



Association internationale d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle – AIOSP
International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance - IAEVG
Internationale Vereinigung für Bildungs- und Berufsberatung - IVBBB
Asociación Internacional para la Orientación Educativa y Profesional - AIOEP

IAEVG Communiqué on Social Justice in Educational and Career Guidance and Counselling

*On the occasion of the International IAEVG-Conference “Career counselling: a human or a citizen’s right?”, the IAEVG Board of Directors publishes the following press release/statement, **on the need to advocate for social justice** in educational and career guidance and counselling.*

Social injustices and divisions have increased exponentially in recent years, widening the economic and social gap between, and within, countries. Current economic forces are compounding this situation, and many policies aimed at social inclusion and cohesion have proven to be ineffective in the creation of a democratic, participative and inclusive society in which all voices are heard. We acknowledge that many educational and career guidance practitioners are deeply committed to social justice, advocating for, and with their students and clients at an individual and system level. However, although each of us has roles and responsibilities towards social justice, we need to address the structural and societal barriers that continue to oppress people, requiring leadership and collective efforts. Promoting equality of opportunity regarding access to education, training and employment options is not enough. We need to strive to achieve equity and equality of *outcomes*. This implies that diverse social and cultural groups are given opportunities to actively participate in the policy-making process, and to ensure that their views are recognised and voices are heard and respected, without them having to surrender their values and beliefs.

An individual’s career encompasses all of their life choices, thus there is a need to broaden the remit of those engaged in the delivery of educational and career guidance and counselling services. Career practitioners must, therefore, be enabled to advocate for quality opportunities, for diverse client groups as they seek to find their way in a fast-paced world. This will require them to reach out to those who seek alternative paths; members of non-dominant groups; those that may be placed at the margins of society; and others who may not readily access guidance support. This advocacy requires the provision of *real* support to enable people to develop their potential and capabilities, whatever form this may take, and regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion socio-economic class, dis/ability, sexual orientation, and their intersections. We need to document best practices to demonstrate how the concept of social justice can be applied, mentor our colleagues, and provide evidence of how practices based on social justice make a positive difference in people’s lives.

It is necessary to create the conditions that allow for a widening of participation and openness in dialogue to ensure that the voices and concerns of all people are both acknowledged *and* heard. Social justice is also about recognising diversity between, and within groups, and that the needs of community members should not be subservient to the ever-increasing demands of the labour market. Consequently, the ‘career’ agenda should not be driven by economic rationalist arguments, but rather encompass a holistic view through which the needs of all human development and multiple pathways are considered.

We need to promote commitment to social justice at all levels of society, and to incorporate a critical-reflective approach to social justice within political and institutional practices. Therefore, we call on policy makers to renew their thinking about the contribution career education, guidance and counselling can make to the promotion of a just society, and to provide the material and political support to make this a reality. Within an educational context, for example, career practitioners need this support to prepare students to become critical and active citizens of the future, regardless of their employment status.

IAEVG, as the largest worldwide guidance association, appeals to providers, practitioners, academics and policy makers, **to increase their efforts by embracing social justice as a core value that guides their practices. IAEVG members** have an important role to play in leading and promoting research and



Association internationale d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle – AIOSP
International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance - IAEVG
Internationale Vereinigung für Bildungs- und Berufsberatung - IVBBB
Asociación Internacional para la Orientación Educativa y Profesional - AIOEP

practice **located within a social justice agenda**, and their employers must assist them in this endeavour. This will help to ensure that career practice becomes meaningful, and *real* career choice is made available to all people.