al. 2001). It is important to take into consideration all the different aspect of the way traumatic events affect a whole person's life.

THE RED CROSS CENTRE IN STOCKHOLM

Since 1918 one of the tasks of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been to visit people who are imprisoned. During 2002 IRCR delegates visited 44,063 prisoners in 1,566 places of detention in 75 countries. The aim is to work for improved prison conditions and to give prisoners the opportunity to restore contact with their families through Red Cross messages. Besides this, these visits also serve another important purpose. Thanks to the fact that the Red Cross registers prisoners and visits them regularly, the risk of prisoners disappearing, being subjected to torture or other cruel treatments is reduced. By working in this manner the Red Cross also obtains special knowledge of the conditions experienced by refugees.

The Red Cross Centre for Victims of Torture (RKC) has existed since 1985 in Stockholm. The other centres are located in Malmö (1988), Skövde (1991), Uppsala (1996) and Falun (1998). More than 6000 refugees and asylum-seekers have been treated for torture and war traumas in these centres. Since it became known that the RKC runs treatment programmes for victims of torture, an increasing number of people has been referred here by medical practitioners at health centres. Others come on referral from psychiatrists, social workers or staff at refugee-centres. Some are helped by relatives and friends to find our centres, while others come by themselves, feeling safe with the Red Cross. In Stockholm and Malmö every third client comes to the centre on his/her own initiative.

The RKC offers treatment with a wide range of professionals. Medical doctors, psychologists, psychotherapists, psychiatrists and interpreters work as integral parts of a treatment team. At all centres our professional staff has gained knowledge and experience of how to relate to people with different cultural backgrounds. The multi-disciplinary teams are necessary for assessing the client health situation from a holistic and psychosocial perspective.

The appalling experiences that the Red Cross Centre's clients have endured will always be part of their lives. The aim of our treatment is that each client, as far as possible, is able to regain both mental and physical well-being related to their own individual capacity. The time it takes varies from person to person. The client's family also frequently needs help and support during the period of treatment.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

Each person has an utterly unique life history. Therefore treatment has to be adapted to each individual and has to be based on a profound confidence between the client and the counsellor. During introductory treatment both time and patience are crucial for the outcome of the treatment. Each person who is referred to the Red Cross treatment centre gets to start with one or more introductory discussions where a plan is drawn up for further treatment, considering the client's total life situation. Medical, psychological and social needs are interwoven in an integrated assessment.

The encounter with a refugee, a survivor of torture or war, is particularly delicate. Clients arriving at the Red Cross Centre for Tortured Refugees have often been in Sweden for a while wandering about in a jungle of offices, meeting a large number of social-workers, secretaries, medical staff, etc. Because of this they often feel lost and have still not achieved a global picture of how the Swedish medical or social system works. This is very humiliating, especially for a person whose self-confidence is already suffering because of past traumas. Our work at the start often consists of re-establishing the broken connections between the client and the societal institutions. Misunderstandings in communication and failure to establish trusting relationships are the biggest obstacles to the client's ability to integrate in the new host country and are mostly experienced as re-traumatisation.

Hopelessness and helplessness are the same feelings they felt in prison, when they had no control over events. For this reason our work may at times resemble more that of a social-worker than that of a psychotherapist. Although most of the experts in the centre have a psychodynamic background, psychotherapy gets a much wider meaning when working with this kind of client. It is impossible to treat the trauma without taking the whole person's life situation into consideration. Those therapists who cling too rigidly to their professional identity and are not able to be flexible in the tasks and communication do not last long. Reconstructing the sense of self-esteem is a long process that embraces all the dimensions of the client's life: from the necessity of a shelter to the ability of making the necessary plans towards self-actualisation. It is important that a therapist is open to discussion about the client's different realms of existence and does not feel threatened in his/her professional role. A psychologist, for example, may be left wondering what his/her therapeutic contributions were after explaining a letter or telephoning the employment office or a social worker, but these things contribute to improving the client's sense of well-

being and are often necessary to build up a trusting relationship (von Kaehne 2001).

The experience of the staff at the Red Cross Centre has resulted in a practical set of questions (table 3) for the therapist to follow in order to get a holistic picture of the client, one that embraces all realms of existence of the client. Whatever the problem may be, we focus on the person's whole life situation. We ask about the country of origin, the languages, the need for a translator, date of arriving in the country, when the client got a permanent residence permit, family conditions, accommodation, education in the home-country and in Sweden, previous contacts with physicians or psychiatrists, medication, description of physical problems, description of psychological problems, background, need for help and, of course, if there is a history of torture because that is a necessary criterion for getting treatment at the centre. It takes three sessions to assess the above mentioned. We are very keen not to make it sound like an interrogation as we know that our clients have been through much too many of those. This may sound as an obvious fact. However, communicating with refugees implies meeting with people with a wide spectrum of cultural differences, so our clinical formation is hardly sufficient to tangle this. The vastness of dimensions intertwined in communicating across cultures and with these patients may signify a great challenge for the counsellor and a great deal of courage is needed to undertake this adventure.

MULTICULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

It is not only the professional identity that is “endangered”, the counsellor is tested in many more dimensions of his/her own existence. The sense of wholeness (in Jung's meaning), of knowledge of one self, the sense of mastering communication with the environment, and of coherence may be tested when the counsellor is communicating with people from other cultures. The counsellor does not have any cluster to put the client in, the diagnostic system is insufficient, the counsellor him/herself is lost in a jungle of observations, emotions, stories, words, languages, tears and laughs... and has to try not to drown and hold on to his/her dignity as a skilled professional. To cope with this you should have a good sense of humour, be a good communicator, possibly know one or two languages, and be able to cope with organisational chaos (von Kaehne 2001).

Chaos often represents a threat to our sense of identity. The fear of chaos leads the counsellor to cling even more strongly to his/her secure systems of categorising and organising reality. The counsellor becomes more rigid and the client is the enemy, the threat. The result of this is a subject-object communication in which the counsellor/subject projects his/her anxiety on the observed object/client. In this relationship there is no sharing of a common ground, it is a static one-sided relationship, fertile ground for prejudices and xenophobia (see figure 1).

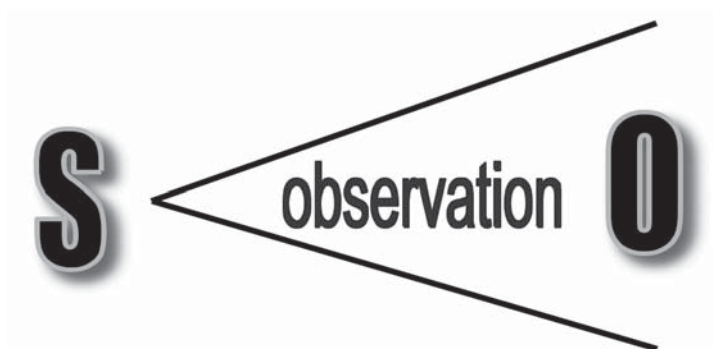


Figure 1. *Subject-object communication*

In the Western tradition science has taken the place of religion and we worship science in the same way our ancestors did their gods. Rationalism was a reaction to the bloody times of the Inquisition; we just need to look around us to see that we have not reached a higher maturity when it comes to communicating with each other in this world. Education has not made us better people. In one study (Sidanius & al. 1996) we are informed that racism does not necessarily correlate with ignorance; on the contrary, it increases with educational sophistication. It is absolutely clear that our education in psychology does not prevent us from falling into the trap of racism and prejudice; we have to find other ways to find better communication skills and more fruitful attitudes. The novelist, and in the author's opinion a great contributor to European cross-cultural communication, Tahar Ben Jelloun (1984, 1998) writes that the only way to work for a change of attitudes in people is to work with children's attitudes. He states that it is impossible for a grown up to change his/her attitudes. This pessimistic opinion was the result of his work on trying to teach adults to change attitudes in France. However, the greatest challenge in the encounter with people of other cultures

is that one should learn to become like a child in that situation as one has to learn all anew. With humour, humility and a spirit of adventure one will be open to questioning old convictions and removing blind spots.

There are modern teaching methods that are based on a whole new way of looking at how people learn new things, one is *Suggestopedia*, which is a phenomenal method used for teaching new languages: roleplays, games, relaxation techniques, humour, art, etc., are the tools. Suggestopedia is a teaching method that is based on a modern understanding of how the human brain works and how we learn most effectively. It has been developed by the Bulgarian doctor and psychotherapist Georgi Lozanov (Lozanov 1978). The term ‘Suggestopedia’, derived from suggestion and pedagogy, is often used loosely to refer to similar accelerated learning approaches. Suggestopedia was originally applied mainly to foreign language teaching, and it has often been claimed that with the help of suggestopedia languages can be learnt approximately three times as fast as through conventional methods. It is now applied to several other fields. In my opinion, it could very well be applied to teaching cross-cultural communication and helping people change negative or rigid attitudes towards other cultures.

The ideal communication is the one that happens between two subjects with reciprocal respect, in which two people are sharing a common ground (see figure 2).

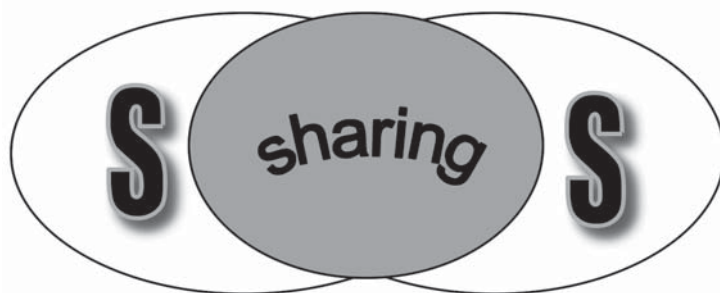


Figure 2. *Subject-subject communication*

To grant the client the position of subject in our communication requires that we put ourselves in the same boat and share a reality that is certainly not very comfortable, especially when we are dealing with people who have been tortured. In these cases, in

fact, the counsellor is forced to witness horrifying realities that have the power to shake him/her deeply as he/she, as well, is forced to find a meaning for existence and make sense of a brutal reality, feeling at times as if he/she is drowning in an ocean of evil events.

The view of counselling varies a great deal from person to person and across cultures. One can never generalise, but in many countries the power of the therapeutic dialogue is completely unknown until a person has the opportunity to experience it. An Afghan woman told me, to my surprise, after a long time of seeing me at the Centre, that she had always believed only doctors, pills or injections would have helped her, and that she was amazed how just talking with someone had helped her. The demand for doctors, pills, injections or other concrete and palpable solutions is very pressing for a counsellor and it is not always possible to establish a trustful relationship if we are not willing to let the client try that route. Clients often talk to the counsellor as if he/she was a doctor, and sometimes one may like to sound like a doctor, to gain credibility... In another case the client had had the most terrible pains but had not had the courage to meet a doctor: doctors were the ones that after visiting her in jail reported that she was well enough to be tortured further. Other clients may talk in a very intimate way that we are not used to in the Scandinavian countries; they may project on us the positive figure of an important relative lost in the war or in jail. This may increase the meaningfulness of the client opening his/her heart to a complete stranger.

In every one of the above-mentioned cases a counsellor is confronted with his/her own sense of integrity (identity) and is forced to take other roles to establish the necessary trustful relationship. This skill is only learned by experience and being able to make a fool of oneself more than once... This situation may lead the counsellor to blame the client for not being adequately integrated in a certain cultural, medical or social context, a feeling of helplessness and powerlessness may invade the counsellor, who is at risk of projecting these feelings on the client.

AN INDICATIVE CASE

XX is a young man with a university degree from a country in the Middle East. He suffers from complicated PTSD (table 2). He has been tortured severely in many ways, among others by having to witness his mother being violated, being put in a coffin for a very long time, witnessing others being executed, being submitted to

fake execution, isolated and humiliated with words and other acts. At the time of the assessment at the Red Cross Centre, he is staying in the house of some acquaintances he has got in Sweden, but he is no longer welcome there because of his loud screams during the night due to nightmares. There are also two children living in the house and they are becoming more and more scared of him. He has not received any help from anybody to find a place to stay, so he has often been out all night in underground stations in order not to disturb the family. In total despair he has tried to commit suicide a couple of times and has ended up in the psychiatric in-ward for short times. We use a translator during our 45-minute sessions.

The treatment plan is to get him a place to stay as soon as possible. For this I have to contact many social workers that have been involved with XX. Of course none of them is aware of the extent of traumatising XX is suffering, so my job is (with the consent of XX) also to explain this to them. XX feels that the people he has met have been rude and aggressive towards him, but my opinion is that the communication has been biased because of cultural differences and XX's difficulty to trust people. He needs to be reconnected to these people because they are his only network in this country. He has no family in Sweden, no friends whatsoever, so at the moment his only contacts are with social workers, psychiatry and the Red Cross Centre. After a while he gets a provisional apartment, a better relationship with the social workers. This is the point when he is able to start talking about torture, to start thinking about trying to make new friends and studying Swedish.

Unfortunately, when refugees reach this country, the demands are often the other way around. They have to, for example, trust the social workers so much that they are able to talk about torture right away, and then they have to go to Swedish lessons before they have a place to stay. In this case what made a difference at the start of treatment was that we had plenty of time to talk and a translator. This gave us a possibility to straighten out misunderstandings and overcome obvious cultural differences, thus creating trustful communication and a relaxed atmosphere. These are basic requisites for successful counselling. However, my willingness to deal with practical problems and to co-operate with other societal employees was of crucial importance; in other words, not being stuck in my professional identity as a psychologist. Psychotherapy and the processing of XX's traumatic experiences was the next step in treatment, the common ground for communication was now fertile. The counsellor's role is often to prepare this ground so that the client can make the most of further psychotherapy.

CONCLUSIONS

It appears that the common ground counsellors share with clients is a battleground in which all are involved in the same battle against evil: a very delicate and intricate battle where the frontline is the narrow line (within ourselves) between care and cruelty (Igra 2001). Instead of integrating evil we create a polarised reality where “we” are the good ones and “they” are the evil ones. “They” are the people representing the culture of the torturer, and, consequently, the tortured. We are not able to share such a painful reality in which humans are capable of such horrendous acts. If humans are capable of this, even I may be capable ... We would like to stay in the position of observers, but in order to work therapeutically we have to establish a relationship, and to gain trust we have to be capable of *compassion* (*com* + *passion*, meaning the capacity of *suffering together*) and sharing. Creating a common ground of communication where my rules are equal to yours.

The incapability of human beings to integrate the dark side in their own life is such that it may have lethal consequences in one’s life like war, genocide, racism. We need means to transcend the state of dualism that has split the European’s Psyche into an ideal view of life and a material view of life. Today we may believe in the welfare state, in universal peace, in the equality of man, in his eternal human rights, in justice, truth, and, we may try to build a “perfect society” where no evil is present. The sad truth is that man’s real life consists of a complex of inexorable opposites, day and night, birth and death, happiness and misery, good and evil. We are not even sure that one will prevail against the other, that good will overcome evil, or joy defeat pain. Life is a battleground. It always has been, and always will be; and if it were not so, existence would come to an end. New ideologies, even if contrasting with each other, promised to establish the perfect societies where humans would not have to suffer anymore, anyone who didn’t follow the ideology became the carrier of the evil, the enemy, the “other”, guilty of all disgrace. But as Jung states “[...] *nobody is outside the collective shadow of humanity. To blame others for the evil is the same as losing the possibility of perceiving it within ourselves and so, to lose the ability to deal with it.*” (Jung 1957 cit. in von Franz 1972).

As R. D. Laing (1967) states, disagreements shake us out of our slumbers, and force us to see our own point of view through contrast with another person who does not share it. But we resist such confrontations. The history of heresies of all kinds testifies to more than the tendency to break off communication (excommuni-

cation) with those who hold different dogmas or opinions; it bears witness to our intolerance of different fundamental structures of experience. We seem to need to share a communal meaning to human existence, to give with others a common sense to the world, to maintain consensus.

Shall we realise that We and Them are shadows of each other? We are Them to Them as They are Them to Us. When will the veil be lifted? When will the charade turn to Carnival? Saints may still be kissing lepers. It is high time that the lepers kissed the saint.

(R. D. Laing, 1967. The Politics of Experience, 83)

QUESTIONS AND TASKS

- 1) Are you aware that a high percentage of those refugees you meet in counselling have been exposed to torture? Do you know what the percentage figure in your country is?
- 2) How would you approach the subject of torture with your client and see that he/she gets the right psychotherapeutic help? Discuss the issue with your colleagues.
- 3) Do you normally gather together a detailed life-story when encountering a refugee and are you aware of the possibility of memory distortions due to PTSD? What is the role of such a life-story in refugee counselling and how can memory distortions best be approached? Discuss these questions with your colleagues.
- 4) Are you well informed about various torture methods? Different regimes have had different preferences in torture methods; it may be helpful to have an idea about which they are in the country of your refugee client. Find information about various torture methods (e.g. on the internet) and share that information with your colleagues.

- 5) How do you feel about your professional role? Do you feel you are a good link from and to other helping professionals?
- 6) How do you react when you hear horrifying stories of war, rape and torture? Do you feel you can stay focussed and support the client? What could you do to better cope with your own eventual helpfulness in such situations?

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<http://www.careerfocus.bmjournals.com> (18.12.2004)

WEBSITES

The Red Cross Centre for Victims of Torture in Stockholm:

<http://www.redcross.se/rkcstockholm/>

IRCT - International Rehabilitation for Torture Victims (Denmark):

<http://www.irct.org/usr/irct/home.nsf>

International Committee of the Red Cross:

<http://www.icrc.org/>

APPENDIX 1.

TABLE 1

SIMPLE PTSD (DSM IV)

A. Exposure to life threatening experience

Intense subjective distress upon exposure

B. Re-experiencing the trauma:

Recurrent intrusive recollections, or repetitive play,
recurrent dreams

Suddenly acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring

Intense distress upon re-exposure to events reminiscent of trauma

Physiological reactivity upon re-exposure

C. Persistent avoidance or numbing of general responsiveness.

Efforts to avoid thoughts or feelings associated with trauma

Efforts to avoid activities

Psychogenic amnesia

Diminished interest in significant activities

Feelings of detachment or estrangement

Sense of foreshortened future

D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal

Difficulty falling or staying asleep

Irritability or outbursts of anger

Difficulty concentrating

Hypervigilance

Exaggerated startle

TABLE 2

COMPLICATED PTSD.

I. Alteration in Regulation of Affect and Impulses

- A. Affect Regulation
- B. Modulation of Anger
- C. Self-Destructive
- D. Suicidal Preoccupation
- E. Difficulty Modulating Sexual Involvement
- F. Excessive Risk Taking

II. Alterations in Attention or Consciousness

- A. Amnesia
- B. Transient Dissociative Episodes and Depersonalisation

III. Somatisation

- A. Digestive System
- B. Chronic Pain
- C. Cardiopulmonary Symptoms
- D. Conversion Symptoms
- E. Sexual Symptoms

IV. Alterations in Self-Perception

- A. Ineffectiveness
- B. Permanent Damage
- C. Guilt and Responsibility
- D. Shame
- E. Nobody Can Understand
- F. Minimising

V. Alterations in Perception of the Perpetrator

- A. Adopting Distorted Beliefs
- B. Idealisation of the Perpetrator
- C. Preoccupation with Hurting Perpetrator

VI. Alterations in Relations with Others

- A. Inability to Trust
- B. Revictimisation
- C. Victimising Others

VII. Alterations in Systems of Meaning

- A. Despair and Hopelessness
- B. Loss of Previously Sustaining Beliefs

TABLE 3

Headings for initial assessment

Country of origin
Language, need of translator
Dates of arrival in Sweden, permanent residence permit
Family situation
Accommodation
Education, work home-country
Education, work in Sweden
Prison, torture
Description of psychological problem
Previous contact with therapists
Description of physical status
Contacts with physicians
Medications
Background
Current situation
Need for help
Assessment
Plan for treatment

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

V





Sauli Puukari & Mika Launikari

Multicultural counselling in Europe – Reflections and challenges

REFLECTIONS ON THE CONTENTS

The primary theme of this publication has been understanding the theoretical framework and practical implementation of guidance and counselling in a multicultural setting/context in today's Europe. The various perspectives on multicultural counselling presented in the articles by scientists, researchers, experts, trainers, guidance counsellors, psychologists and immigrants give a good overview of the theories, approaches and practices which an individual guidance counsellor should be closely acquainted with when working with culturally diverse populations. However, counselling across cultures is too extensive a topic to be covered in any single book or by any single author. But the publication challenges readers to question their own prevailing culturally learned assumptions. It also demonstrates that culture is a complex, dynamic, diffuse and fluid reality, whose impact on guidance and counselling as well as on communication is thus often difficult to comprehend.

A central underlying theme throughout the publication has been what is and what will be the future role of the multicultural counselling services provided by education, employment, as well as by social and health care sectors, in supporting the social and societal inclusion of immigrants in Europe. Multicultural counselling should actually be seen from a broader perspective so that it covers different information, advisory, therapy, guidance and counselling services as well as language training and activities facilitating the immigrants' orientation to the society as a whole. In addition, there is a need for increased networking and closer cooperation amongst professionals in different sectors for helping cultural and ethnic minorities.

In the coming years the European countries are expected to approach multicultural counselling not only from a purely guidance perspective, but also more from pedagogical, sociological, political, cross-sectoral and multiprofessional points of view. Are the current integration and other support services offered to immigrants by European societies sufficient as they are? Probably not. How should they be developed? How could the national authorities better take the immigrants' real needs and expectations into consideration when planning and providing them with guidance and counselling services? How are the multicultural counselling competencies and qualifications of guidance counsellors to be further developed, and where should the future focus be in evaluation and research in the field of multicultural counselling? All these questions must be answered in close European cooperation in the near future, because cultural diversity and minority issues are already high up on the political agenda of the European Union.

IMMIGRANTS AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Europe is noted for its great economic and technological accomplishments, welfare societies, nurturing of the arts and academic institutions. The European countries are highly regarded for the generally speaking harmonious relationships of the diverse people whose cultures and languages contribute to this multi-layered society. Many different traditions and cultural groups live together in Europe under the aegis of freedom. It is precisely these aspects that make Europe an attractive place for people who are living in poverty and misery as well as for those suffering from wars and famine in other parts of the world.

But too often and for various reasons, the representatives of cultural and ethnic minorities living in Europe are socially excluded or they are at risk of becoming drop-outs in most European countries. The European Commission has identified severe risk factors that increase the danger of poverty and social exclusion. The factors mentioned are long-term unemployment, living long-term on low income, low quality employment, poor qualifications and early leaving school, growing up in a family vulnerable to social exclusion, disability, poor health, drug abuse and alcoholism, living in an area of multiple disadvantages, homelessness and precarious housing, immigration, ethnic background and risk of racial discrimination. (Commission 2001.)

The European Commission has also identified eight core challenges in facilitating social and societal inclusion of all groups of citizens, including migrant and ethnic groups (Commission 2001):

- developing an inclusive labour market and promoting employment as a right and opportunity for all
- guaranteeing adequate income and resources for a decent standard of living
- tackling educational disadvantages
- preserving family solidarity and protecting the rights of children
- ensuring reasonable accommodation for all
- guaranteeing equal access to and investing in high-quality public services (health, transport, social, care, cultural, recreational and legal)
- improving the delivery of services
- regenerating areas of multiple deprivation

Migrant and ethnic minorities, whether they are socially excluded/marginalised or not, are not a one-faced group of people, but human beings with individual needs and capacities. This requires that European societies consider integration as a process of mutual adaptation, in which both immigrant and native citizens take their responsibilities and seize the chances to develop their ability to be self-sufficient and to participate in society. Every action must be taken to involve policy- and decision-makers at European, national and regional levels in processes that retain and promote a multilingual and multicultural Europe, as well as the social and economic welfare of all people living in Europe. A key challenge is to work out national strategies that encourage better collaboration between the various guidance and counselling systems in the education, employment and social and health care sectors so that they more efficiently support the integration of culturally diverse populations in European societies.

NETWORKS AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES OF SOCIETY IN RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF CULTURALLY DIFFERENT PEOPLE

Collaborative networks

Multicultural counselling should not be seen as separate from the societal structures in the sense that it could be considered only as ‘psychological help’. This is a very important part, but it is not enough. Sue et al. (1999) note that “multiculturalism is not only about understanding different perspectives and worldviews but also about social justice” (p. 1064). During the past years a number of interesting articles have been published on the social justice issue, noting that counsellors should also advocate and pay attention to and also respond to social problems which require concrete actions – responding often means responding together with other people (see e.g. Arredondo & Perez 2003; Baluch, Pieterse & Bolden 2004; Ivey & Collins 2003; Vera & Speight 2003). Therefore, building collaborative networks with a number of other professional groups and with members of clients’ communities is an important part of counsellors’ work.

Collaborative network systems vary in different countries, but it is useful to take examples which may provide ideas for development. An interesting Finnish follow-up study, which was based on extensive national data, showed that school counsellors have attempted to respond to the challenges of immigrant integration by establishing interprofessional collaboration networks inside and outside the school. These networks include teachers, local authorities in social and health care and labour administration, representatives in ethnic minority organisations as well as human resource personnel in local enterprises. There has also been development in collaboration with labour administration and local industry and commerce. Analysis of the research data indicated that there were two different approaches to interprofessional interaction. One approach had some similarities with the European student-centred holistic model of guidance (van Esbroeck & Watts 1998). The starting point of the holistic model is students’ needs, which require integration of the expertise of teachers, school counsellors and other professionals outside the school. In addition to providing support and advice for immigrants, school counsellors acted as observers of problems outside of their own expertise (e.g. social security and mental health matters), and, if necessary, consulted experts in other fields. (see e.g. Lairio & Nissilä 2002; Lairio, Nissilä & Puukari 2003)

The collaborative networks of multicultural counselling should also include representatives from cultural minorities. These representatives could be peers who have already integrated into the new society well enough and are thus able to work as mediators and role models. For instance, there are good experiences in training cultural minority adolescents to work as peer tutors for younger members of similar groups (see e.g. Frisz 1999). Furthermore, religious authorities and traditional healers of certain cultural groups may sometimes be of help in multicultural counselling, especially in cases where the counsellor is not familiar with the topics which are important to the client. For instance, Moodley (1999) presented a case where it seemed that “through the traditional healer he [the client of the case] was able to identify cultural metaphors, symbols and archetypes which may have been outside the parameters of Western counselling and therapy” (p. 148). Moodley continues: “Although research in the area of culture and representations of illness is still very limited, we are aware that ethnic-minority communities respond differently when it comes to representing illness, discomfort and distress. These socially and culturally constructed ways of expressing our deepest emotions must be understood by the multicultural counsellor if he/she is to practice in a non-oppressive and ethical manner.” (Moodley 1999, 149).

A number of studies have indicated that in many cases people of different cultural minorities often experience the available guidance and counselling services as not responding to their needs. The approaches and methods that are typical of Western countries do not pay enough attention to the specific cultural aspects and represent something which is felt to be strange or cold. Many studies conclude that even multicultural approaches to counselling and therapy can be characterised as Eurocentric, representing cultural hegemony, lack of minority counsellors, and racism (Carter 1995; Bimrose & Bayne 1995; Lago & Thompson 1996; Sashidharan 1990; Sue & Sue 1990). Therefore, involvement of representatives from various cultures is needed in planning services which are better suited to all. Flexible and versatile approaches and methods are needed in order to respond to the needs of diverse populations.

Moodley (1999) notes that, given the fact that client’s life experiences are pivotal in therapy (and counselling), it is important to note the differences of ethnic minority clients irrespective of which generation they belong to. However, Nader Ahmadi (see chapter 6 in this book) stresses that there may be a danger in emphasising the ethnic background and cultural identity too much, because this may lead dominating cultural groups to consider the minority groups as something special “outside” society and

keep them at a distance without giving them an opportunity to integrate into society and take part in decision making as equal citizens.

A holistic perspective on support structures

A more holistic, societal perspective is also needed. We need to be aware of how the well-being of immigrants and refugees – as well as all members of societies – is linked to the policies and/or structures of the organisations involved, and more generally to societal structures and politics. Therefore, when considering the integration of immigrants and other culturally different groups into society, it is important to note the impact of the decisions and policies of various institutions in societies. For instance, in an interesting article Ley & Murphy (2001) studied immigration in “gateway” cities and indicated how different policies had some identifiable links to immigration as well as, for example, summarised observations of different patterns of the development of immigrant communities within the two cities studied, Sydney and Vancouver.

How could we evaluate guidance and counselling service systems in a holistic way in order to cover important levels and perspectives? A comprehensive evaluation matrix could be used for implementing a holistic evaluation. The matrix could also be used for evaluating the services targeted at culturally different clients. The matrix is based on a model (Kasurinen & Vuorinen 2003), which promotes congruence between the strategic planning and the implementation of guidance services. The model describes guidance and counselling as a chain of services, and the responsibilities of different providers are being described at different layers. As a whole, the model works as a framework for making the best use of existing resources employed in responding to the demand for guidance services and the needs of different client groups during the different phases of an individual lifelong learning process. The model can also be used as a framework in developing guidance and counselling services in different educational settings. The overall guidance provision can be described in seven dimensions and parallel strategic questions (Vuorinen 2004, 8–9):

- *Contextual dimension* – National decision making and policy on guidance and counselling issues, legislation, national curriculum guidelines, etc. (Why does guidance matter for public policy?)

- *Systemic dimension* – Description of the contexts, development of local school curricula, to what extent individual programmes are possible, how institutions support the individuals, how teaching is organised, etc. (What are the settings and mechanisms for decision-making on guidance policies?)
- *Time dimension* – Guidance services during different phases of the individual lifelong learning process, primary education – secondary level education – tertiary education – adult education. (When do different client groups need specific guidance services?)
- *Content dimension* – Marketing, information, guidance by means of different communication channels and methods, and the focus of the counselling practice during different phases of the individual study path. (What is the content of lifelong guidance services?)
- *Area dimension* – Psycho-social support, personal guidance, career guidance, educational guidance. (What is the role of different guidance providers within cross-sectoral networks?)
- *Responsibility dimension* – There must be regional plans, which describe the areas of responsibilities for staff members producing guidance and counselling services in different phases of the individual's life span. (Who is in charge of the overall design of cross-sectoral regional and national co-operation?)
- *Methodological dimension* – Description of the methods and facilities which are in use and how these methods are used. (How are the services produced in order to meet the needs of various client groups?)

The model can be also presented in the form of a matrix and be described in more detail by the various stakeholders and social partners at institutional and regional levels (see figure 1).

F a c t o r s b e h i n d e c i s i o n m a k i n g	Time dimension (When?)	Comprehensive education	Secondary education	Higher education	Working life	Adult education
	Contextual dimension (Framework)					
	Systemic dimension (Where?)					
	Area dimension (What)	Multi-professional expert groups?				
	Responsibility dimension (Who?)	Cooperation?				
	Content dimension (What?)	Transition? Follow-up?				
	Methodological dimension (How?)					

Figure 1. A matrix for connecting guidance policy and practice (Kasurinen & Vuorinen 2003)

ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYERS TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

International migration can significantly influence the size and composition of the labour force in Europe. As fertility continues to decline and life expectancy rises in most European countries, an ageing population and simultaneous depopulation, together with an accelerated population growth in the developing countries, represent considerable economic, social, cultural and environmental challenges and require focused political action over the coming years. In some countries, such as Finland, the government has already initiated an active immigration policy with the aim of attracting more foreigners to the country to tackle the future labour shortage problem due to the rapid increase in the proportion of old people in the Finnish population.

A growing trend towards ethnic, cultural and religious diversity as a result of increased international migration and mobility within Europe challenges the Euro-

pean labour market, as well as forces employers to revise their attitudes towards recruiting immigrants and refugees. An analysis (2000) conducted by the Danish Ministry of Labour shows that one in every four of the more than 1200 private employers interviewed in Denmark would refuse to hire a refugee or immigrant under any circumstances, even if there was no one else available for the open position. This is only speculation, but probably the attitudes of private and public employers in other European countries can be assumed to be equally cautious and critical, and sometimes even resistant to employing foreign-born workforce within domestic job markets.

Mr Ove Hygum, the Danish Minister of Labour at the time when the above analysis was released, said to the Danish newspaper “Politiken”: *“I find this quite fantastic, how out of touch many employers are with the reality of today’s labour market. How little understanding there is of how important jobs are for integration. There seems to be a very powerful bias among those who have never tried to hire foreign workers, an overblown fear that such action would prove disruptive and upset existing employees.”*

The potential reluctance of European employers to recruit immigrants may prove to be very expensive for society as a whole. By failing to integrate immigrants into the national labour force, the European countries will be creating new social and societal problems that will in the long run be very costly to deal with. So, at the end of the day, one central question remains: how to influence employers so that their attitudes become more open, tolerant and positive towards hiring immigrants and refugees in the future. Could one solution be that each public and private employer in Europe should have a strategy or action plan for meeting the challenge of culturally diverse labour force in his/her organisation/company?

MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS – TRAINING OF COUNSELLORS

As pointed out in several articles, it will be necessary to strengthen the competencies of teachers, trainers, guidance counsellors, social workers, psychologists and therapists who work with immigrants and refugees. Some of the authors in this publication have made concrete suggestions for how the initial and continuous training of guidance counsellors could be modernised and improved within a context more and more characterised by cultural diversity. The guidance workers’ active

participation in innovation and development projects at national and European level was also emphasised as one method to upgrade one's own competencies.

Some good national and European training initiatives have already been taken in the area of multicultural counselling. However, the training in multicultural counselling available to guidance counsellors varies a lot in terms of duration, contents, structure, etc. from country to country. Therefore, a future step in Europe should be more effective dissemination of training modules developed in other countries: only this way can good training expertise, experiences and practices in the field of multicultural counselling be available to a wider European audience. In the long run, there will perhaps be a commonly recognised European multicultural counselling qualification for guidance counsellors.

In addition to training, guidance counsellors definitely need both theoretically and practically oriented professional literature about multicultural counselling. Moreover, literature with a variety of other perspectives (including historical, socio-political and pedagogical) should be part of the reading materials for guidance counsellors, thus giving them an overview of issues more loosely or more strictly linked to phenomena such as immigration and integration. For their daily multicultural counselling work counsellors usually prefer to have easy-to-use guides with practical advice and helpful resources. At a European level, this very publication aims at fulfilling this specific need.

Atkinson et al. (1993) proposed that a minimum of three factors should be taken into account when selecting a proper approach to work with a client who has a racial/ethnic minority background:

- the client's level of acculturation
- the locus of the problem's etiology, and
- the goals of helping

Each of these three factors represents a continuum and the following roles of counselling were recognised based on the three-dimensional model: adviser, advocate, facilitator of indigenous support systems, facilitator of indigenous healing systems, consultant, change agent, counsellor, and psychotherapist. These roles are still, more than ten years after the publication of the article, relevant and challenge also European counsellors to reflect on their current roles and seek ways to develop more diverse roles for their diverse clients.

Carey et al. (1990) studied American school counsellors' perceptions of training needs in school counselling on nine general aspects, which could also be considered targets for multicultural training: 1) sensitivity to and understanding of the minority experience, 2) self-understanding and affective growth, 3) skills in cross-cultural communication, 4) specialised knowledge bases and competencies, 5) skills in outreach and community networking, 6) skills in professional consultation, 7) skills in programme development, 8) skills in student advocacy, and 9) skills in ethical decision making. These seem to be relevant training targets in European countries today as well. Optimism is created when good results are achieved in multicultural training. Arthur (2000), in her discussion of the results of a study dealing with the perceived development of multicultural counselling competencies, points out that participation in a graduate course dealing with diversity issues in professional practices affected the self-reported multicultural competencies of graduate students. Positive changes were reported in students' self-awareness and knowledge/skills for working with culturally diverse clients.

In dealing with the teaching of multiculturalism and diversity, Sue et al. (1999) are strongly in favour of an integration model of teaching multiculturalism instead of the separate course model, the area of concentration model, and the interdisciplinary model (the models described by Copeland 1982). The area of concentration model means having a core of courses related to multicultural topics. The interdisciplinary model refers to taking culturally focussed courses outside one's core programme in areas such as anthropology and sociology. The problem with these three models is that they all keep multiculturalism in a sense in isolation from the broader curriculum, whereas the integration model means incorporating multiculturalism in the whole curriculum. To implement this, Sue et al. (1999) stress the importance of not only changing isolated subsystems of an educational organisation but also of making the whole organisation change so that the change covers the aspects listed below. They discuss a psychology programme, but the same aspects could also be applied to other fields of sciences which provide various professionals with knowledge on multiculturalism and multicultural counselling. The important aspects are:

- a) faculty and student preparation in the development of cultural competencies,
- b) multicultural curriculum in all aspects of education and training,
- c) minority representation among students, staff, faculty, and administration,
- d) an inclusive and positive campus climate,

- e) recognition of culturally based teaching and learning styles,
- f) people providing a social support network and services that understand the minority experience, and
- g) that current programmes, policies, and practices negating multicultural development must be changed.

CULTURE AND FAMILIES

Many immigrants encounter problems in adjusting to a new country, particularly when the language and culture are very different from their mother tongue and culture of origin. It is only relatively lately that more attention to the role of culture has been paid in family work and family therapy. For instance, Ariel (1999) notes that in most theories of family therapy, symptoms in the individual are explained by family dysfunction without addressing cultural factors. The arguments for including culture as a part of the explanation system, according to Ariel (1999, 17–18), are:

“Culture creates both order and disorder. That is, psychological symptoms serve as a homeostatic function, not just for the family as a system, but also for the family as a carrier of culture and for the cultural community to which the family belongs. Culture also provides the means to cure such disorders. Both the deviations and their correction protect the culture’s equilibrium. This mechanism can clearly be seen in the culture-bound syndromes. This thesis is true of situations in which the family belongs to a single, relatively homogenous culture. However, most situations in which family therapy is sought involve fusion of different cultures. In such situations, symptoms serve not just a homeostatic function with respect to one’s own culture. They also protect the culture against the stresses produced by the encounter with a different, strange and often hostile culture.” The counsellor should seek knowledge of the culture from the family itself, but he/she “speaks with the family about itself, now about social generalisations”. (Ariel 1999, 17–19)

Not only immigrants and cultural minorities need attention, but also families of dominant cultural groups are important. The goal of family involvement with education is not merely to get families engaged, but rather to connect important home-student-classroom contexts for strengthening children’s learning and development. The

teachers and parents together can influence the child's attitudes, raise his/her awareness of cultural diversity as richness in life, and teach openness, understanding and respect for other cultures. If a generally positive approach to cultural differences is learnt at an early age, this probably contributes to tolerant behaviour towards migrant and ethnic minorities later in life.

Education and training are critical forces in the creation of a multicultural Europe. Youth as well as adults must be equipped with the sensitivity and skills required to live and work in diverse societies. Educational environments must be prepared to meet this need, and to be able to demonstrate inclusion and equity in the process and content of the educational system. The marginalisation of immigrants can be prevented by strengthening remedial teaching, special education and student welfare, by ensuring basic educational security and by developing the education of immigrants.

PEOPLE ARE IMPORTANT

Counsellors and other professionals working with counselling immigrants need to develop a good understanding of the role of culture in our societies and of theories and good practices in the field of multicultural counselling. Our aim has been to provide the readers with an introduction to key theoretical and practical aspects of multicultural counselling and this way motivate them to develop their own relation to multicultural counselling. In addition, the readers are encouraged to be critical and creative in applying the ideas of this book in their own countries and working environments. The questions and concrete tasks at the end of each chapter can be used for individual and collective learning, and that way linked to one's own daily working context. We sincerely hope that our book will be inspiring and useful for its readers and that it will be of help in building multicultural societies and multicultural guidance and counselling services for common good.

In the multi-layered European societies we need to have multiple perspectives on multicultural counselling, but still the most important thing is how we relate to other people. Pedersen et al. (1996) note that "a basic component of counselling experience that remains constant across cultures is a trustful and open relationship between the counsellor and counselling." (p. 16). Locke (1990, 18) points out that the crucial aspect in multicultural counsellors' education is to learn to work with people from different cultures rather than read about cultures. The experiences of net-

working activities as part of multicultural counselling in-service training have also appeared to be very positive and rewarding for the participants (e.g. Launikari & Puukari 2004). We do need theoretical knowledge, and reading books helps in reflecting on our first-hand experiences, but without working with people the theory cannot be linked to everyday reality. Read this book and start linking it to your everyday reality and make contacts with people. People are important!

Curiosity, respect, and openness to learn from other cultures are the driving forces behind all intercultural learning! Without these, making contacts with new people from other cultures becomes difficult – without contacts no trust may develop – without trust there is no good life.

- Mika Launikari and Sauli Puukari -

*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking
new landscapes but in having new eyes.*

- Marcel Proust -

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List of some relevant organisations

Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

http://www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/CRER_RC

Council of Europe

http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Migration

Euroguidance (European Network of National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance)

<http://www.euroguidance.org.uk>

European Association for International Education EAIE

<http://www.eaie.nl>

European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology EAWOP

<http://www.eawop.org>

European Commission

<http://www.europa.eu.int>

European Federation for Intercultural Learning EFIL

<http://efil.afs.org>

European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia EUMC

<http://www.eumc.at>

European Network Against Racism

<http://www.enar-eu.org>

European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations ERCOMER

<http://www.ercomer.org>

Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies

<http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/imes>

International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology

<http://www.iaccp.org>

International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance

<http://www.iaevg.org/IAEVG>

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<http://www.ifrc.org>

Refugeenet - EU Networks on Reception, Integration and Voluntary Repatriation
of Refugees

<http://www.refugeenet.org>

Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research SIETAR

<http://www.sietar-europa.org>

The Refugee Studies Centre

<http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk>

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In this first edition of **Multicultural Guidance and Counselling – Theoretical Foundations and Best Practices in Europe,**

readings of both enduring insight and immediate relevancy introduce the practice and the underlying theories of multicultural counselling from a European perspective. The starting point of the publication is that culture influences all counselling. With an emphasis on developing multicultural counselling competencies, the European authors demonstrate multiple ways and methods with which guidance counsellors can improve their skills to better tackle the challenge of cultural and ethnic diversity among their clients.

Among other topics, the publication focuses on the multiplicity of realities in Europe, the conceptual foundation and ethics of multicultural counselling, cultural identity, intercultural communication and interaction, intercultural conflict management, immigrants in education and in the labour market. Examples of good practices are an integral part of the readings and they reflect current trends in multicultural counselling in Europe. Theoretical aspects presented in the book will become more familiar to the reader with the help of the questions and tasks appended to the chapters.

The book is intended for guidance counsellors who work with migrant clients and look for information on theories, methods and good practices of multicultural counselling. Secondly, it is targeted at trainers of guidance counsellors who can apply the contents and exercises of the handbook to their training programmes for developing intercultural awareness and skills among course participants. Also human resources personnel in multinational and multicultural organisations can benefit from the book.

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