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Asociación Internacional para la Orientación Educativa y Profesional - AIOEP

IAEVG Communiqué

Life-long educational and vocational guidance for all and support for sustainable work in a turbulent environment

Adopted by the IAEVG General Assembly, November 4, 2020

The beginning of the 21st century has seen rapid economic and social transformations characterized by globalization of our knowledge, information exchange, and economies, by an evolution of our cultures and social norms which are more open to diversity, but provide less structure and support, and by digitalization and automation of means of production. These developments have, on the one hand, supported social progress, helped some countries and individuals to get out of poverty, reduced hunger through more productive agriculture, and improved health and well-being through important innovations in medicine. On the other hand, these rapid changes have triggered an increase of social inequalities with a risk of cumulative disadvantages, consumption of raw materials, and our ecological footprint. The **professional, social, and climatic uncertainty** associated with these rapid developments is associated with **important challenges** for our societies, raising issues of **sustainable development, social justice and biodiversity**, as noted in our previous communiqué, for example in terms of precarious employment, structurally perpetuated inequalities, and social and economic disparities.

The scale and scope of these transformations and ensuing uncertainty have been **amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic**, which has put all societal structures under pressure, with health, social and economic implications that could last for years or decades. This global pandemic has worsened the health and employment situation of those who were already vulnerable, such as marginalized groups or people who do not benefit from decent social support. In doing so, it has revealed weaknesses in the organization of societies that need to be addressed. It is notable that such transformation and uncertainty can be expressed across many domains, from increasing resistance to antibiotics to social crises such as the yellow vest protesters in France and the Black Lives Matter movement to high rates of un- and under-employment in many countries. These and other economic and political tensions will continue to present challenges to the sustainability of our lives.

In such an uncertain environment, exacerbated by this global pandemic, it is more important than ever to promote **sustainable work** and sustainable development while respecting individuals and their environment. This implies that our societies need to be attentive to the systemic and global impact of our activities in a broad sense, and also ensure that people's lives develop in decent and dignified work contexts. In the dynamic world of work, it is crucial to promote **lifelong learning** to enable people to remain employable. Today's labor market increasingly implies complex and discontinuous transitions that require adaptation to completely new work contexts. To support these transitions, which constitute moments of vulnerability, it is important that our societies offer adequate support, especially to those with the fewest resources. While the Convention on the Rights of the Child highlights the importance of young peoples' access to educational and vocational guidance, it is also essential to offer such support to the entire population throughout the life span. Particularly in these times of uncertainty, it is imperative to develop and offer contextualized and inclusive **lifelong educational and vocational guidance and counseling for all**. To promote relevant lifelong vocational guidance and counseling policies, we need to continue and further enhance a collective effort, based on co-operation with parallel international organizations, support and strong commitment of policy makers and the engagement of all educational and vocational guidance practitioners. Currently, educational and vocational guidance practitioners have continued their work through digital means and are developing new forms of digital intervention both at the individual, group and community level, supporting young people and adults and fostering the essential resilience to overcome the difficulties that the Covid-19 came to accentuate. However, it needs more professional and financial support for guidance providers and practitioners in their current efforts to develop and implement digital guidance formats which meet the needs and desires of their clients. The turbulent environment of the 21st century and the Covid-19 pandemic provides challenges and also opportunities for educational and vocational guidance to be part of the solution that can be realized through advocacy and collaboration between practitioners, policy makers and stakeholders.