Leading career development services into an uncertain future: Ensuring access, integration and innovation

Theme 1
Context and challenges for career development policy

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Uncertain Future…

• The future by its **very nature** is uncertain.
• It always has been and will continue to be uncertain.
• Uncertainty can generate feelings of **insecurity** and even of **fear**.
Future as Destiny

• Some eschatologies are **linear** in their orientation and portray a **beginning** and an **end**.

• The future **already** exists.

• Deterministic… fatalistic…accepting a *fait accompli*. 
Future as Culmination

• Other eschatologies take a **cyclical** view.

• Life is **not** seen as moving in a single direction from beginning to end.

• Futures are **created** through actions taken in the present.

• The future is viewed as ongoing **culminations** of the actions of the present.
One way of looking at it!
A culture prepares its members to engage with life in a particular manner.

- Only University education can lead to a “good” career.
- Jobs linked to TVET are not dignified. They have no future.
- A girl’s primary responsibility is to be a wife and mother.
- STEM subjects lead to the best careers.
- Traditional occupations are outdated and have no future.
The Cultural Preparedness Approach

Key Concepts

1. Cultural Learning
2. Enculturation
3. Cultural Preparation Status Equilibrium
4. Acculturation
5. Alteration of the Equilibrium
6. Emergence of a new Equilibrium
Concept 1: Cultural Learning

- results just from growing up in a culture.
- Is not the result of reasoned thinking.
- identification with a source of information.
- is an unconscious absorption.
- the learning is deep.
Cultural Preparedness

Concept 2: Enculturation

• Process by which people learn the obligations of the culture that enfolds them, assimilate the values of that culture, and acquire the behaviours that are suitable and obligatory in that culture—for specific practices.

• For example, while the practice of greeting another person is an aspect of socialization, the manner of greeting can vary from one culture to another.
Hello!
Concept 3: Equilibrium

It is not about
- right and wrong,
- correct or incorrect,
- appropriate or inappropriate

It is about
How I have been brought up to behave.

- Habituation to a way of life.
- Mental or emotional balance.
- Internal stability.
- Routinisation of requirements.
Concept 4: Acculturation
The intersection between Culture and Policy

- External influences on a culture.
- Original cultural patterns can change.
- Usually, it is the minority/submissive group that is required to embrace the living patterns of the dominant group.
Hello!
Cultural Preparedness

Concept 5: *Alteration* of Equilibrium

The intersection between Culture and Policy

- Acculturative forces could be **consonant** or **dissonant** with the individual/group’s cultural preparation status.

- Consonance would mean that the acculturation supports, enhances, or **further stabilizes** the existing career preparation status equilibrium.

- Dissonance would mean that the forces of acculturation **disturb** the existing career preparation status equilibrium.
Concept 5: Alteration of Equilibrium

Outsourcing and its acculturative impact on ways of living
The present emphasis and preoccupation is with the post industrial situation.

Evolution of Work

Pre Industrial
- Survival
- Group Oriented
- Generalists rather than specialists
- Small Scale
- Manual
- Dependant on nature

Industrial
- Technical Specialists
- Large Scale
- Mechanisation
- Automation
  - (Mechanical)
- Manufacturing
- Exploited nature

Post Industrial
- Knowledge Specialists
- Global Scale
- Automation
  - (Electronic)
- Services
- Flexibility
- Personal Mediation

Presented by Gideon Arulmani
The Promise Foundation
Yet...
More than two thirds of the world follow occupations such as these...

Does “career” really exist in these contexts?
Contexts *Create* Futures

- Context influences the nature of action and the quality of effort.

- Different contexts create different futures.
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The present emphasis and preoccupation is with the post industrial situation

Pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial forms of work exist simultaneously in many economies.
The manifestation of career can be seen in two broad contexts:

- **Culturally congruent**
  - natural to that context
  - manifestation is spontaneous

- **Culturally alien**
  - induced by global transformations

Mainly cultural contexts:
- **Mainly industrialised Western cultures**
- **Mainly non-industrialised non-Western cultures**
• Some of the largest workforces in the world are located in developing economies.

• Although the notion of career is not indigenous to these societies, the need for career development support is rapidly emerging as a strongly felt need in these contexts as well.

• However, career development continues to be coloured by definitions of career that have been transposed upon these cultures.

• As a result, those involved in workforce and career development in these contexts are trained in ideas, methods and theories that do not equip them to effectively address felt needs.
Contextual Challenges for Policy Development

Culture – Policy Interface
1. Recognise cultural leadership

• A career development policy or a theory or model of career development can only be secondary to the already present leadership structure within a cultural system.

• The group’s elders and leaders must be acknowledged as the culturally sanctioned mediators of cultural learning.

• Their experiences, ideas, and views must be acknowledged and inform policy development.

• These individuals could participate firstly in the development and then in vetting of the policy and intervention.
2. Expand the definition of “client”

- Almost all existing career development models emerge from individualistically oriented epistemologies.
- However, in collectivistically organised cultures, the group rather than the individual, may be the client.
3. Identify and accommodate ways of living

- Cultural learning and enculturation have led to a typical balance in the manner in which a culture engages with the world around.

- In some contexts policy that countermands this balance could be ineffective or even destructive of the wider cohesion already characterising that social fabric.
3. Identify and accommodate ways of living

- At the same time, it may be that the prevailing view is out of date, out of keeping with the realities of the times or even counterproductive.

- The policy target here would be to facilitate the emergence of a new equilibrium that builds upon preserving and accommodating prevailing ways of living.
4. Integrate livelihood and career

- **Formal** (school and college) education is viewed as the entry pass to career, while traditional, **non-formal** practices of skills transmission (e.g., work based learning) are linked to livelihood.

- In many contexts livelihood is the reality, not career.

- Yet, a common tendency amongst career development professionals is to replace livelihood practices with career orientations.
4. Integrate livelihood and career

- Career and livelihood can be viewed within the same frame of reference.

Accordingly, in one situation the objective may be to help the individual explore specific occupational areas (e.g., law, journalism, or nursing) that he/she could consider in relation to his/her aptitudes and interests.

In another perhaps more traditional environment, career guidance may need to help a community identify and gain modern skills to manage their traditional occupations in a viable manner.
5.
Invest in creating and sustaining a qualified work force to deliver career development services

- Promote investment in Training that is congruent with cultural and economic realities.
- Introduce Livelihood Planning.
- Institute networks of career development professionals.
The destiny approach: Motivated by a future created by someone else… accepting the **fait accompli**

The culmination approach: Motivated to create a new future recognising, acknowledging, and working with prevailing cultural practices and economic realities.
THANK YOU!