Life-and- career designing for sustainable development and decent work

Chapter: Life Design and career counseling: contributions to social justice

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Abstract

This chapter addresses the contribution of the Life Design paradigm (Savickas, et al, 2009) and, consequently, career counseling for decent work and social justice. The approach taken herein is justified by the current context of a globalized economy, in which rapid change has led to new employment opportunities, but which also represents challenges to equity and social justice. The starting point of this chapter sees the Life Design paradigm and Life Design counseling characterized as a method for grounding the discussion on this particular career counseling approach and its contributions for decent work and social justice. Building on this foundation, a presentation of an illustrative case of these practices follows, in which the promotion of the clients' self-determination is complemented by a supported employment approach in which collaborative action between the target population, family and different community institutions facilitate the integration of disadvantaged populations into the labor market. Finally, conclusions summarize the most useful and important suggestions made throughout this chapter.

Keywords: Social Justice; Life Design; career counseling; reflexivity.

Life Design and career counseling: contributions to social justice

Introduction

The social, economic and political changes underway throughout the world and economic globalization, in detriment to a more humanist globalization centered on well-being, have promoted a growth in transnational mobility and competitiveness based on an increase in low-cost productivity. The problems affecting large swathes of the population – employment instability, precarious employment, unemployment, discrimination and migrations – have contributed in a way that sees many left at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing and staying in the employment market. Data produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS; 2004) is illustrative of this phenomenon, with on in every four workers in the USA having been with their current employer for less than a year. This environment of employment instability is now more generalized, as can be seen in a report produced by the International Labor Organization (ILO; 2016), which in 2016 noted that 46% of the total global working population (representing 1.5 billion people) were not in stable employment. Employment precarity is another consequence of globalized economies. In 2014, around 59% of the European Union's work force had full-time permanent contracts, while the rest were in a more precarious position: freelance (11%), marginal part-time (9%), permanent part-time (7%), fixed-term employment (7%), temporary agency work (1%) and apprenticeship or training contracts (2%) (Broughton et al., 2016). Additionally, unemployment figures are on the rise, with 2016 seeing another 2.3 million people put out of work, while another 1.1 million people are expected to face the same fate in 2017 (ILO, 2016). However, the problem of unemployment does not impact on all sectors of the population equally. For example, in USA the employment-population ratio for persons

with a disability is lower (17.9%) than for those with no disability (65.3%) (Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2017). Moreover, only 34.4% of people with a disability were in employment in the USA (Cornell University, 2015) while in the space of European Union 47% of persons with disabilities are employed (European Disability Forum, 2017).

As a result of economic constrains and/or multiple forms of marginalization (e.g. discrimination, classism), many of these peoples are disadvantaged in terms of career development. For some people, economic constrains play a decisive role in obtaining the economic, social and cultural resources needed for full career development and access to decent work. For others, marginalization, defined as the "relegation of people (or groups of people) to a less powerful or included position within society" (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer & Autin, 2016, p. 132), is the decisive factor. It is precisely on this point that research can offer empirical evidence in relation to the role of social class (Blustein, Kozan, Connors-Kellgreen, & Rand, 2015), poverty (Maree, 2015) discrimination (Cardoso & Ferreira Marques, 2008), disabling conditions and (Szymansky & Parker, 2003) immigration (Schultheiss, 2015) as a hindrance to access to decent work and a stimulant of social exclusion, defined here as the impossibility of a full participation in society which would see people not only contribute, but benefit from seeing their own personal necessities fulfilled (Bell, 1997).

Taking into consideration the proliferation of decent work deficit and social exclusion, brought about through broad social (e.g. different forms of discrimination) and contextual (e.g. disadvantaged backgrounds) factors that hinder sustainable career development and decent work, the aim of this chapter is to present Life Design Counseling (LDC; Savickas, 2015) possibilities for career interventions that facilitate access to decent work and promote social justice. Since the chapter refers approaches

aiming to promote socio-professional integration of disadvantage people, social exclusion is viewed from the social integrationist perspective, which considers participation in paid work key to social inclusion (Watts, 2001).

The chapter begins with the presentation of LDC framework. In the second section, considerations are given on LDC possibilities for enhancing decent work and social justice. From this perspective of social exclusion, designated social integrationist, participation in paid work is viewed as the key to social inclusion (Watts, 2001). At the end of this section the relevance of contextual factors in career development of disadvantaged populations is referred to highlight the importance of these interventions not be exclusively focused on inter- and intrapersonal career development factors, but also take into consideration social action at the institutional, community, public policy and international/global levels (Cook, 2017). In the next section, the process of balancing the focus on the self-determination of the individual with a focus on a transformation of contextual factors that reinforce the disadvantaged position (Blustein, et al., 2005; Prilleltensky, 1997) is illustrated by presenting an intervention in which LDC was integrated into supported employment approach. Our proposal focuses exclusively on collaborative activities at the individual, institutional and communal level, with these being the tiers which the counselor can more easily influence as part of their more routine interaction with disadvantaged populations in general. The chapter concludes with an overview of the subject and a reference on LDC limitations for the intervention with disadvantaged populations in general.

The Life Design paradigm and Life Design counseling

The Life Design paradigm (Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, et al., 2009) emerged as an answer to the demands of social and economic transformation. By

contrast to a traditional view of career counseling as a rigid and rational process where the use of psychological tests and giving occupational information are core tasks (Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston, 2009), Life Design requires reflection on the Self and one's environment, receptivity to feedback and the specific capacity to imagine possible Selves. These requirements pose a challenge to career practitioners, who in response need to develop alternative/new competencies. Given the nature of the continuous changes and demands of counseling interventions, the need to build new counseling relationships would appear obvious. These new bonds are based on individual narratives, stories and dialogue and must be constructed as a way of enabling clients to express their emotions, reveal their lives, discover reasons for change and identify the salient components of their Selves.

The counseling process fed by Life Design perspectives is based on a co-construction of identity and in which each party (the counselor and the client) acts upon, and reacts to, the other. The success of this kind of relationship is largely predicated on the adequate training of counselors.

Life Design Counseling (LDC; Savickas, 2011a; 2015) is the application of the Life Design paradigm (Savickas et al., 2009). In the epistemological matrix of social constructivism, this approach to career counseling is based on the conception of human functioning as a continuous process of constructing meaning in the context of interpersonal relationships. In this perspective, narrative thinking plays a fundamental role in this construction of meaning, as is allows for a symbolization of individual experience (Greenberg & Watson, 2006; McAdams, 1993; Sarbin, 1986; White & Epston, 1990).

With the idea that individuals give meaning to personal experiences through the stories that they narrate as their starting point, counselors who base their practice on

LDC look at careers as the grand narrative that organizes our individual experiences throughout our life cycles. To this end, the main objective of intervention is therefore to help clients in the clarification of their narrative identity, i.e. with the construction of a representation of his/her past, present and future in a continuous and coherent manner. Career plans hence emerge as one of the methods people use to project the future, thereby conferring a sense of order and intentionality to their existence (Cardoso, 2012). Beyond narrability, LDC also aims to enhance adaptability (Savickas et al, 2009), i.e. the self-regulating processes which help us to manage challenges to the fulfilment of our career plans. In the framework of LDC, adaptability is the "individual's readiness and resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks of vocational development" (Savickas, 2002, p.156) and involves four dimensions: concern about future planning, curiosity about oneself and the structure of opportunities, feeling of being in control of one's life and having confidence to face career challenges (Savickas & Porfelli, 2012).

To enhance narrability and adaptability, LDC interventions evolve over three sessions (Savickas, 2011a). In the first session, the client is helped to define the problem and the Career Construction Interview is utilized (ECC; Savickas, 2011a) as a way of facilitating the narration of episodes from the client's life story.

In the second session, the counselor and the client explore the episodes which were narrated in the previous session, as a way of helping the client to construct a coherent and continuous representation of his/his life story. Helping the client to identify his/her life theme is fundamental in this process, with this theme representing the central problem in the client's life and the solutions that he/she has been searching for to solve that problem (Csikszetmihalyi & Beattie, 1979). As with any story, it is this theme that allows for a continuous and coherent linkage to the different episodes of our

lives and to create the conditions for the client to be helped in projecting new episodes (career plans) in different career roles in the third session.

By considering different career roles throughout life-span, this holistic approach has the double advantage, this holistic approach has the double advantage of integrating career problems in the framework of a psychosocial dynamic, while opening the client up to new possibilities for personal realization that do not restrict the role of the worker. In this light, the designation of Life Design Counseling is clearly justified, as career plans are forecast as instruments for giving the significance to the meaning of life that we are searching for (Savickas, 2011b).

Throughout this intervention process, three dimensions are fundamental for individual change: relationship, reflection and sense-making (Cardoso, Duarte, Gaspar, Janeiro & Santos, 2016; Maree, 2016; Reid, Bimrose & Brown, 2016; Savickas, 2015; Taveira, Ribeiro, Cardoso & Silva, submitted).

Relationships emerge as core element of LDC, as meaning-making fundamentally is a relational process (Mahoney, 2003). Thus, the counselor-client relationship is viewed as a co-construction process in which the counselor assumes a participatory attitude in the client's experience, helping him/her to freely express the subjective experience of his/her career, to explore emerging representations and to construct new meanings (Savickas, 2011b). This represents an equal involvement between the counselor and the counselee. The counselor establishes a relationship of usefulness with the client. The idea of an equal relationship in the LDC process represents the counselor's work placed at the service of the individual and considers that the client is the only expert when it comes to the content of his/her story, whereas the counselor is an expert when it comes to the process.

Reflection moves clients to rewrite narrative identity, i.e. to the elaboration of a coherent and continuous life story which allows new possibilities of self-construction (Savickas, 2011a). The concepts of reflection and reflexivity are elaborated on, in order to describe the multiple dialogues involved in the client's endeavors for meaning-making (Cardoso et al., 2016). Each client has a story that tells their life biography and one possible life. The work of the counselor consists of assisting the client in understanding that the principle of consistency can always be found underlying in all of us. That consistency is the same fact, the same little story, which can be analyzed from different perspectives. In short, the counselor prompts and sometimes guides reflection, to help clients tighten coherence and highlight continuity in the collection of the stories that are being told. This reflection produces new perspectives, spur new realizations, clarifies meaning and deepens emotions…all of which clarifies what is at stake and enhances decision making.

Sense making is an expression of the Self as a process of repeatedly organizing past, present and future experiences. Through this perspective, career plans are viewed as an expression of sense making: a fundamental dimension of self-organization which gives intentionality and purpose to narrative identity (Savickas, 2011b). In other words, the rewriting of the script of life itself. The main process in the meaning-making dialogue is to ensure that the individual is not excluded from his/her own process. To understand if what the individual "is" is how the individual is, where the individual fits into globalization, uncertainty, insecurity and risk, it is crucial to first identify the webs which envelop the concept of identity. The development of client's critical consciousness implies that counselors apply reflective processes to develop their own consciousness on the values and assumptions underlying their theories and practices.

This consciousness is fundamental “to recognize the existing sociopolitical awareness of our clients, students, and colleagues” (Blustein, McWhirter, & Perry, 2005, p. 168)

Life Design Counseling possibilities for enhancing decent work and social justice

At the foundations of LDC are three assumptions that facilitate the adequacy of these practices and interventions with disadvantaged populations: 1) people bring both order and predictability to the experience of the Self and contexts, created out of the meanings which they construct in their relationships with these same contexts; 2) narrative identity is a fundamental signification for the construction of career plans; 3) adaptability in career implies auto-regulation processes which permit the management of challenges to the fulfilment of career plans (Cardoso, 2016).

The emphasis on the individual as a constructor of contextual meanings leads to a valuing of the subjective dimension of a career, being the individual’s representation of their life as a whole; including his/her skills, aspirations, values, needs and social roles (Richardson, 1993; Savickas, 2013). This new career conception creates conditions for social inclusion, allowing everyone, not only middle class Eurocentric individuals, to be seen as having a career. Moreover, the emphasis on meaning-making contributes to the value of the singularity of each individual and, consequently, favors the use of qualitative assessment to encourage clients to uncover their subjective careers and life themes (McMahon & Patton, 2002). This modality of assessment has the advantage of overcoming the difficulty of adapting standardized methodologies (e.g., content and norms) to socio-cultural diversity, therefore fitting easily to the needs of clients, regardless of their cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic and health conditions (Duarte & Rossier, 2008; Goldman, 1990).

The emphasis on the construction of meaning also frames the counselor as a participant in the experience, thereby facilitating a free expression of subjective experience, the exploration of emerging meanings and the construction of new representations (Savickas, 2015). In this sense, the position of power in the relationship is discussed with the client, thereby allowing people in disadvantaged positions to live a corrective emotional experience. This experience is one of acceptance and empathy contrasting with the discriminatory situations which are frequently lived through. In this light, the relationship is a fundamental instrument for helping disadvantaged people to overcome the condition of being a victim and to live the experience of being in control of one's own story.

In turn, the focus on the rewriting of narrative identity offers two advantages. On the one hand, it gives voice to the facets of the Self and the socio-cultural specificities that contribute to the affirmation and appreciation of the dimensions of that same Self. On the other, the analysis of life themes allows for the forging of a link between personal needs and their satisfaction in multiple career alternatives, consequently increasing our freedom of choice and the hope of overcoming the particular experience being lived through. For example, our experience with the unemployed who are crystalized in a career path or who want to construct a new career plans evidences that the construction of new career alternatives lends to a search for employment that is not limited to the professional activities undertaken in the past. In this way hope is reborn, intensifying the exploration of new opportunities and involvement in professional training that opens up avenues for accessing new opportunities.

Finally, an emphasis on enhancing adaptability also favors intervention with disadvantaged populations. In fact, the role of adaptability for the management of career challenges has already been widely evidenced by research (Duffy et al., 2016). For

example, research with adolescents shows that the perception of career barriers has a negative correlation with all career adaptability dimensions (Soresi, Nota & Ferrari, 2012) and is moderated by self-efficacy expectations (Cardoso & Moreira, 2009). However, research has also evidenced dimensions of adaptability such as confidence and the control held by people who are limited by unemployment (Duarte et al., 2012; Mggiori, Johnston, Krings, Massoudi, & Rossier, 2013). These results highlight the importance of promoting attitudes of control and a belief in confidence amongst these populations. Be that as it may and considering that the focus on these dimensions implies intervention in relation to other problems associated with career issues, the noted results reinforce the need for career interventions with these populations, as an interface between career issues and psychosocial problems (Cardoso, 2016).

Last but not least, the flexibility of LDC's practices brings another advantage. This pliability works to facilitate the integration of methods and techniques borrowed from other approaches, as a way of ensuring that the intervention is adequate for the necessities of disadvantaged populations and for the maximization of the efficiency of these interventions. A study by Taylor and Savickas (2016) is illustrative of this idea, in which a narrative approach, namely Pictorial Narratives (Taylor & Santoro, 2016), was integrated into LDC. In the same tone, Maree (2015) reported a case study of an intervention conducted in one of the poorest provinces of South Africa, where a Life Design intervention was implemented throughout seven years to support a local community in the construction and implementation of a project aiming to overcome their poverty. In effect, intervention effectiveness was maximized through the integration of a communal approach.

The flexibility of LDC's tasks also permits an inverse process, in which LDC is integrated into other approaches (Cardoso, 2016). This can be seen in interventions with

disadvantaged peoples such as those with intellectual disabilities, addictive behavior or mental health problems, who frequently look for support in the transition into the world of work as a way of consolidating and enhancing therapeutic gains and as a way of assisting social inclusion (Blustein, 1987; Jordan & Kahnweiler, 1995; Leff & Warner, 2006). However, the relevance of contextual factors in career development of disadvantaged populations requires that interventions do not exclusively focus on inter- and intrapersonal career development factors, but also take into consideration social action at the institutional, community, public policy and international/global levels (Cook, 2017). In this way, it becomes possible to balance the focus on the self-determination of the individual with a focus on a transformation of contextual factors that reinforce the disadvantaged position (Blustein, et al., 2005; Prilleltensky, 1997). In the following illustrative case, we exhibit LDC integrated into supported employment intervention, therein aiming to facilitate the disadvantaged population's transition into employment.

The approach: LDC integration into supported employment

The LDC integration into supported employment is grounded in technical eclectic approach designed to tailor treatment to client needs. In this perspective, integration is viewed as a process implying the sequential and/or complementary use of assessment tools, concepts and interventions from different theoretical orientations (and world-views) to capture the complexities and maximize the efficacy of psychological interventions (Beutler & Hodgson, 1993).

In supported employment perspective workers with disabilities are integrated alongside with other workers without disabilities in jobs found in local communities where they benefit from ongoing support (Hanley-Maxwell, Owens-Johnson, & Fabian, 2003). The aim is to create training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged

populations (Sousa, 2000). This approach begins with the idea that the difficulties experienced by these populations in accessing the employment market result more from a failure of opportunities and an inadequacy or inexistence of support services, rather than the characteristics of these individuals. With this in mind, a simple intervention in terms of self-determination will not suffice. A wider intervention must be considered: one that looks to eliminate any structural or institutional barriers which separate these populations from the employment market (Hanley-Maxwell, Owens-Johnson, & Fabian, 2003).

Research has evidenced the advantages of a supported employment model, in the sense that it is more economical in relation to other socio-professional practices for disadvantaged populations (Cimera, 2000), permits higher salaries, improves quality of life (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 2003), results in higher employability levels (Brooke, Revell, & Wehman, 2009; Hoffmann, Jackell, Glauser & Kupper, 2012) and promotes attitudes and behaviors that facilitate employability and adaptability in careers (Tapadinhas, 2015).

To illustrate how the LDC integration into supported employment approach aids the complementarity between support for self-determination and the collaborative activity of various institutions (schools, companies, councils, employment services, families and other community agents), we can detail the socio-professional integration process adopted by the Portuguese Association of Supported Employment (APEA). The target population consists of youths who have abandoned school or who have an intellectual disability. The intervention aims to facilitate the integration of this population into the labor market through collaborative action between the youth, their families and different community institutions. This general goal is implemented in a process involving four phases process, each with specific objectives and different

partners (Table 1) as a way of mobilizing the resources needed for socio-professional inclusion and job retention:

Insert table 1 about here

The Integration Phase – This is the first phase of intervention, which has an objective of involving technicians and the families of target populations, who will participate in the socio-professional integration process. For this effect, meetings are held involving a team from the APEA, members of other institutions involved in the process and the families of participants. Expectations and insecurities are listened to and objectives and practices are explained, as a way of helping everybody involved to feel like they are active participants in the project that is being undertaken.

The Partnership Phase – when the intervention is focused on youths who are attending public or private schools, one of the objectives of this phase is to articulate the educative project with a plan for social and professional integration. In this way, teachers are supported in the preparation of the academic curriculum in relation to the demands of professional integration. For example, if the intervention is geared towards individuals with an intellectual disability or with mental health issues, an additional training curriculum can be drafted, focusing on the development of competencies such as personal autonomy, the use of social tools (e.g. using public transport or postal services) and a knowledge of the world of work (e.g. employment legislation, hygiene and safety in the workplace). These skills are fundamental for preparing the target population for professional integration.

Another important objective of this phase is making contact with employment services, companies and business associations with the goal of: (a) publicizing the principles of the supported employment model and raising awareness with the business

community; (b) drafting a strategy which responds to the needs of both the individual and the employers, while considering policies which support this population's transition into the world of work; and (c) exploring the possibilities of integrating into the employment market.

The Self-Determination Phase – the objective here is to help the population to construct a life project. With this in mind, individual LDC sessions are held that look to: (a) define the problem, to identify what the client hopes to achieve through the intervention and to list occupations or jobs that the client is thinking about doing now; (b) to assess life themes (needs, goals and interests); (c) to assess abilities and skills; (d) to help the client develop a coherent narrative of him/herself and (e) to connect this self-representation to work settings. Qualitative techniques are used which allow for a scrutiny of episodes of life stories and tangible experiences that facilitate the analysis of individual singularity. The career construction interview is not used in the case of youths with intellectual disabilities, as this approach implies the elaboration of a narrative which may be beyond the cognitive possibilities of these individuals (Cardoso, Janeiro & Duarte, 2017). Instead, in a coconstruction process counselor and client analyze tangible experiences in family, academic or leisure settings, thereby providing for a mapping of interests and capacities.

During this phase of self-determination, we find a critical moment in the restructuring of unrealistic career plans. Indeed, the condition of being disadvantaged sometimes leads to the elaboration of unrealistic solutions (career plans) in relation to life themes. For example, a young lady with serious linguistic problems who would like to teach children with special needs. Another client, with a self-narrative saturated in the theme of personal underappreciation, wants to be a professional musician, despite being 18 years old and not actually having any kind of experience in the world of music. To

tackle this kind of challenge, the counselor must avoid confront the unrealistic of career plans and instead focus on the construction of alternative plans. In this way, the counselor evades provoking an emptiness brought about by the absence of a future, ruptures in the working alliance and a disinvestment in the intervention itself.

Cooperation with the family and teachers is fundamental in this phase of self-determination, as a way of facilitating exploratory behaviors that aid the clarification of self-perception and the awareness of professional alternatives. Working with families is also particularly critical when the intervention involves people who are dependent on the family environment (e.g. people with physical or intellectual disabilities). In these situations it is important to sensitize families to the encouragement the autonomy of these individuals.

The Employability Phase – the aim here is to integrate the target population into companies. This phase begins while the self-determination phase is still underway, thereby allowing employment specialists to contact companies who are adjusted to the career plans of participants. It is also at this stage that the occupational therapist, the employment specialist and/or the social worker undertake an evaluation of the employment position and the specificities of the context that will involve this integration (e.g. evaluation of the physical/motor demands of and related to the position). This analysis will allow for an evaluation of the compatibility of the physical and psychological characteristics of the participant with the position, while also providing indicators in relation to the competencies that the specific individual will need to develop as a competent professional. This range of information is fundamental for the drafting of the respective company's initial training plan.

Finally, this phase implies the provision of on-going support from a tutor, as a way of facilitating job retention. The ideal scenario would see the tutor as somebody

who is part of the company and who voluntarily cooperates to provide a maximum degree of availability in support of the participant's integration and adaptation to his/her new role. This option is based on the results of research on the topic (Arnold, 2001), with the concept of a voluntary tutor giving better results in the support of the socio-professional integration of employees.

Of relevance during this phase of employability is an examination of the financial aspects implied in integration into a company, after evaluating as to if this integration will benefit both the individual and the company. This examination will avoid training becoming a sort of "integration allowance" or source of "cheap labor", thereby guaranteeing access to decent work and the promotion of social inclusion for these populations.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the authors have looks to analyze some of the contributions made by the Life Design paradigm (Savickas, et al, 2009) to career counseling as a concept that promotes and even catalyzes social justice. The globalized economy and the unexpected and rapid change that we are witnessing, particularly in relation to employment (or unemployment), but also in relation to the possibility of "grasping" other jobs or the search for other ways of surviving that result in the undertaking of dignified and decent work (and which are therefore promotors of social justice), pose challenges not only for the world of scientific research, but also for the real contexts in which we find interventions. This is particularly evident in those interventions in which the promotion of fairness and social justice is all the more necessary.

This chapter has also sought to give some visibility to the possibility of using LDC in more specific intervention contexts, such as cases of supported employment, therein looking to facilitate a transition into employment for disadvantaged populations. In symphony with the social imperative which was at the heart of this presentation of the Life Design paradigm (Savickas, et al., 2009), the authors have looked to show that it is actually possible (although there is still a long way to go) to find ways of answering the questions raised by Winslade (2011) in relation to the utility of LDC in some of the more disadvantaged contexts. In making use of an illustrative case, we have evidenced the possibilities for the promotion of a client's self-determination, complemented by collaborative action between the target population, their family and different community institutions in the facilitation of the integration of disadvantaged populations into the employment market. However the illustrative case also showed two main limitations of LD practices with disadvantaged peoples: (a) to be focused in the individual and (b) to require cognitive abilities that some populations such as young adolescents or people with intellectual disabilities do not have. To address these limitations, the illustrative case showed the importance of to complement LDC with approaches more focused in contextual variables that limit the career development of disadvantaged populations and to adjust career counseling tasks to client's developmental level.

To take a cue from the title of the book in which this chapter is included *Life-and- career designing for sustainable development and decent work*, we would like to make one final note. At the end of the day, we are all (or at least almost all of us) riding on the train of knowledge. It is just that some of us are comfortable in first class, while others are clinging on however they can. In this society of learning, we must of course all learn. This means that we must modify our behavior in function of the stimuli we face. We must re-construct and adapt. Learning comes from paying attention and getting

involved in terms of both thought (the formulation of theory) and practice (applying theory through action). This is what must be done in the defense of universal values, to defend the right to life, to lay the foundations for future responsibilities. In interventions in contexts of social exclusion, Life Design counselors can make a contribution to the laying of foundation stones for social and personal development, through strategies that promote personal agency (relations, reflection, sense-making), but which also contribute to a social transformation (as was set out in the illustrative case). In summary, Life Design counselors are catalyzers of the internalization of the self-awareness of autonomy and the self-imposition of intervention in society, being therefore included in the performance of work roles. The bottom line: that which is advocated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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Table 1 – Phases, goals and partners in the process of LDC integration into supported employment

Phase	Goals	Partners
Integration	To raise the family and the institution to which the participant belongs awareness of the intervention; To establish a contract between partners	Participant Family Institution to which the participant belongs APEA
Partnerships	To integrate the intervention in participant's educative project; To involve both the employment services and industry associations	Teachers Special needs teachers Employment services Industry associations School psychologist
Self-determination	To assess personal expectations; To explore life themes (needs, interests, goals), abilities, skills and occupational opportunities; To design a career plan grounded in a self-narrative;	School psychologist Teachers Family
Employability	To search for companies and occupational activities that are compatible with the participants' profile; To analyze the company and the job profile; To integrate the youngster and follow up his/her occupational path	Employment specialist School psychologist Occupational therapist Family Company tutors'