Career Guidance
for Persons with Disability

Dr Andrew Azzopardi
University of Malta

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wife Sue
and children, Karl and Claire.
Conversely, I would be ungrateful
if I didn't mention the people who
have guided and supported me all
throughout my career; my father,
mother and brother - to them goes this
monograph.

Note

This work has been stimulated and stirred by
my own Doctoral Thesis
Reading Stories of Inclusion:
Engaging with Different Perspectives Towards
An Agenda for Inclusion
(Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2005).

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Biographical Note

Dr Andrew Azzopardi
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Dr Andrew Azzopardi is a lecturer within the Department of Youth and Community Studies, Faculty of Education at the University of Malta. His lecturing and research focuses on sociology, critical pedagogy, disability politics, inclusive and multi-cultural education, community management, emancipatory research, narrative enquiry, youth and community studies.

He has had papers published in the applauded journals of disability studies; *Disability and Society* and *The International Journal of Inclusive Education*, had several pieces of work published in an electronic journal of the University of Leeds, reviewed books for the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and co-authored a text, *Developmental Programme for PSD Teachers* (2002) amongst other. Dr Azzopardi recently contributed in an *International Handbook of Disability Studies in Education*. He has presented papers at the University of Leeds, University of Lancaster, University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Malta. He organised two Open Series Seminars for the Department of Youth and Community Studies namely: 'Beyond the formal: An educational experience made valid' and 'Captivating the real in narrative research'. He was an advisor to the National Parents Society for Persons with Disability for ten years.

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An introductory note by Mr Mauro Pace Parascandalo

The main objective of the European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA) is to ensure that those programmes of an educational nature are consistent with the national educational policies and strategies. The Euroguidance Network is part of the Agency's remit and a complex association of centres across Europe linking together the careers' guidance systems in Europe. Euroguidance promotes mobility, supports guidance teachers, counsellors and other paraprofessionals to enhance the understanding and opportunities available for European citizens.

Our priorities for the years 2007-2008 are namely social inclusion in adult education; the promotion of intercultural dialogue; the implementation of inclusive education and training policies targeting adult learners; the implementation of ICT for the purpose of formal, non-formal and informal education.

The EUPA believes that through the support of Euroguidance to research and produce publications in the area of career guidance for disabled people, it would be a catalyst for the promotion of good practice in this field as well. Such a positive application would facilitate disabled persons to fulfill their full potential by developing their skills and interests, enabling the said person to engage with society. Career Guidance is another loop in facilitating employment opportunities, positive relationships, independence and autonomy.

We strongly believe that through valid research such as this, the interests of this minority may be further explored thus giving them the opportunity to seek a career trajectory which fulfils their aspirations and potential.

The EUPA is proud to be in a position to support Dr Andrew Azzopardi, who through his expertise in the educational and social welfare field, has engaged himself to deliver a valuable piece of research in the field of Career Guidance and Disability in Malta.

Mauro Pace Parascandalo
National Coordinator
European Union Programmes Agency

An introductory note by Joseph M. Camilleri

This publication is spearheaded by Euroguidance Malta, the European Union Programmes Agency and the Ministry of Education. Malta, is a timely reminder to us all that young, disabled people in Malta and Gozo have found themselves at an important crossroad in their lives.

In Malta, one of the most remarkable developments has been the Maltese Ministry of Education's incremental phasing-in of an inclusive education policy in 1994. Although not as efficient, or effective as we would wish, nevertheless the policy is working. The result is that the vast majority of disabled schoolchildren today receive their education in the mainstream. These youngsters are demanding a chance to a dignified, adult, independent life. A life based on meaningful work.

The *Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Diżabilita'* has long maintained that the major challenge for all decision-makers, employers and especially those involved in career guidance is how to engage with the issues raised by disabled school-leavers and how to find innovative ways in which we can help them fulfill their aspirations.

Dr Azzopardi's discourse is a useful guide to Social Model thinking based on insider views by disabled people, parents and policy-makers, as well as containing straightforward recommendations for future change. Accessing the labour market is a major hurdle for all disabled people. Often failure is not the result of an individual's disability, poor motivation, or a lack of job opportunities, but of low aspirations, a lack of conviction in the abilities of disabled people and a lack of innovative thinking when offering careers advice.

2007 is the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. Creating a just, equitable and inclusive society means interrogating our own attitudes and practices and developing new tools to cope with the demands made on us by a new generation seeking fulfilment in a changing and exciting job market. Whether they flourish or flounder depends on us; we are the stepping stones to their future.

Joseph M. Camilleri
Chairman, National Commission Persons with Disability

An introductory note by Dr Valerie Sollars

The narrative included in Chapter 6 of the current publication has set me thinking on the issue of disability in an unorthodox way. I believe that in our society, we are more than accustomed to meeting children in mainstream schools thanks to the inclusive policy that has been promoted for several years. We are also familiar with finding people with special needs and varying degrees of abilities at various places of work. However, this book highlights a gap, brought about as individuals develop from childhood to adulthood; from being children and students in the relatively protected and sheltered school environment to adults who face the broader contexts offered in the world of work. For many, the transition involved in orienting oneself towards employment can in itself be a sufficiently daunting process: there are often prolonged deliberations and discussions about what to do, where to go and how to proceed in an attempt to attain one's goals. The services and advice of teachers who offer career guidance are essential: such advice has the potential to influence the life-time decisions young people make. We are now faced with the realities of offering career guidance to people with disabilities. What career guidance can be or is actually given to persons with disability? How much more demanding and challenging a job is it to provide career guidance for individuals with special needs? Is there a coherent and collaborative plan to promote a multi-disciplinary approach to career guidance for such individuals? These are some of the issues which my colleague and author of this publication, Dr Andrew Azzopardi, sets out to explore.

The publication will undoubtedly help to highlight the ever-increasing needs of people in our society who have the potential and the right to enjoy as high a standard of living as they possibly can achieve. Apart from their personal motivation, skill, aptitude and knowledge, people with disabilities need to have access to a supportive system, made of understanding and professional staff who are knowledgeable about services and careers available, familiar with the skills and knowledge of the individual concerned and possess enough enthusiasm and conscientiousness to ensure that a person with disability who has the potential to succeed in life manages to secure the best position towards which they have aspired.

Thank you Andrew for taking the initiative to share your research, in order to raise the issues surrounding career guidance for persons with disability.

Dr Valerie Sollars
Dean, Faculty of Education

An introductory note by Jonathan Attard

I have been teaching at a Boys` Secondary School for these last ten scholastic years. Apart from teaching Maltese, I am also the vocational and career guidance teacher. My ultimate goal is to support young people to learn how to seek information and where to ask for help throughout their life - especially post-school life. I am also responsible to provide access to information to help young people make informed decisions and choices, and assist with the transition between different stages in education and beyond.

Most adolescents, regardless of their impairment, have concerns about what they will be doing after finishing secondary school. Moreover, when they feel they do not have the necessary skills to find adequate employment, certain anxieties will start building within them.

As a vocational and guidance teacher, I truly believe that preparing students in terms of independent living skills and employability should be the most important goal in our educational system. During these last years I have noticed that without careful planning and preparation for post-school placement, certain goals can never be achieved by disabled youth. Hence, all the stakeholders involved, must continuously assess existing employment opportunities, analyse those skills required and design training activities which will finally prepare them for the 'outside world'. The educational system is really successful when our students find real work environments that match interests, circumstances and aspirations.

In our school, both disabled and non-disabled students will be provided with orientation visits and job shadowing. For our disabled students, these visits vary from work environments that present a non-pressured atmosphere to those where high productivity is the ultimate desired aim. As a school we work closely with Government Agencies, such as the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC). Through their 'Support Employment Section', disabled youths are given the necessary backing for their transition programme in order to bridge the gap between school and the working place.

I am sure that this text will be an important resource in this complex tapestry of guidance and career counselling.

Jonathan Attard
Guidance Teacher

An introductory note by Ronald Balzan

Employment is a means through which one is able to use his/her potential to further develop his/her skills and interests, to feel part of a community, to contribute to society, and to have access to financial independence in the process. Indeed, employment is one of the pillars on which the whole concept of independent living stands.

Whereas independent living can often be taken forgranted by non-disabled people, disabled people, due to barriers created by society, have to struggle to have access to what is ultimately their right, that is, to live their own life, deciding what they want to do and make it happen.

Very often, disabled people find themselves in situations where other non-disabled people, explicitly or implicitly, make decisions on their behalf, perhaps out of overprotection and often out of sheer paternalism. This, of course, happens with respect to the choice of employment.

Thus, the need for a study about career guidance for disabled people has long been felt. Such a study needs to contemplate that what this minority requires is support to be able to access a career. Career guidance needs to take into consideration personal circumstances, but which are truly congruent to the person's interests and potential rather than leading them to a 'career' which 'fits the mould' of low expectations.

The author of this study has been engaged in the disability field for over sixteen years now. This, coupled with his specialisation in the educational and social welfare sector, has allowed him to recognize the issues I have described above together with other relevant matters, and to come up with a piece of work which can be considered another landmark in the disability field in Malta.

Ronald Balzan
Disabled Activist

An introductory note by Marchita Mangiafico

As a single parent of two teenagers, Seby who is 21 years old and Vanessa who is 18 years old, I believe that Career Guidance should be given the merit it deserves. Families should encourage their children to seek advise any time they feel the need.

Seby, my son, has profound multiple disabilities and as his advocate, it is my duty to see to all his needs ranging from personal care to education related issues. The thorny financial situation that every family supporting a person with disability has to face, together with the need to be informed constantly about the services available, is enough responsibility to send anyone round the bend. Compounded to this is the challenge of having to mentor the other sibling/s as well.

Career guidance teachers should believe that all persons with a disability have the potential to improve and can contribute towards their community in one way or another. It very much depends on how much society is ready to include them by providing the necessary individual support they require.

Persons with disability should be given choices. Proper transition programmes are an essential tool to prepare them for what the future has in store, whether they will move on to further their education, start vocational training or to find adequate employment. To achieve this, Career Guidance teachers should always be informed on what services and resources the country has to offer for persons with disability. Social Workers and Youth and Community Workers need to be involved because most families of persons with disability usually avail themselves of such services, therefore providing a more holistic approach towards giving the appropriate advice.

I am sure that this text will be another milestone in enhancing the quality of service being offered to persons with disability and their families.

Marchita Mangiafico
Parent Activist
President, National Parents' Society for Persons with Disability

An introductory note by Professor Dan Goodley

Disabled people continue to be excluded from mainstream society. This is particularly apparent in education and employment where disabled people remain under-represented. World estimates are that there are 500 million disabled people - 1 in 10 of population. In my own Country, Britain, disabled people are over 7 times as likely as non-disabled people to be out of work and claiming benefits. There are over 2.6 million disabled people out of work and on benefits: over a million of them 'want to work'. Disabled people are more than twice as likely as non-disabled people to have no qualifications. Clearly, career guidance is a crucial area of development in terms of promoting disabled people's access to education and employment. However, as this report documents, this involves more than vocational guidance. It requires political will on the part of young disabled people, policy makers, professionals, parents and representative organisations of disabled people. We must continuously remind disabled young people that they deserve a place in wider society, that they are valued and significant citizens and that society must change to embrace their needs - rather than young disabled people adapting to a disabling environment. I welcome this monograph. Azzopardi's commitment to the social model of disability, developments in Malta and the use of narrative research place at the foreground the ambitions of disabled young people. Disability is a political concern and only through embracing forms of inclusion can we challenge apartheid in the lives of disabled people.

Dan Goodley
Professor of Psychology and Disability Studies
Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

Introduction

Independent Living means that we demand the same choices and control in our every-day lives that our non-disabled brothers and sisters, neighbours and friends take for granted. We want to grow up in our families, go to the neighbourhood school, use the same bus as our neighbours, work in jobs that are in line with our education and interests, and start families of our own. Since we are the best experts on our needs, we need to show the solutions we want, need to be in charge of our lives, think and speak for ourselves - just as everybody else. To this end we must support and learn from each other, organize ourselves and work for political changes that lead to the legal protection of our human and civil rights. As long as we regard our disabilities as tragedies, we will be pitied. As long as we feel ashamed of who we are, our lives will be regarded as useless. As long as we remain silent, we will be told by others what to do. (Adolf Ratzka 2003 http://www.independentliving.org, accessed 8/7/2004).

Preamble

Along the years we have seen considerable development in the educational and welfare services sector in Malta. Education keeps featuring as a crucial component in the social fabric due to the ever increasing demands in the industry, manufacture and services sector. It has often been claimed by politicians, policy-makers and investors alike, that the main and probably only resource in Malta lies with the individual.

Along the years we have seen considerable development in the educational and welfare services sector in Malta

A number of changes across the years have characterised our educational system (Sultana 2001), which even though has always been considered as a somewhat conservative institution, we still believe it is a primary instigator of change. In actual fact, education is often regarded as a decisive constituent in the development and progress of our society, and politicians have repeatedly called for projects and plans in view of making this institution render to its maximum.

...education is often regarded as a decisive constituent in the development and progress of our society

Career guidance is no exception in all the weaving of this tapestry. A fundamental question that students (and their parents) keep asking to themselves and to others is, what will I do in the future? This is no easy question to answer especially when the choice is based on a number of factors; credentials, academic performance, presentation during interviews, and a highly competitive societal mindset.

Career guidance is no exception in all the weaving of this tapestry

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...the concept of career guidance is still considered part and parcel of secondary educational provision

Career and vocational guidance have characterised our educational services in Malta (Debono, Camilleri, Galea & Gravina 2007). These services are made available to all State schools and most Church and Private Schools at secondary level. When it comes to the primary level, there are resources that need to be shared between a number of schools as the concept of career guidance is still considered part and parcel of secondary educational provision. Most people I interviewed for this research corroborate that it is at this stage that students with a disability go through the most puzzling of decisions.

> The quality of career education and vocational guidance for students with disability in the Maltese educational system is unacceptable on all counts. In effect, the more challenges a disability places on a student's transition from school to adult life, the less career education and vocational guidance is available (Galea-Curmi et al. 1996, p. 229).

...the importance of becoming self-directed when developing a career/life path

Young people with a disability I interviewed in this research felt they were capable of certain tasks. However, there are clear indications that young people, namely persons with disability, depend on the retraining and up-skilling throughout their working lives. There is a widening recognition among all those involved on the importance of becoming self-directed when developing a career/life path. As a result, career development is moving to the forefront of societal awareness. A key policy-maker and provider of services told me during an interview that:

> ....ensuring job security for persons with disability depends not only on inclusion but on the ability of the individual to choose a future based on what skills and qualities the person has and to what use they can be made (Policy Maker 1, 13/10/2006).

There are still, in my judgement, too many young people who receive the Disability Pension

Career development encompasses a broad range of programmes and services that enable people to expand themselves and the career options they are embarking on. Understanding the labour market is very important, but we also need to recognise that we are an information society and accessing it, acquiring critical employability skills, and making transitions between periods of employment, education, unemployment, unpaid work and leisure, requires a lot of resources. Sociologists have repeatedly claimed that an individual's healthy development is based on the ability of that person to balance out his/her lifestyle. There are still, in my judgement, too many young people who receive the Disability Pension. One needs to ask how many of these individuals would manage employment, sheltered or other, rather than accepting a non-contributory pension which guarantees that a person remains close to the poverty-line when it

comes to quality of life. In an interview I had with a parent of a young disabled woman, she implored me:

> ....please find her a job. Just take the pension and pay her the same amount. It's OK. We're not after the money. I just want her to be with other young people, to enjoy the challenges of work, to get worried that there is something she still has to complete. Is this asking too much from Government? (personal communication, Parent, 17/7/2006).

Many structures involved in human development have career development as a component of the service provision they provide. Consequently, career development is an umbrella term that includes, at the least, undertakings in the following: education counselling, employment counselling, training in personal job-related areas, and training in employment skills.

Initiate

Career guidance has made up quite a large part of my teaching career

Career guidance has made up quite a large part of my teaching career. If I had to ask myself what triggered the interest in this profession, I would frankly say, that I have always wanted to be closer to the students in the knotty phase, when they have to choose their subject matter regarding future career track and when they are experiencing some personal impasse (Azzopardi 2005).

> The evidence that disabled people experience severe economic deprivation and social disadvantage is overwhelming and no longer in dispute, whether it be from the Government's own commissioned research, from research institutes, academics or disabled people themselves. For example, after over a century of state-provided education, disabled children and young people are still not entitled to the same kind of schooling as their able-bodied peers and nor do they leave with equivalent qualifications (Metzer, Smyth and Robus 1989). The majority of British schools, colleges and universities remain unprepared to accommodate disabled students within a mainstream setting. Thus, many young disabled people have little choice but to accept a particular form of segregated 'special' education which is both educationally and socially divisive… (Oliver 1996, p.64).

Informants to the Research

My research has been informed by a variety of sources. I have found it necessary to analyse such complex issues with all those involved in this complex tapestry of selection and predicament. I have felt it 'de rigueur' to seek the advice of schools, policy makers, disabled

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and parent activists, guidance teachers, counsellors, key policy-makers, trade unionists and service providers. I have seen this work as an opportunity to meet people coming from the civil society and in fact, I have met key stakeholders coming from the principal unions and the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC). The research also entailed that I send a questionnaire to all the Church, Private and State Schools in Malta and Gozo at Primary, Secondary and Post-Secondary levels. I have, in addition, circulated an on-line questionnaire with non-governmental organisations involved with persons with disability and/or parent activists. Bringing together all these complex experiences was a daunting task, but it helped me understand better what the needs and perspectives of people with disability in this sector are.

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Main Concepts
The main issues that will govern this study are based on the following inferences:
 • To explore the perceptions of young persons with disability regarding their career choices;
 • To explore the notion that policies and varied discourses create barriers for young people with a disability when they are exploring their career decisions, even prior to accessing the labour market and/or pursuing further education;
 • To examine the main influences on these young people's vocational choices and to investigate the relationships, environments and structures which shape their experiences;
 • To give the opportunity to young persons with disability to be heard and listened to, thus informing policy concerning young people, their education and transition to work.

To give the opportunity to young persons with disability to be heard and listened to, thus informing policy concerning young people, their education and transition to work

Naturally, this work has emerged a number of issues that will be explored in this text:
 • There is equal opportunity and access to education;
 • All the stakeholders imply that they agree that each student has the right to be educated with respect to his/her individual needs;
 • Education has to be designed around the needs of each student;
 • We need to create a positive school ethos whereby the environment offers all the pupils an opportunity to improve their personality and individual knowledge and practical skills;
 • Open school atmosphere;
 • Classroom atmosphere built on friendly relations, feeling of security with participation of all pupils, supporting inclusion of all children (Bartolo et al., 2002);
 • The learning process has to stimulate a student's active role, his/her self confidence, participation in the process and activities within the class and his/her motivation for whole-life education.

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Research Questions
This work revolved around these central questions:
 1. What are the factors that are weighing over the young person with a disability's career or further education choices?
 2. In what way are the social constructions (such as parental expectations, stereotypes, information or no information, employment support schemes, employers expectations, discrimination) determining future events?
 3. In what way are the career choices of young persons with a disability influenced by the educational environment they come from?

Little Island - Complex Nation
> The diversity that prevails in the Mediterranean is also apparent if we had to focus on the education sector… An obvious one [difference] concerns the divergent educational histories of each country, where present structures and practices are a complex reflection of colonial influence, and accommodations that have been made to that in response to political, economic and cultural pressures (Sultana 2001, p.11).

Understanding this situation is also about indulging in a milieu that is constituted of a variety of factors. A central question is: Where do I come from? (Sultana and Baldacchino 1994; Camilleri and Callus 2001; Sultana 2001).

Understanding this situation is also about indulging in a milieu that is constituted of a variety of factors

Malta is an independent republic situated in the heart of the Mediterranean basin, with a population counting less than half a million. It consists of a small group of islands with an area of a little over 300 square kilometres. This archipelago lies 90km south of Sicily and 300km to the north of Africa. Very recently we have become members of the European Union, which I believe will become a cultural, social and economic experience that will affect us considerably (Sultana 2001).

> [The colonised]…. are evidently human beings, in some respects not unlike ourselves. Indeed, while the bulk of them… are uneducated and half-civilised, they have some of the marks of superior people. They wish education. They are cleanly, are hospitable and obliging. They have a pleasing family life… The climate allows them to be indolent, yet they possess many fine branches of industry… with their patriarchal system of living, they have not learned the art of forming a state and are commonly supposed to be destitute of the capacity of governing themselves … (Salter 1899, p.2).

Chapter 1

Introduction

For centuries, the strategic location of these islands was of central significance for the indigenous islanders who had moved from one protectorate to the next. The Maltese people always seem to have an immeasurable ability to adapt to the different cultures, attitudes and ways of living that they sometimes inherited, occasionally forced from their colonising past (Inguanez 1994).

Undoubtedly, the extensive years of colonising power has left a compelling influence on the Maltese culture and economy even more than forty years down the line, since Malta achieved its independence from the last domineering command. In more ways than one, the social context affected our language, lifestyle, and how we construct our stance. Imperialism has been described as a process of 'forcible expansion'. Malta, for hundreds of years, was uninterruptedly colonised, and since 1800, for the next 164 years, a function of the British Empire. Malta's post-colonial age started in 1964 and this process is still active and vibrant (Montebello 1999) especially within the educational institutions (Sultana and Baldacchino 1994). In reality, imperialism did not end but decolonialisation was set into motion by "a legacy of connections" (Said 1993, p.3) and a number of social structures still fasten our country to Britain. For example, one cannot but mention the influence in the way the administrative structures are organised in our country; Parliament, the Courts, the Civil Service and Educational Institutions, are amongst the main configurations that still embrace a British model (Sultana and Baldacchino 1994). This historic event of colonialisation significantly affected the social fabric of this Country, and these influences are evident also in the educational structures (Chircop 1994) that exist to date. 'Reading' the stories of my informants helped me pin my ears back to this scenario as well.

> …the Colonial State's post-1870's adoption of a cultural imperialist strategy, which propelled the expansion and modernisation of the public school system, was paying off. The new schooling system pushed the process of colonialisation in the domestic terrain to an unprecedented deepness. It came to inculcate in the new generations, the essential imperialist notion that "The interests of Malta and those of the Empire do not clash, they are identical" (Chircop 1994, p.136).

Research Strategy
The research strategy was based on six focal phases, which had the objective of carrying through a number of variables.

The main conceptual phase is based on the literature review. At this stage it was critical to identify the literature that exists in this area of study. It was evident that a great deal has been written in different countries but Malta, when it comes to career guidance, stands out, especially with the work that has been done by Professor Ronald Sultana notably in the innumerable reports and monographs he was involved in (Sultana 2004; 2006; Sultana and Watts 2005).

The second stage is constituted of grass-root engagement. This phase included interviewing and meeting people who are involved in this issue directly, namely parents and persons with a disability. I have also had a meeting with the representatives of the Maltese Council of Disabled Persons (MCODP) including representatives of the MCODP section who support/represent people with a learning disability.

The third phase was made up of interviewing policy-makers and service providers coming from a variety of sectors; Agency SAPPORT, National Commission Persons with Disability, Special and Inclusive Education Network, Adult Training Centres, Employment and Training Corporation, Student Advisory Services of the University of Malta, Student Services - Education Division, Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School Guidance Services, MCAST Student Services, Academics/Researchers from the University of Malta, Department of Youth and Community Studies at the University of Malta, Workers Participation Centre at the University of Malta, Eden Foundation and Equal Partners Foundation.

This stage included interviews with policy makers and service providers:

- Ms. Josephine Baldacchino, Assistant Director, Student Services, Education Division;
- Mr. George Borg, Coordinator, Network of Special and Inclusive Needs, Education Division;
- Ms. Ann Marie Callus, Policy Maker, National Commission Persons with Disability;
- Mr. Joe Cauchi, Member, Spiteri Report Committee;
- Mr. Joe Camilleri Chairman, National Commission Persons with Disability;
- Mr. Charles Cassar, Senior Manager, ETC;
- Ms. Joyce Mifsud, Coordinator, Adult Training Centres;
- Mr. Marcel Pisani, Agency SAPPORT;
- Professor Ronald Sultana, Academic and Researcher, UOM;
- Equal Parents Foundation.

In the next phase I sent an email questionnaire to all primary, secondary and post-secondary schools in Malta and Gozo. I made

This historic event of colonialisation significantly affected the social fabric of this Country, and these influences are evident also in the educational structures that exist to date

...constituted of grass-root engagement

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sure that the email was sent to all Private Independent, Church and State Schools. I also sent a questionnaire to all the Associations that are registered as supporting people with a disability and/or their families.

The fifth phase was the organisation of a seminar entitled 'Career Guidance for Persons with Disability'. Over 150 career guidance teachers, counsellors from all the educational sectors, academics and policy-makers together with disabled activists were present. The Conference included a presentation by the author of this text (See Appendix). Workshop outcomes were presented during the seminar and will be included as part of the research data that informed this study. The case studies used during the workshops are included in the Appendix.

Finally, the last phase was made up of interviewing the leading unions in this Country; the General Workers Union (GWU), the Union Ħaddiema Magħqudin (UĦM) and the Malta Employers' Association (MEA). Unfortunately, even though I felt that this study would have gained from interviewing the Federation of Industry (FOI) and the Chamber of Commerce, it became an impossible feat to get through to them and manage to organise a rendezvous.

Career Guidance in Malta: A Snapshot

Career Guidance in Malta has generally been linked with the counselling services

Career Guidance in Malta has generally been linked with the counselling services. It is a service provided under the remit of the Student Services of the Education Division.

The Guidance Teachers are appointed to this post after a stipulated number of years of service as regular teachers. Following that, they undergo an interview. There is a particular quota of Guidance Teachers in schools depending on the school population, although there are schools that due to the particular nature of the region they service, they are given additional support. Each guidance service in a school is supported by a Counsellor. A Counsellor would need to have a specific qualification to be eligible for such a role. The Guidance Teachers together with the Counsellors have a number of on-going professional development sessions that deal with a variety of issues. At this point in time, the Assistant Director responsible for this service is close to retirement age and there has not been a coordinator for the Counsellors for a significant number of years, making it virtually impossible to maximise the services and project for the future. However, through collegial leadership, the service has been able to keep providing the regular day-to-day services much needed in schools. The structure of career and vocational guidance was reviewed and a new structure will be put into place very soon giving a more encapsulating dimension to the service.

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Bringing in Inclusion

The complex debate surrounding career guidance for persons with disability lies within the discourse of inclusion and the politics adjoining inclusive education. 'Inclusion' is no isolated debate that takes place solely in academic journals and amongst intellectuals. It is an engagement with a very complex social reality that is somehow affecting the way I think about difference.

'Inclusion' is no isolated debate that takes place solely in academic journals and amongst intellectuals

It is a fact that Career Guidance in schools is important for all students in whatever form it comes. However, in this study it emerged that it is particularly necessary for students with a disability. Students, whether with physical, mental, sensorial or other impairments, can be identified as being exceptional students with a potential to learn. The issue that needs to be addressed is their ability to learn and to refine their skills (Torgeson 1991). A lack of skills can prevent them from acquiring knowledge when they are taught in isolated clusters or supported within unstructured approaches.

Students with a disability seem to have a higher dropout rate when it comes to succeeding in schools or when analysing school outcomes. In addition, over 300 people with disability, of employable age, are on the waiting list at the ETC to be supported in the development of skills and possible employment (Policy Maker, ETC). Another 400 individuals attend the ATCs whilst a number of other people remain at home or else are involved in other services provided by a number of NGOs. Enrollment of these students is an uphill enterprise because of the complexity of such needs. However, the issue lies within the employers who need to develop a receptive employer culture and parents who need to convey more confidence in their sons/daughters.

Career Guidance and Persons with a Disability

The life of a student can be referred to as a lifelong journey. The Career Guidance teacher has a role to accompany any student, who for some reason or other, encounters difficulties along this passage. A person with a disability, like any other student, requires a positive experience and needs to answer questions related to Who am I? and What can I become?.

The life of a student can be referred to as a lifelong journey

The Career Guidance teacher has a role to accompany any student, who for some reason or other, encounters difficulties along this passage

However, in this experience called 'life', these individuals do not come across the normal pitfalls, but have a number of barriers they need to overcome to ensure that they will make it through. There are many elements which will affect the way students will prevail over these challenges, namely; their personality, their sense of pliability and the support imparted by society to overcome these barriers. Resilience is improved when community leaders, educators, therapists,

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parents, youth and community workers, mentors, priests, coaches, provide as many support in the environment as can be garnered.

Decisive Question - Inclusion

In what way can the stories of children at the margins expose issues of 'inclusion' and exclusion? A crucial element in this research is the work I do at school. Teaching has been my main job. I wanted to become a guidance teacher because I was such a bad pupil (I believe no fault of my own)! I wanted to enquire what practices enable 'inclusion'? because, I am more than ever persuaded and committed to the fact that teaching can be a positive and enjoyable experience. I wanted to engage with the rationale of having career guidance as part of the students' kit to make their dreams and aspirations doable.

> The evidence that disabled people experience severe economic deprivation and social disadvantage is overwhelming and no longer in dispute, whether it be from the Government's own commissioned research, from research institutes, academics or disabled people themselves. For example, after over a century of state-provided education disabled children and young people are still not entitled to the same kind of schooling as their able-bodied peers and nor do they leave with equivalent qualifications (Metzer, Smyth and Robus 1989). The majority of British schools, colleges and universities remain unprepared to accommodate disabled students within a mainstream setting. Thus, many young disabled people have little choice but to accept a particular form of segregated 'special' education which is both educationally and socially divisive… (Oliver 1996, p.64).

Value Dais

Culture and interpretation is at the foundation of understanding the symbols that the school institution is engrossed in (Ritzer 1996). The educational structures have always been thought of as developing a model of adult behaviour. The centrality of the notion of culture depends on its rapport with understanding meaning, positionality and the relationship that develops between power and ideology (Allies 1999; Goodson and Sikes 2001). The ethos, or rather the range of values and beliefs, which identify the atmosphere in a school, is central to the understanding of school life.

The values we tend to disseminate in our schools are permeated by Catholic influences. The priority for the Church has always been that education in our schools is driven by explicit, articulated and implemented concepts of a specifically Catholic ethos. Religion makes part of this intellectual infrastructure in contemporary educational experiences. It seems that for the institution, God cannot exist away

I wanted to engage with the rationale of having career guidance as part of the students' kit to make their dreams and aspirations doable

from an organised structure, called religion (Nierkerk 2000).

> It is a Catholic ethos, built into the faith of God Our Father and loving others. It is about respecting others and sharing and respecting God's will and all those things… These are not set apart in a Catholic school they are brought into your curriculum areas…. in a Catholic school it is different, it permeates the whole day - in the teaching and the discipline (Donnelly 1999, p.5).

Finale and Inception

The concept of 'inclusion' needs to be viewed as a process located within the cultures, policies and practices of a whole school and community. Consequently, the focus that this work has been endowed with draws on an assortment of contexts; school, family, disabled and parent activists, policy-makers, service providers and trade unionists.

We cannot analyse career guidance in isolation from other factors such as employment access, ideology and culture. There is also another crucial issue that we need to mention at this point - the preparedness of our communities to become inclusive. The commitment needs to go beyond fear, sympathy and charity. We need to start interpreting this debate within a human rights discourse. A report issued by NSO in conjunction with the KNPD (2004) claims that there were 331 persons with different impairments registering for work under part 1 of the unemployment register. Now, if my calculations get me right, this is far below the amount of people who are registered as disabled even when one compares the quota issued by the WHO (2005) when it comes to the number of disabled people in the world. This is another indication of the lack of space and opportunity that there is for this minority. The larger number of people with a disability who are looking for work seem to be males (almost 75%).

We need to start interpreting career awareness and activities that are to be included into the curriculum, giving particular attention to on-the-job related survival skills which are also part of independent and interdependent living skills. It will become virtually impossible for people with disability to find jobs and effective employment if the focus lies on the standard transition from one phase to another. Disability needs to construct a particular agenda in which the individual requirements caused by an inaccessible society can be addressed.

> Social exclusion refers to the structures and processes which exclude persons and groups from full participation in society…

The concept of 'inclusion' needs to be viewed as a process located within the cultures, policies and practices of a whole school and community

We cannot analyse career guidance in isolation from other factors such as employment access, ideology and culture

We need to start interpreting career awareness and activities that are to be included into the curriculum, giving particular attention to on-the-job related survival skills which are also part of independent and interdependent living skills

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(It) can be succinctly described as cumulative marginalisation: from production (unemployment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family neighbours), from decision-making and from adequate quality of life… It is not just about lack of money, but may also be about isolation, lack of work, lack of educational opportunities and discrimination' (Irish National Report, p.98 *cited in* Clayton1999).

The Text Episodes

My research will develop on three pillars; the critical aspect, the political dimension and the method/ological composition.

- I will analyse my understanding on the whole complex issue of career guidance within an inclusion debate.
- I will reiterate the research questions within the literature review and will convey the social model of disability as being in the foreground of my theoretical set-up.
- I will engage with the complexity of methodology/method debate and will examine the importance of having assorted methods of gathering data that will increase the understanding of such a multifaceted debate.
- I will analyse the contest and will reinstate once again the values that encircle my research, the need to look at this topic in a multitude of dimensions and the thinking and reflections that have presided over this intriguing but thorny piece of work.
- I will focus on the various commitments and recommendations that need to be acted upon.

I will analyse my understanding on the whole complex issue of career guidance within an inclusion debate

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The Agenda[1]

There are two important annotations I need to make straight away. Firstly, inclusive education is turning out to be a cliché - a politically correct term that is used for speeches and for policy-makers to silence all woes. Secondly, 'inclusion' is an encompassing term. This word is full to capacity with arguments, disputes and contestations.

'inclusion' is an encompassing term

But what is inclusion fundamentally?
- Is 'inclusion' an end in itself or is it a process that starts in school but has to find its fulfilment in adult life?
- What audit processes do we need to engage to have apposite 'inclusion'?

Using the term 'inconclusive education' as opposed to 'inclusive education' is no wisecrack. The debate on 'inclusion' is an on-going, eternal process. This in itself can have its positives, but it is also a situation, which brings to my mind circumstances whereby 'inclusion' has a preface but no end to it. It very often turns out to be a philosophical debate rather than a strategic framework. It is described by Allan (1999) as 'a state of unsettled uncertainty'.

It is described by Allan (1999) as 'a state of unsettled uncertainty'

'Inclusion' is also about positioning the special school debate. I feel that in the local context we may still look down on special schools and on the virtuous work they have been responsible for in the past. This is not right. We need to look at educational processes as all chipping into the weaving of this educational fabric. However, special schooling, in my estimation, is diametrically opposed to having an inclusion strategy that teaches in remoteness rather than enclosure, in privacy rather than attachment. Children learn when they are together, encapsulated in the same experiences, interacting together (Salend 2006).

Having said all this, what are the arguments that will help us iron these folds? These are some fundamental questions we need to ask in the 'inclusion' debate:
- In what way can the stories of children at the margins expose issues of 'inclusion' and exclusion?
- What are the different perspectives of parent and disabled activists, teachers, academics, labelled students, para-professionals and others in relation to presenting a transformative agenda for 'inclusion'?
- Are we pinning our ears back to parental expertise?

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1 This chapter has been significantly inspired by my unpublished Doctoral Thesis (University of Sheffield, 2005)

Inclusive Education or Inconclusive Education?

It is necessary to create an 'inclusion' movement

It is necessary to create an 'inclusion' movement. This is no longer an isolated issue that interests the few. It is a debate that has a great deal of social and economic implications on the Island. Teaching has been my job for years and I want to do it well. This pedagogical and methodological commitment needs to be driven towards a serious political, policy and strategic plan and vision.

Inclusive education can be analysed within a number of varied frameworks; the cultural, historical, political and social (Armstrong 1999). However, 'inclusion' is fundamentally an elaborate interaction that is taking place within the social structures we are engaged in. We need to interpret this combination of issues and decipher emerging problems contained in this complex intermix of 'inclusion' discourses.

'Inclusion' even in Malta is a contemporary debate in education that raises noticeable discussion and argumentation but regrettably remains a dispassionate topic, with shallow exchanges

'Inclusion' even in Malta is a contemporary debate in education that raises noticeable discussion and argumentation but regrettably remains a dispassionate topic, with shallow exchanges. Policy-makers, politicians, academics, service providers, disabled activists and parents appear to be at different polarities. On one hand policy-makers and politicians petition for a different type of learning; the configuration of 11+ exams, the eradication of streaming and a never ending list of proposals. On the other hand, all provisions and structures seem to favour exclusion (Thomas and Loxely 2001).

Where to from here?

We need to ask, what are the practices which infuse 'inclusion' and what is the position of career guidance in this debate?

1. We need to assess in what way the narratives of students expose matters of 'inclusion' and exclusion.
2. We need to ask, what are the practices which infuse 'inclusion' and what is the position of career guidance in this debate?
3. We have to read the 'inclusion' economy. Where are 'our' money and resources going?
4. We need to set up a National Forum that will converge all the forces implicated in this dispute; NGOs, University, Government Services, Commissioner of Children, welfare services, self-advocacy groups etcetera.
5. We need to re-dress the curriculum. The way we are designing our programmes of study only give more reasons for exclusion.
6. 'Inclusion' needs to be fostered and nourished by a healthy political debate.

The following is a semi-fictitious story based on the real life experience of a student with a physical impairment

The following is a semi-fictitious story based on the real life experience of a student with a physical impairment. This story will converge policy, practice and research and will bring to light the complex issues surrounding students with a disability within an inclusive context.

Chris
Let's 'listen' to the story of Chris:

Chris is waiting in front of his home, his face pressed between his two hands, his eyes sticky after a good night's sleep. He's as still as most things in St. Thomas Street, a cul de sac in the centre of a clamped up town with the gantry and tower cranes at one end and the fifty-year old slums at the other. It's a dark path, leading to hell - some would say. The nauseating smell of humidity, mixed with the stanching odour of vegetable soup - a mix up to make it feel like you're at the end of a day in a discounted restaurant kitchen. Piles of rubbish at one corner of the road, all muddled up with a colony of kittens struggling their way into this overload of rubbish. From somewhere one could hear a baby crying out from the brown lazy walls. Walking up the lane was what looked like a very normal eleven-year-old, haversack neatly stacked on his back, wearing a freshly washed and ironed white school shirt moving with a steady pace as if he doesn't want to arrive late for his next appointment.

Rick: Hey mate what's up?
Chris: W-H-A-T-'-S U-P?
Rick: Yeah, you look as if you're off to the dungeons. It's school time man. I was looking forward to school. It was so boring these last two weeks.
Chris: Damn, we're late.
Rick: Oh it's OK. The Head's a twat, he won't notice.
Chris: Well my mother will!
Rick: Come on quick, we can get the bay-blades after…
Chris: After what? I'm on transport this year…
Rick: Oh don't tell me…
Chris: Yeah, don't tell ME! She said it's too much for my scoliosis, too much for my arms, too much for my back and the…
Rick: I suppose it's fair enough…
Chris: No mate it's just crap. My back is fine, I want to play ball and all my mother keeps saying is 'watch out love, watch for love, watch them love…' Oh look there's Mark… Hey Mark quick we're late…
Rick: Mark, look at my blade!
Mark: Cool man... com' on guys let's go… what about the Team, we have a game with 2A tomorrow?

Chris: Can I play?
[Mark and Rick look at each other puzzled]
Mark: Quick guys we're late…

The end

She said it's too much for my scoliosis, too much for my arms, too much for my back and the…

Chapter 2

Inclusive Education or Inconclusive Education?

It is a discourse, which takes us well into what is being engaged with in our daily interactions

This semi-fictitious story, Chris and The Blade, is about this boy with a disability, Chris. He is a young student coming from a particular part of the country, a region where I worked at as a guidance teacher. The manifestation and the bringing together of this collective experience contributes to the weaving of a tapestry where the occurrences and the informants are brought together to deliver a message (Azzopardi 2000). It is a discourse, which takes us well into what is being engaged with in our daily interactions. These students know interaction through the pain of exclusion.

> I think that what brings them together is something that is a matter of culture. The culture that what's different is to be kept different (Omar, Teacher).

Chris is a 'typical' in his area. He hardly has a 'voice' but still struggles to position himself within a school context that is 'a completely different planet' from where he comes from, from parents that treat him as if he's still in hospital coming out of surgery and students that are more sensible than adults believe they are. It is a context where one gets confused what the real impairment is, the social constructions of society, the perceptions of the people around this person or the physical impairment per se? Amongst the issues that stand out is the understanding of 'inclusion' tensions as taught out by the boys at school, are the normality debate, the restrictive environment, the selectivity that starts even from the cult of play, the anxiety of parents, the condescending way culture decides for 'him' as being 'abled' or 'disabled' depending on the social mood.

The struggles that such individuals have to endure bring into play the way disabling barriers are designed and an attitude cultivated by isolation.

> Injustice and oppression I would say…. For example in the first story, the mother … is always telling him to be careful… and if he does what his mother tells him, he'll probably feel afraid to include him…. (Frances, Social Worker).

This story is about what students teach us. I believe that labelled and non-labelled students are the real envoys of 'inclusion' - it is essential that we listen to them. Career guidance's principle notion is 'listening'!

School Communities
School communities are there to include the facility of speaking up for one's own right, designing options based on informed choices, having the facility to listen to and be taken seriously, developing new

skills, helping, supporting and representing self and getting adequate information (Azzopardi 2000). School community will not just happen. Our society is still very selective, secretive and reticent.

Our society is still very selective, secretive and reticent

The way schools are structured reflect the culture and experience of a community and the curriculum is to take account of this reality rather than just accounting for a traditional chase for credentials. A school institution can bring about an 'ideological intent' of oppressing students in already oppressed contexts (Freire 1970; Brown 1999). Inclusive education is not by any stretch of the imagination a problem-free experience even within the best possible scenario.

Inclusive education is not by any stretch of the imagination a problem-free experience even within the best possible scenario

'Inclusion' is Realistic
There are concepts that will help us make 'inclusion' a realistic and practical issue, a vision propagated by the use of narrative research. Firstly, education is a mainstream environment which can encapsulate the fundamental principle of 'schools for all'. Inclusive education must guarantee quality life expectations and should offer lifelong and equality to all the echelons of society. Inclusive education has to adapt to the needs of the student and not vice-versa. Early intervention also supports re-education and autonomy. Parents are the prime educators of their children and key partners in the educational process. However, they cannot and must not isolate themselves from the politicisation of this debate, an agenda tailored by persons with disability (Clough and Corbett 2000).

Inclusive education must guarantee quality life expectations and should offer lifelong and equality to all the echelons of society

Rather than seeking to fix people and to separate them from mainstream society we need to address the complex issues that will enhance society. The solution therefore lies not in the person as an individual but within society in itself. It is in deconstructing barriers that people will be able to read into a community that is inclusive.

It is in deconstructing barriers that people will be able to read into a community that is inclusive

'Inclusion' policy is about treating the students equally and not the same. I have come to depict a reality where there is a need for students with a disability to be included rather than existing in educational institutions that segregate and exclude them. Bullying and isolation are another two components that are grounded in mainstream schools (Morris 2002b). Lack of flexibility in the provision of mainstream education often leads the parents and (maybe) the child with a disability to opt for special schools.

Stories of children with disability emerge 'the barrier of friendships'. Friendship is the biggest gap there is with their non-disabled peers. Any 'inclusion' policy and strategy will be a letdown if the issue of assimilating disabled and non-disabled children does not happen.

Any 'inclusion' policy and strategy will be a letdown if the issue of assimilating disabled and non-disabled children does not happen

Chapter 2

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Inclusion in Malta

'Inclusion' even in Malta is a contemporary debate in education that raises a great deal of discussion and argumentation but regrettably remains a dispassionate topic, with shallow exchanges. A sociologist I was speaking to some time back explained how policy-makers/ politicians and parents are at opposite polarities. On the one hand policy-makers and politicians petition for a different type of learning, the removal of 11+ exams and the eradication of streaming. On the other hand, all provisions and structures favour exclusion (Ballard and McDonald 1999; Thomas and Loxely 2001).

Education in Malta in recent history, has attempted to focus on standards (Sultana 1994). This current has seeped through most state, private and independent private schools. Fundamentally, 'inclusion' addresses a search for inducing equality (Slee 1993) and individualised programs suited to the particular needs of students. Assessment, appraisal and evaluative systems embody this standards-based movement in schools. Such a lobby contributes to this polarisation. Contested practices persist in all schools, and students and their parents continue to be affected, sometimes profoundly by the interpretation of the educational needs of academics and bureaucrats (Chircop 1994).

The discourse of inclusive education has its own particular characteristics and has been hijacked by concerns for quality and 'achievement'

The discourse of inclusive education has its own particular characteristics and has been hijacked by concerns for quality and 'achievement'. Education reflects the struggle of a community of citizens. 'Inclusion' is one vital factor which brings this conflict at the forefront based on the principle of social integrity.

The essence of inclusive education is the ability to respond to diversity

The essence of inclusive education is the ability to respond to diversity. It is a process whereby children are given a voice (Dunn 2001; Moore 2001). The National Minimum Curriculum (Ministry of Education 1999) and other reforms at State level have been responsible for the restructuring in the education system conditioned by a competitive stance (Armstrong 1999). 'Inclusion' needs to find its position primarily within this trajectory. Children labelled as having 'special needs' rarely get to know the children in their neighbourhood because the school experience is still not conducive enough to embrace such diversity (Rioux 1999). There is also a big debate on what is considered to be diverse within a locality that feels, or is made to feel different in so many ways, to the rest of the Island. Knowing who lives in the neighbourhood makes it possible to develop alliances that extend beyond the classroom experiences. The real cure for educational troubles is the rightful interpretation of community goals (Giordmaina 2001).

Any minority group in a society is marked by its values and social experiences (Haralambos and Holborn 1991; Potts 1998). "Values are influenced by contextual factors" (Corbett 1998, p.40).

Any minority group in a society is marked by its values and social experiences

> …this process of 'inclusion' and the implementation of policies directed at reducing inequalities arising from students' culture, race, gender, disability or level of attainment (Potts 1998, p. 25).

'Inclusion' cannot remain a neutral and an apolitical discourse. It is an event relating to a social experience (Camilleri 1999). Amongst the various factors that contribute to an inclusive school are the roles that each member in the school community plays. Role distinction is imperative in establishing a considerate and responsive community (Reezigt and Pijl 1998). A vibrant school community is one that is constantly on the move where the deep-seated goal is to reach out to all students, empowering them with the necessary skills they will need for their future. Students fundamentally need to be able to work in a diverse community, more tolerance in the face of diversity. A real world experience, which draws from the communal context they come from, is the most natural, effective and long-lasting way for children to learn.

'Inclusion' cannot remain a neutral and an apolitical discourse

> Inclusive education speaks to all those involved. It is not an isolated experience. It is an educational pattern that moves from being disablist to contributing to the development of the individual holistically and comprehensively (Corbett and Slee 2000, p.143).

It is essential that inclusive education is not turned into another 'bureaucratic discourse' (Corbett and Slee 2000). School in itself can be an exclusionary experience (Clough and Barton 1995; Ainscow, Booth and Dyson 1999). We need to reflect relentlessly to ensure that we acknowledge the fact that school culture is still selective, exclusionary, credential-oriented and standards-based (Ainscow 1999; Slee 2000).

> Inclusive education is really a process of people inquiring into their own context to see how it can be developed - it is a process of growth. It is a social process and it engages people in making sense of their experience and helping one another to question their experience and their context to see how things can move forward (Mel Ainscow, interviewed 26 October 1998, *cited in* Corbett and Slee 2000, p.136).

Inclusive schooling incorporates a political dialogue (Corbett and Slee 1999). This chase for standards cannot be challenged before

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the principles of emancipation, respect and tolerance are primed.

> All compulsory state schooling takes place within a broadly common statutory context… What may be noticeably different are the additional requirements and practices, which must be managed within the schools in order to meet a wide spectrum of need within a framework of rights (Clough 1998, p.2).

As a society, we construct countless social structures such as friendships, marriage, cult and ritual to affirm ourselves as unique members of the community. At the same time, groups are recognising each other and search for a collective identity. The value of schooling is in the capacity to prepare students for a life that is gripped by continuous decision-making situations (Ministry of Education 1999). School in principle is also there to help students fabricate strategic models and to cultivate a social commitment which we call career.

We live in a society that is producing different interpretations to gestures and words, relational dynamics and social roles marking human behaviour as a subjective reality in form and content (Chircop 1994). We need to read what students are telling us even through the complex symbols that constitute their reality.

A basic notion in disability is 'inclusion' and if 'inclusion' starts compromising, than it means that the whole rationale behind 'inclusion' starts taking on a new function

The experience of education has in these last years taken a new twist. Education is more than ever market and industry-driven. Our schools are introducing subjects and themes that may be more in the interest of industry than those of students. Disability cannot be interpreted as being objective. A basic notion in disability is 'inclusion' and if 'inclusion' starts compromising, than it means that the whole rationale behind 'inclusion' starts taking on a new function. Inclusive education needs to assume co-ordination of the educational process in consultation with all the parties concerned, because 'inclusion' instils changes (Salend 2001). Each training programme should work towards interdependency and skill development to maximise on future self-reliance. That is where career guidance comes in. Clayton and McGill (1999), say that:

> …putting guidance on the mental map
> working with other agencies and networks…
> taking the service to where people are…
> bringing people into the central service…
> creating the most appropriate environment… (p.85).

Parents are expressing serious concern on the effectiveness of the current 'inclusion' provisions and the program design (Ballard 1999). There are also parents who are being left with a bitter-sweet taste

when their children finish secondary school. These young people may not be finding post-secondary alternatives or else adequate 'skill training schemes' that compliment their social, psychological and economic aspirations. This places a lot of pressure on the parents that see schooling within a transition framework and not as an end in itself. Society has a responsibility.

> …until, we get it right, parents and children will continue to make compromises even though the consequent segregation is a high price to pay. We must respect these choices while at the same time striving to make them unnecessary (Morris 2002b p.14).

After All
The complex process of 'inclusion' lies embedded in the role of career guidance. Career guidance teachers are not just there to provide a service in isolation but to support the person with a disability in the struggle to make our society more inclusive - thus contributing to a positive school environment (Bartolo et al. 2002). It is through the engagement of disability studies that a career guidance teacher can respond to the complex demands of this service. We need to accompany our young citizens in this long and winding road of potential pitfalls and snags.

Career guidance teachers are not just there to provide a service in isolation but to support the person with a disability in the struggle to make our society more inclusive

Methodology

In a bizarre little experiment conducted in 1969, psychologists measured the performance of cockroaches running away from a light source. They found that the cockroaches ran faster if the runway was lined with an 'audience' of fellow cockroaches, each watching from a perspex box. In other words, the presence of a group had a facilitating effect upon performance. As a researcher who works largely with groups I found this result strangely comforting. It seemed to provide some sort of natural vindication for my methodology (Anderson 1997, p.1).

Prologue

Education has become a cultural determining factor. Things change - and so it seems with education. Even though education is more often than not seen as a very conservative exercise, teachers end up with a potpourri of self-loathing. Our educational structures seem to have a schema to make our students subject to a wide array of rules and restrictions. In relation to students who have a diversity label, these regulations prevent the students from having a voice and everyone starts to assume that the characteristic which distinguishes them prevents their involvement in regular schooling. In relation to children with disability these trivial rules are further compounded by the existing legislation which not only refuses to hear their voice, but assumes that it is the child's behaviour or impairment which is 'the problem' or 'the difficulty' preventing their participation in mainstream education (Kenworthy and Whittaker 2000, p.220).

Education has become a cultural determining factor *(margin note)*

Method/ology

If the culture of the teacher
is to become part of the consciousness of
the child, then the culture of the child
must first be in the consciousness of the teacher
(Bernstein *cited in* Brooker 2000, p.2).

Emancipatory research epitomises the equalisation of research relationships, changed social affairs of research production, empowerment and the focus of user-controlled research. The general contention is that such control is rarely positioned with the (disadvantaged and oppressed) groups which are most liable to become research informants (Beresford 2002b).

Emancipatory research epitomises the equalisation of research relationships, changed social affairs of research production, empowerment and the focus of user-controlled research *(margin note)*

We tell stories about our life and our 'self', or rather our 'selves', as a sort of reflective interpretative device, with a view to understanding who and what we are and the things that happen to us. And yet, as Maroula Joannou (1995: 32) points out: "although the self may only exist as a story that can be told about the self, what is told about the self is not always the same story, and much will depend on how it is told and by whom". In any case, 'self' is a contested and controversial term. When we talk about our self, are we referring to our public, or private, or personal, or professional, or spiritual possible, or familial, or whatever, self?… Is it ever to present a comprehensive account? (Goodson and Sikes 2001, p.41).

Epistemology is only possible if the protagonists in this social experience are understood and are given a rightful interpretation of the social constructions that are created around their dilemmas (Ritzer 1996). The logic used for this work is that of ethnographically endeavouring to provide meaningful prescriptions of what is happening in the social episodes of the informants (Robson 1993; Denzin and Lincoln 1998). I have attempted to explore, find out and understand "meanings-and-symbols" that surround the institutions that I am closely involved with. It is only by deepening my own understanding of the cultural occurrence I am immersed in that I managed to locate, interpret and understand the reasons for certain actions (Lowenstein-Damico 1999).

The logic used for this work is that of ethnographically endeavouring to provide meaningful prescriptions of what is happening in the social episodes of the informants *(margin note)*

Naturally, it is an accepted fact that research, as in all human behaviour is subjective and the process of interpreting the outcomes is also particular to my own reading of events (Denzin 1998). Rather than considering the result of any course of events as an encoded result of some set of casual factors operating on it, the outcome is instead an emergent and contingent product, one which will not follow the same course in other comparable situations (Robson 1993).

Schooling in many ways is engaged in both a visible and an invisible pedagogy. Bernstein (1990) in *The Structuring of Pedagogical Discourse* makes it abundantly clear that schooling needs to engage with adapting ones pedagogy to meet the needs of students - in the absence of which, schools and the education system will fail. What is the position and outlook of career guidance in this discourse?

Schooling in many ways is engaged in both a visible and an invisible pedagogy *(margin note)*

"I don't like school. I don't need to learn German and Maths. I want to have more time doing crafts at the workshop". The teacher replied, "But you can become a good craftsman if you learn maths as well". The student replied, "My father doesn't know any school and he has a lot of people that ask him for work" (Peter, Labelled Student).

Chapter 3

Methodology

An Inclusive Research Paradigm

Barnes and Mercer (1997) have traced the growth of the disability research paradigm. After exploring the effects that previous research has left on the individual informants and on the disability community in general, they go on to analyse the principles of emancipatory research, a concept developed at the end of the 80's and beginning of the 90's. Oliver called for a 'political commitment' in the adoption of an emancipatory type of research. He advocated for research that finds its realisation in the social model of disability. This framework where research rests is a commitment to politicising disability issues, advocating and effecting change, interpreting social relations and connecting 'research and policy initiatives' (p.5). Texts like Oliver's *Understanding Disability - From Theory to Practice* (1990), is a classic in its genre. Oliver brings in three very important components to reckon with; understanding the social model as evolved after UPIAS (1976), bringing the researcher close to what s/he is researching and personalising and localising the research study within the researcher. Oliver, basically engages with the notion of the individual that forms the collective. *The Fundamental Principles of Disability* (UPIAS 1976) is a key and fundamental text in this discourse.

> …fundamental principles to which we are both in agreement: disability is a situation, caused by social conditions, which requires for its elimination, (a) that no one aspect such as incomes, mobility or institutions is treated in isolation, (b) that disabled people should, with the advice and help of others, assume control over their own lives, and (c) that professionals, experts and others who seek to help must be committed to promoting such control by disabled people (p. 3).

I have referred to a number of other texts when it came to designing my principles for research methodology:

- The series by The Disability Press has played a role in this debate. *Doing Disability Research* by Barnes and Mercer (1997) outlines the notion of emancipatory research and the link with the social model.
- *Disability Studies: Past, Present, Future* by Barton and Oliver (1997) is an anthology that ponders the issue of the independent researcher, liberatory theory of disability and this text returns to the difficult theme of oppression.
- Coleridge's (1993), *Disability, Liberation and Development* provokes a debate on the different realities of disability and perspectives that are very different from what we are used to reading. These are an antology of case studies of countries that are struggling to make ends meet on a social-economical and political dimension; Zanzibar, Zimbabwe, India, Jordan and

The Fundamental Principles of Disability (UPIAS 1976) is a key and fundamental text in this discourse

Lebanon. However, these countries have an interesting and fresh-looking experience to contribute.

- Emma Stone (1999), in *Disability and Development-Learning From Action and Research On Disability In The Majority World*, analyses in depth some issues that had already been regurgitated a number of times but this time she localises them within an international context. This book in itself is a process of defining 'disability'.
- Campbell and Oliver's (1996) *Disability Politics-Understanding Our Past, Changing Our Future*. This book, written by two leading activists and academics in the disability scene, maps out the future within a framework of what has and is happening. This book brings in a multitude of themes ranging from activism to the often tense relationship created through research, amongst researchers and between researchers and informants. There are contestations about how the social model fits within a pragmatic day-to-day scenario rather than constructing a debate that leaves it all on the academic backburner. Probably, the most pronounced issue in this text is that related to the organisations of people with disability and how the grouping has created a social movement that is re-directing disability policy. The interview in the last chapter by Bamper Postance with Oliver and Campbell brings a flavour to the composite tensions that encapsulate disability activism, research and movement. Her questions externalise a debate that centres on the need for the politicisation of disability.
- Corker and French (1999) in their *Disability Discourse*, have also taken up a very interesting piece of work where they have managed to bring together some renowned disability academics and activists. The focus lies in social theory and the making of a disability discourse. Somehow these authors converge the traditional modes of collating data and of designing methodology to a disability minority application. The crucial theme as delineated in the series editor's preface is about a social construction, disability that has seen a massive oppressive experience imposed by a society that highlights the impairment as being the cause and be-all of the disability experience. Society tries to keep shunning away responsibility.
- *Disability: A Personal Odyssey* provides an autobiographical perception on how this person with a disability, Joe Camilleri (1999), turned activist and policy-maker and how he perceives his own situation and that of the disabled minority as being evolutionary.
- *Narratives of Leisure: Recreating the Self* by Fullagar and Owler (1998) represents instances whereby storytelling becomes a new approach of connecting with people. Story telling becomes not only an 'end' but a 'means'.

…disability that has seen a massive oppressive experience imposed by a society that highlights the impairment as being the cause and be-all of the disability experience

Chapter 3

Methodology

It took me very long to decide what type of methodology and methods I was going to use because I wanted a system of data collection and analysis that is not subservient to the very theme that is being debated

Spoilt by Choice

I intended in the process of this study to bring together another important and contentious point. It took me very long to decide what type of methodology and methods I was going to use because I wanted a system of data collection and analysis that is not subservient to the very theme that is being debated.

> In the process of unpacking life story research we may end up deconstructing the life stories that we initially present. Never mind, we hope we have done some justice to our narrators/ narrative subjects and encouraged others to consider stories as the very stuff of research (Goodley et al. 2004, p.x).

There are various other texts that have informed my method/ology:
- *Research Methods In Education* of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000);
- Bassey's (1999), *Case Study Research in Educational Settings*;
- Burton's (2000) edited, *Research Training for Social Sciences*;
- Rubin and Babbie's (1993), *Research Methods for Social Work*;
- Arksey and Knight's (1999), *Interviewing for Social Sciences*;
- Claire Tregaskis (2000), in *Disability and Society, "Interviewing Non-Disabled People about Their Disability-Related Attitudes: Seeking Methodologies"*.

Engine Room

The disability movement in the UK and in the USA, especially through disability studies, promoted a very intricate debate on how disability research can take a form where control lies within the informant rather than with the researcher

Research has always been considered a very thorny issue in the field of disability. The disability movement in the UK and in the USA, especially through disability studies, promoted a very intricate debate on how disability research can take a form where control lies within the informant rather than with the researcher.

> For Oliver, emancipatory research must be located in the social model of disability. It must reject the individual or medical model view that impairment is the root cause of disabled people's problems. This includes giving proper recognition to disability and disabled people in social research (e.g. in studies of the family, employment, sexuality, education and the like) but more ambitiously, it is suggested that disability research presents a radical alternative to mainstream research theory and methods (Barnes and Mercer 1997, p.5).

The 'methods section' can be defined as the 'engine room' of every piece of research

The 'methods section' can be defined as the 'engine room' of every piece of research. It is useless trying to explain how a motor vehicle functions unless one understands how a robust engine compliments speed with its variability. Theoretical debates and analysis of data are important but the capability of method is crucial. If the research strategy is unsound and the methods used are inappropriate, the data, and therefore the arguments in this study will be undermined. Nonetheless, we need to keep in mind that a method chosen is another method discarded.

The research fluctuates from external observations to personal reflections. As a researcher I interpret the intersection of these two components. Evidently, this approach is connected to a cultural discourse and interpretations that are woven in personal accounts (Denzin 1997).

The research fluctuates from external observations to personal reflections

> A number of differences can be identified between these two approaches to participation. The first approach generally starts with policy and the service system; the second is rooted in people's lives and in their aspirations to improve the nature and conditions of their lives. Both approaches may be concerned with bringing about change and influencing what happens. However, in the consumerist approach, the search is for external input which the initiating agencies (state, service providers, or policy makers) themselves decide what to do with. The democratic approach is concerned with ensuring that participants have the direct capacity and opportunity to make change. This latter approach highlights issues of power and the (re)distribution of power. These are not explicit concerns of the consumerist model of involvement (Beresford 2002b, p.97).

As a researcher I attempted to embrace a thinking process whereby one gives control and jurisdiction to the informants (Beresford 2002b). However, the situation still lies in the fact that the issue of time, lack of resources and the need to 'get on with it', creates a scenario whereby commitment to emancipatory objectives is not good enough. The frustrations and tensions that accompanied the writing of this work were centred primarily on the values I believe in.

The research methods include four crucial notions:
- The development of research in a way that allows space for the informants to express themselves (Robson 1993);
- The development of a research approach that influences the actions to meet these targets (Robson 1993) and to engage with this research discourse (Wellington 1996);
- Opening up to a methodology that is emancipatory in its thinking and style (Cohen et al. 2000);
- Allowing space for the reader to make out of this work the conclusion and recommendations s/he wishes.

Methodology

The manner the research is structured will provide the platform for the informants to tell their story, in particular their experiences with school. It is vital that research is supported by the right methodological concerns (Arksey and Knight 1999). Research in reality is never a neutral process (Clough and Barton 1995). It is always aligned to one or another point on the continuum. My language, the development of my idioms and narrative will make certain that I serve primarily as the author and narrator of what informants want to convey.

Ultimately

Research seems to indicate that even though there are a lot of struggles, debates and a general sense of indecisiveness in this whole matter on career guidance for persons with disability, the fact that we allow the informant to 'say his/her own' is becoming a more imminent and urgent issue. Emancipatory frameworks guarantee that the informants are not used as passive recipients to the hauling of information but are actively engaged in their own stories intimately and thoroughly (Corbett 1996; Plummer 2001).

Emancipatory frameworks guarantee that the informants are not used as passive recipients to the hauling of information but are actively engaged in their own stories intimately and thoroughly

Emancipating Research

And this is where I think I have benefited, from psychology in prison, because I've watched people, because the people are watching me… And you get a much better response from a person if you allow them to be themselves, and to express themselves. Of course, at the end of the day, they are… It's truth. It tells you. That's why you've done so much research - because you want to bring the truth out. (Jepson and Parker 2002, p.82).

Introduction

The emerging definitions of career development are reflective of a proactive, individual centered, lifespan, life/career management process where individuals are active in responding and adapting to change in creating, constructing, designing and identifying paid employment opportunities, life and learning experiences that will enable them to create satisfying lives (McMahon, Patton and Tatha 2003, p.4).

Over the years 'career' has been identified as a lifelong, lifespan process and the term 'career' has become widely used in order to capture this paradigm shift (Sultana 2003). The need for active involvement by individuals in their career development is another aspect of the change in thinking especially within the disability discourse.

Over the years 'career' has been identified as a lifelong, lifespan process and the term 'career' has become widely used in order to capture this paradigm shift

The quality of career education and vocational guidance for students with disability in the Maltese educational system is unacceptable on all counts. In effect, the more challenges a disability places on a student's transition from school to adult life, the less career education and vocational guidance is available (Galea-Curmi et al. 1996, p.229).

Unpacking

Career guidance, even with persons with disability stresses the interaction between learning and work (Debono, Camilleri, Galea & Gravina 2007). This reality surfaced from the data collated in the different stages of debate I had with the countless stakeholders involved. A number of issues have emerged when conducting this research on career guidance for persons with disability, which I have unpacked, namely:
- Career guidance needs to be perceived as a milestone in life-long learning goals;
- The need for social equity and social inclusion aims;

Emancipating
Research

**Promote work
choice and search**

- We need to reflect on the local context;
- There is a need to develop career information;
- Promote work choice and search;
- Advance skills development;
- Staff development is crucial to support service delivery;
- Improve coordination;
- Choice of work is still highly influenced by the family and community;
- We need to ensure continuous development of worker's capabilities and competencies;
- Impact of globalisation needs to be reflected upon (Pagliano 2005);
- There still is a lack of career maturity;
- We still have poorly developed planning and monitoring skills;
- Our students with a disability lack problem solving skills, social skills and social awareness;
- There still is low academic achievement particularly in literacy and innumeracy;
- Parental over involvement.

    Social exclusion refers to the structures and processes which exclude persons and groups from full participation in society… (It) can be succinctly described as cumulative marginalisation: from production (unemployment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family neighbours), from decision-making and from adequate quality of life… It is not just about lack of money, but may also be about isolation, lack of work, lack of educational opportunities and discrimination' (Irish National Report, p.98 *cited in* Clayton 1999).

**In emancipatory
research, the
central purpose of
research is seen
as supporting the
empowerment
of service-users
and the making
of broader social
change**

If emancipatory research emphasises the equalization of research relationships, changed social relations and empowerment, the focus of user-controlled research is with who originates and makes decisions about research and evaluation. Its general contention is that such control rarely lies with such (disadvantaged and oppressed) groups. In emancipatory research, the central purpose of research is seen as supporting the empowerment of service-users and the making of broader social change.

**More students
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Future

More students with disabilities are planning to continue their education, either within the vocational or purely academic sector. A significant number of other persons with disability are interested in either finding open or sheltered employment with full-, part- or flexi-time conditions. As a person with a disability, one needs to be well informed about rights and responsibilities. There are a number of

arguments which inform this debate and will feature the practices enabling 'inclusion' within the career guidance deliberation:

- We need to move towards a mindset whereby debates are directed towards interdependence rather than dependency or independency, which is a focal module in self-realisation (Goodley 2000).
- This work blends collective and individual debates as part of a comprehensive solution to this elaborate discussion (Goodley 2000). Finding solutions is not about isolated decisions, disconnected struggles, tangential involvement of the disabled community and marginal strategies. We need to make 'inclusion' happen on a variety of fronts, tap-in allies, look for resources in existing structures and challenge the rhetoric that oozes from boardroom debates.

That is why, my fieldwork helped me to conceptualise career guidance for persons with disability by drawing on the grassroots (NGOs, Unions, Activists), policy makers (NCPD, ETC, Education Division) and service providers (Agency SAPPORT, Schools, ETC, Education Division). We need to keep engaging with a discourse where policies enable 'inclusion' and the disabled community entice this agenda. The data I have gathered in my ethnographic dimension of my research compares well with my other methods of collecting data. In ethnography, there may not be any concrete data by some researcher's standards but the information is gathered out of a very personal agenda when it collides with the reader (Clough and Nutbrown 2002).

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To help me administer and manage my research I have referred to the Social Model to provide for my analytical framework, which hinges on an individual engagement - this avoids social barrenness (Corbett 1996). This work has been based on a number of important components; stories, listening to people, reviewing literature and disseminating questionnaires amongst others. However, the crucial point of my research lies within the fact that this was a process of self-exploration (Plummer 2001). I sought to give my work a reflective dimension.

**I sought to
give my work
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dimension**

I Became Aware Of: Parents

According to my own observation and debate with parent activists, most parents feel that their child benefited to some degree or other from school. Nonetheless, they are also concerned that the opportunities following compulsory education seem to be little and far between. They have reiterated their concern that the skills their children have managed to obtain from school will not be enough for them to access the community. They also appear to feel that their

Emancipating
Research

They were able to work in partnership with the school systems to find the best way to support their child's education

children had to struggle to achieve appropriate social 'inclusion' (Daniels 1995; Thomas 1999). A number of parents still feel that they were prevented from being fully involved in their children's education and decision-making process (Booth & Booth 1997). Other parents emerged with a distinct experience. They were able to work in partnership with the school systems to find the best way to support their child's education (DFEE 1997). It becomes apparent that parents in their own distinctive cultural discourse are trying to interpret the complex debate that is taking place in the disability discourse. They bring to light the following:

- The importance of an "open school" with two-way communication.
- The need for consultation and personal involvement in the development of the school policies and school development plans. They state that schools should not simply be the end of the implementation line. Policy also needs to be developed in schools (Slee 1993; Clark, Dyson and Millward 1995).
- The experience of parents and their children with a disability reflect a marginalised institutional struggle involving professionals, academics and bureaucrats. Parents are at times confused where their allies and allegiances lie.
- Parents feel disorientated about the whole debate of 'inclusion' and how this discourse is being chased by a standards mentality (Brown 1999; Ware 1999).

Parents want to be part of career guidance

- Parents want to be part of career guidance. They tend to express a need to be directly involved and engaged in this process (Debono, Debono and Caruana 2005).

In a paper I had published in *Disability and Society* in 2000, I attempted to capture the concept of 'inclusion' and exclusion as part of a complex interaction with notions governed by professionalisation. Parents are increasingly dissatisfied with the way different provisions are regulated. There is a tendency to interpret professional involvement as a shared negative experience.

From my own observations, annotations and discussions with varied guidance teachers and counsellors, I could note that the responsibility of having an inclusive school community lies primarily with having a school administration that is vigorous

I Became Aware Of: School Community
From my own observations, annotations and discussions with varied guidance teachers and counsellors, I could note that the responsibility of having an inclusive school community lies primarily with having a school administration that is vigorous (Busher 1998) but also one that has enough resources to maintain the services required for effective inclusion in school and in the community. Schools are being expected to create an inclusive culture within an atmosphere that is increasingly demanding and competitive (Farrell and Ainscow 2002). When students with disability are included in regular programs, these tasks need to be attuned to their specific requirements. What better way to meet those needs than through adequate, trained and possibly, specialised guidance teachers in the field of disability?

School communities are there to include the facility of speaking up for one's own right, designing options based on informed choices, having the capability to listen to and be taken seriously, developing new skills, helping, supporting and representing others, obtaining adequate information, being treated for what one is rather than for what they are not, influencing the fabrication of services and finally having social contact based on a process of citizenship (Azzopardi 2000). School community will not just happen on its own.

I Became Aware Of: Culture
The way that schools are structured reflect the culture and experience of a community and the curriculum is to take account of this reality rather than just accounting for a traditional chase for credentials. Inclusive education is not by any stretch of the imagination a problem-free experience even with the best possible scenario. Schools should have the right climate and opportunity to tackle such issues. No organisation can function without a culture of debate.

Inclusive education is not by any stretch of the imagination a problem-free experience even with the best possible scenario

- Schools should bring together the community, educationalists, service-recipients and bureaucrats to engage with the discourse of 'inclusion'. This is no one's remit. Schools need to explore possibilities in a spirit of constructive dialogue in which all parties, especially students are free to voice (Davis 1998) their fears and dreams.
- This process has been accompanied by a new managerialism in which 'quality', 'standards' and 'targets' have become the mots d' ordre… In this context, the allocation of students to particular schools is influenced, if not entirely decided, by considerations relating to visible academic success rewarded by financial advantages and status in the community… 'Failing' schools are subjected to public scrutiny through 'naming and shaming' (Armstrong 1999, p.85-86).
- The school is a communal location. It is the crossroad that for a moment brings in-line all stakeholders. Teachers (most especially guidance teachers) and other professionals (namely counsellors) within the education system are to bear in mind the potential of every child that has to learn and grow. One cannot presume there is a distinct group of 'special' children defined solely by professionals on what they would refer to as 'deficits'.
- Schools need to develop a new teaching culture. We have to move away from anti-pedagogic teaching approaches. Regional schools where cultural characteristics stand-out, require the necessary support provisions to adapt to a curriculum which tolerates diversity, 'pupil context-based content' and to scrutinise existing teaching methods (Bonal & Rambla 1999) - I have seen and experienced this for myself.

Chapter 4

Emancipating
Research

I Became Aware Of: Unions and Employment Agencies

The main structures that inform our employees and have a direct role in developing and safeguarding the individual are in fact Unions. In my debate with the Union representatives a number of issues emerged:

- Employers seem to be afraid of recruiting persons with disability because there is an innate feeling of fear and unpreparedeness;
- Legislation enacted back in Employment Act 1969 (Handicapped Persons) is not being implemented and reinforced;
- Unions themselves feel that there are people who are unemployable and there should be services that complement full, flexi and partial employment;
- Employers need more information on the current schemes adopted by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC);
- There is seemingly a lack of understanding on what are the rights and responsibilities of employers;
- It seems that the employers, feel that most persons with disability, especially those with learning disability, do not have the adequate training and skills to be capable for full employment. Qualities like versatility, numeracy and literacy skills are limited;
- According to the Unions, the jobs that characterised persons with disability, such as telephone operators, have now disappeared from the market and employers are now expecting elasticity and flexibility when applying competencies and skills;
- Employers tend to run short of reassurances when it comes to accessibility, safety and security;
- Employers are also concerned that their non-disabled employees will find it difficult to include persons with disability in their ranks and this may cause a drop in production.

Employers need more information on the current schemes adopted by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)

Employers tend to run short of reassurances when it comes to accessibility, safety and security

I Became Aware Of: Disabled Activists

This research helped me realise a number of issues that emanated from my debate with disabled activists:

- Disabled activists fear bullying when moving into mainstream society either when engaged with further education or with employment opportunities;
- Disabled activists indicated that at times they have met difficulties with future employment because their parents did not believe that they could cope with the dynamic and potential abuse that may be created at work;
- Going into tertiary and post-secondary education has been an important consideration that was mentioned by most, if not all persons with disability I interviewed. However, they felt that the educational system is too rigid and insular. They mentioned situations when persons with disability have to lose out on their obligatory schooling in view of the fact that appointments

at hospital for regular check ups and treatment are done in the morning. At times they miss out weeks on end, which obviously affects their knowledge and skills base. They also indicated that schools are not always welcoming communities and in certain situations they find themselves being disputed when accessing mainstream. They claim that teachers do not believe in inclusion;

- They also maintain that guidance services have made significant improvement for them. However, there wasn't enough done to ensure accessibility of this service. They said that most guidance teachers did not have clear and comprehensible knowledge on disability issues;
- There was a constant indication to have services that are provided impartially and with a holistic rather than a sporadic and fragmented strategy;
- They have also mentioned the importance of visibility (to the community) and transparency (in the choices/selection processes) as two crucial values and stratagems.

There was a constant indication to have services that are provided impartially and with a holistic rather than a sporadic and fragmented strategy

I Became Aware Of: Guidance Teachers and Counsellors

Guidance teachers were consulted in this study through a number of ways. What was interesting was their positive attitude and willingness to engage with this sector (disability) even if quite a significant number of them admitted that they do not have enough knowledge on this area. The outstanding issues that emerged were the following:

- Guidance teachers need more training in the disability sector. They themselves admitted that they have very little knowledge;
- Guidance teachers and counsellors require more time to analyse and debate the basic concepts around inclusive education;
- Guidance teachers mentioned the need to have specialized guidance teachers who could be informed and work more directly with persons with disability and their family;
- At times guidance teachers, seem to have a problem accessing school services because the same administrators don't have enough knowledge on how to deal with these situations;
- Career guidance needs to be a collaborative activity between the citizen and the provider of service;
- The guidance teachers also complained of excessive paper work they have and the need to be more on the floor rather than dealing with papers and reports. Some guidance teachers also contested the fact that their timetable is made up of teaching a subject as well, which creates difficulty when students or circumstances require their immediate intervention.

Guidance teachers and counsellors require more time to analyse and debate the basic concepts around inclusive education

At times guidance teachers, seem to have a problem accessing school services because the same administrators don't have enough knowledge on how to deal with these situations

Chapter 4

Emancipating
Research

Disability is an experience of social oppression through political and economic factors that seem to be influenced by a capitalist paradigm

Pathologising Disability

We need to get away from pathologizing disability and perceiving it as a welfare dilemma. Disability is an experience of social oppression through political and economic factors that seem to be influenced by a capitalist paradigm. Disability is also interpreted as being a symptom of social oppression and impairment is the physical representation of this dimension. This social construction is not about or caused by the body (or some impairment), but it collides on the body. Impairment and discrimination have a massive impact on the life of this minority - in different proportions at different times. The social model contributes to acknowledging the complexities that are taking place behind the scenes. The following are authors of texts that have created a conceptual milestone in this debate:

- Slee (1993) focuses on 'inclusion' as needing a fundamental strength in policy analysis and puts forward some very motivating notions of pedagogy, programmes and school organisation strategies;
- Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995), propose developments in the area of policy, organisation, teacher's professional maturity, resources, pedagogy, curriculum and values;
- Ainscow (1999) sets out a series of challenges and emphasises on the need to design various types of programmes that can meet up with the culture and needs of the student. He also brings in the *Index*, which is intended to lead to effective processes of school audit and 'inclusion'.

The Spacious Silence

It is useless trying to find a 'one fit all' solution

'Inclusion' has an assortment of meanings and values (Bayliss 2004). It is useless trying to find a 'one fit all' solution. I have tried to keep away from finding an absolute in this whole debate - which tends to lead me to nowhere. The values that set up this whole discourse construct 'inclusion' as primarily engaging with the exploration and the nature of difference. 'Inclusion' ends up being the preamble to a discussion about social woes, which views society as being based on the principles of exclusion, selectivity and homogeneity - thus, disregarding unity. We end up interpreting the whole notion of 'inclusion' within the discourse of impairment as being centred on a debate that focuses on 'defectology' (Bayliss 2004). Career guidance needs to slot past these misconceptions and create the so much needed support that is required for these students to make it into our community as fully active and productive citizens.

Conclusion

Should career guidance be a specialization on its own account?

- Should career education be a separate 'subject' in our curriculum?
- Should career guidance be a specialization on its own account?

- What is the role of other teachers (apart from the guidance teachers) in this issue?
- Should we start to consider different models, whereby career guidance teachers work in tandem within a trans-disciplinary setting that includes other professions, namely, youth and community workers, social workers and psychologists amongst others, together with parents and their children?
- What strategies are we using to ensure that all students receive the necessary support in school?

What strategies are we using to ensure that all students receive the necessary support in school?

The perspective of disabled activists surfaces a number of thrilling debates that describe the tensions that exist in such a discourse. The impression I get is that there is a dearth for discussion amongst all the stakeholders, which would contribute considerably to the 'opinionating' of these issues according to the perception, perspective and persuasion of people with a disability. Structures that are being set up at the moment such as the Malta Council Of Disabled People (2003) and the Malta Disability Studies Group (2004) are still at a very early stage to make the impact and dictate the agenda that this context so fiercely needs. So, debate remains sporadic, isolated and fragmented, which is convenient for policy-makers, professionals and politicians not allies to the 'cause' (Campbell and Oliver 1997).

...debate remains sporadic, isolated and fragmented, which is convenient for policy-makers, professionals and politicians not allies to the 'cause'

In these last years teaching has become an 'increasingly explicit politicisation of educational structures and processes' (Clough 1998, p.1). The experience of education will succeed if it becomes a liberating force that would help students transcend into new social dimensions. The processes of education are strongly governed by legislation, regulation and the marketing of schools (Clough 1998; Giordmaina 2001). This responsibility entails a great deal of liability on the whole school institution (notably through the role of the guidance teacher) to respond to the particular demands of society. The struggle is hijacked by converging all our efforts on standards. The experiences of students with a disability become a point of contention and at times are perceived as a waste of energy and lack productivity. Career guidance teachers have a most important role in the struggle against this quandary.

Career guidance teachers have a most important role in the struggle against this quandary

The Social Model of Disability

My physical impairment is not something I would choose. I would rather be able to walk than have to use a wheelchair. I would rather the spasm in my legs didn't wake me up at six o'clock in the morning. I would rather I didn't have to worry about incontinence when I share a bed with someone. I would rather I didn't have the burning sensation in my legs which is there every waking moment of my day and night. Yet I love how I am and the life I lead.

I like what I see when I look in the mirror. I value so much the contact I have with other disabled people and with non-disabled allies - in our struggle against - prejudice and discrimination.
(Jenny Morris, 'The Fall', in Keith's 1994, *Musn't Grumble*, p.170-1).

Introduction

The whole thinking surrounding career guidance relies on a tradition of support

The whole thinking surrounding career guidance relies on a tradition of support. It is a question of gaining the support of society to guarantee that an individual, whatever his/her needs, can be represented and directed towards a future based on personal development and economic productivity. An impairment shouldn't invoke an assumption that a person is in need of a cure or pity. The development and progression of an individual lies within a process of transformation whereby, an individual is able to move from one stage to another in a sure and steady sense of citizenship. It is when engaging with the visibility of this minority made reticent, that the excluded can collide with the oppressive discourse effectively.

An impairment shouldn't invoke an assumption that a person is in need of a cure or pity

The social model rejects a 'personal tragedy' image, in which the disabled person is perceived as the problem; the civil rights model promotes collaboration and collective strength as a force for change; the personal as political model illustrates diverse experiences and sharing of feelings which support and validate identity (Corbett 1996, p 75).

Finkelstein & Stuart (1996) define the Social Model of Disability as a model that:

Incorporates a holistic interpretation of the situation facing disabled people. It suggests that people with physical and mental impairments can have satisfying life-styles as disabled people if the focus of attention is shifted towards the removal of disabling barriers rather than concentration only on the rehabilitation of disabled individuals (p.171).

The medical model, on the other hand perceives disability as a problem that lies within the person with a disability and they need to adapt to fit into the world as it is. If this is not possible, then they are shut away in some specialized institution, service or else isolated at home, where only the most basic of needs are met. In other words the medical model maintains that the person with a disability:

The medical model, on the other hand perceives disability as a problem that lies within the person with a disability and they need to adapt to fit into the world as it is

- is a sufferer;
- is the problem;
- needs curing;
- cannot make decisions about life;
- needs professionals to look after him/her;
- can never be equal to a non-disabled person.

The barriers can take three forms, 'environmental', (e.g. lack of accessible information), 'systematic' (e.g. segregated provision) and/ or 'attitudinal' (e.g. persons with disability are seen as expensive, useless or needy).

The Challenge

The biggest challenge facing the social model of disability comes from those critics who would suggest that persons with disability's exclusion cannot be put down purely to societal ills (Barnes and Mercer 2003). Perhaps if we keep trying to understand the social model of disability and the medical/individual model, we will end up with believing that there is little to gain from it all. In the social model lies a basic principle where the person is no longer at the centre of the tragedy but it is society, the collective, that is implicated in this calamity! It also seems that if we take the social context as being at the centre of it all, we will end up realising that in actual fact the whole community has the responsibility of captivating its short comings and addressing the complex needs of its individual members.

We need to engage with the social model as a conceptual framework that leads us to understand the dire need of a society that has to take responsibility for its condescending, demeaning, belittling and patronising position with regards to people with disability. This debate needs to take us a step further in analysing how to prevent the oppressive and discriminatory attitude of society. The fact that persons with disability are increasingly featuring as a theoretical point of reference is proving that the social model is vital to the survival of this minority.

We need to engage with the social model as a conceptual framework that leads us to understand the dire need of a society that has to take responsibility for its condescending, demeaning, belittling and patronising position with regards to people with disability

Whilst this study is not intended to give a detailed account of different models of disability, it is important to discuss the sources that have informed me with this model, which has had the greatest impact in current understanding of disability, not least in terms of their

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commentaries on public attitudes. Needless to say, the *Fundamental Principles of Disability* (UPIAS 1976) is a crucial text that has influenced greatly my thinking and perception of disability. It is a piece of work with a vision that can still be considered modern and forward-looking thirty years after its publication. Way back in the mid-70's the UPIAS was already proposing a social theory of disability (UPIAS 1976; Barnes and Oliver 1995; Drewett 1999). This document was calling for the methodical analysis of the organisation of society, thus managing to get at the soul of what disability entailed.

> …the alternative struggle proposed by the Union is logically developed from a social theory of disability… We ourselves look for our expertise to the wealth of talent and intellectual imagination of disabled people, which will be freed for expression once we contemplate our own situation from our own collective experience (UPIAS 1976, p.20).

UPIAS (1976) is the launch pad of the social model and the rejection of the individual and charity models that have until then dominated disability issues

UPIAS (1976) is the launch pad of the social model and the rejection of the individual and charity models that have until then dominated disability issues (Davies 1994; Mason and Reiser 1994; Azzopardi 1999a; Camilleri 1999). Most of the changes that are being proposed in the economic, political and social realms by persons with disability today are in fact a regurgitation of *The Fundamental Principles of Disability* (1976).

> The Union therefore seeks to help disabled people to recognise and oppose all approaches, which can only see answers to our problems in terms of different forms of charity (p.20).

Oliver (1994) puts forward the concept that, in order to comprehend policy issues, it is imperative to realise the 'discourse'. Oliver (1991) quotes Hugman:

> Discourse is about the interplay between language and social relationships, in which some groups are able to achieve dominance for their interests in the way in which the world is defined and acted upon. Such groups include not only dominant economic classes, but also men with patriarchy, and white people within the racism of colonial and post-colonial societies, as well as professionals in relation to service users (p.37).

Fruition of the Model
The social model has originally been developed by people with a physical impairment. Its main stance is that disability does not reside in individuals' impairment or 'dysfunction' (as the medical model would contend) but in the material and social barriers, which people

with a disability experience (Finkelstein 1991; 2001; Oliver 1990a). During the rise of Western capitalism and industrialisation, persons with disability were increasingly seen as financial burdens since they could not undertake heavy physical labour and were therefore condemned to workhouses. According to this formulation, attitudes towards persons with disability as dependent and deserving of pity can be traced to this enforced dependency model which still exists to some extent today, albeit within a more 'humane' welfare framework. In terms of the educational discourse, the social model surfaces a need for society to provide for the fact that persons with disability are less likely to obtain qualifications, tend to live close or under the 'poverty line' and are more likely to experience social exclusion and remoteness (Strategy Unit Disability Project 2004).

The Tone of Voice
This minority is exposing itself to a language that professionals, politicians and policy-makers are adopting to enfold a strategy that sounds familiar to persons with disability but intrinsically heartens oppression, inequality and discrimination (UPIAS 1976; Shakespeare 1998; Barnes, Oliver and Barton 2002). Language is a key element in culture. The terms used to denote 'disability' have changed regularly over the years. Language is used automatically and unthinkingly in daily conversation so that people become desensitised to the meaning of devaluing words - and their impact on devalued people.

This minority is exposing itself to a language that professionals, politicians and policy-makers are adopting to enfold a strategy that sounds familiar to persons with disability but intrinsically heartens oppression, inequality and discrimination

Jenny Corbett's (1996), *Bad-Mouthing - The Language of Special Needs* treats this issue at length. She argues that the power of language is overwhelming. According to her, it is used by politicians to create emotions, by professionals to persuade, by activists to engage and by students to justify. Language is a force to be reckoned with. The disability community has forever struggled with definitions (UPIAS 1976; Corbett 1996), labels (Barton and Oliver 1997), descriptions and nomenclatures. The question that comes to mind at this point is whether 'political correctness' has in fact become the current that has drifted us away from the real issues to be contended with. Does political correctness come before or after the themes? Is this a repeat of 'who came first, the chicken or the egg?' chronicle where we end up being absorbed with language that defines rather than the definitions that make language?

She argues that the power of language is overwhelming

A Social Model Practice Base
It is useless emphasising the importance that lies in the social model thinking. Disabled activists have repeatedly seen the validity of any research that concerns them if it brings them in line with the control and the struggle they have engaged with; moving from the personal to the social oppression theory, recognize expertise as part of the

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The social model does not lie above the echelons of practice

There is no doubt about this, this study pivots around the social model principles and standards

experience, affirming a position rather than being pushed around to adjustment and making politics rather than fancy strategy clichés (Oliver 1996).

The social model does not lie above the echelons of practice. The social model has provided enormous inroads for people who have struggled to have citizenship rights. This model, has re-positioned the emphasis from one of fault finding to a shifting of responsibility, from a society that has created mainstream values to a struggle that has seen the most basic of assumptions faced up to (UPIAS 1976; Oliver 1996; Barnes and Mercer 2003).

The starting point of the social model of disability is the separation of the two terms, 'impairment' and 'disability'. In contrast to the medical model, the social model of disability does not use the term 'disability' to mean impairment but to refer instead to the disabling barriers of prejudice, discrimination and social exclusion. The following definitions are therefore used:
  • Disability is the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a society which takes little or no account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from mainstream activity…
  • Impairment is a characteristic, feature or attribute within an individual which is long term and may or may not be the result of disease or injury…
  • Disabled people are those people with impairments who are disabled by society (Morris 2002b, p.18).

There is no doubt about this, this study pivots around the social model principles and standards. The social model is in a privileged position to help us read through the current situation and the key barriers to employment and post-compulsory school courses. All other ideas, concepts, theories are seemingly seen as subordinate to it, and everything must fit within the social model (Corbett 1996). The reason for this is that this model has a very broad consensus and has been adapted across cultures as a collective and individual experience (Riddell and Watson 2003). This work is based around the fundamental issue of 'life chances', that is, the creation of opportunities for people to improve on their quality of life. 'Life chances' are not simply based on luck but on a continuum of opportunities brought about by a society that values each and every one of its members. As we will be seeing in this work, people with disability are faring less well than non-disabled people across a wide range of experiences.

We need to get away from pathologising disability and perceiving it as a welfare dilemma. Disability is an experience of social oppression

through political and economic factors that seem to be influenced by a consumer focused paradigm. Disability is also interpreted as being a symptom of social oppression and impairment and is the physical representation of this dimension. This social construction is not about or caused by the body (or some impairment), but it collides on the body. The social model contributes to acknowledging the complexities that are taking place behind the scenes. The social model brings to mind the detail that disability is not noticeable to the majority world. Oppression tends to indicate something 'we feel' and are aware of, disability is about invisibility in these public discourses. It is in no way a transient situation that can enter and leave one's consciousness at the whim of how other people see them and how they perceive themselves.

The social model brings to mind the detail that disability is not noticeable to the majority world

An important research notion that comes into debate in the disability discourse that relates to career guidance research is 'quality of life' which always tends to go back to the idea that one life is better than another.

Asking the Fundamental Questions

Whenever I come across a theory I ask, 'could it be customised to help further disability theory? Does it help explain the situation I am analysing?' The social model is ultimately an ideology but is fundamentally a strategy instigator that can lure 'inclusion' practices in schools. The groups who feel excluded are the groups for whom the 'physical' versions of the social model didn't work, even if they hadn't articulated it in quite that way. They talk about 'inclusion' into the social model without really considering whether the social model is or can be inclusive to the extent that everyone wants. This model has laid the fundamentals of the social world persons with disability live in now. This model has also developed a human rights and self-control agenda. It has encouraged more persons with disability to speak out. Vociferous activists become more likely to engage in a culture conflict over which a version of their lives prevails in the public domain. This model is also a culture on the politics of protest that are starting to emerge even locally, instigated and conditioned by the fundamental principles that guide this conceptual framework. Previously, persons with disability preferred to be submissive. By having a 'condition' where persons with disability are tagged, the consequence is then around how society interprets this minority. The notion of 'visibility' is brought in at this stage. The social model discussion tends to be multifaceted and complex. It is organic in that its boundaries are constantly revisited as persons with disability continue to ask what it should mean for them.

The social model is ultimately an ideology but is fundamentally a strategy instigator that can lure 'inclusion' practices in schools

The social model discussion tends to be multifaceted and complex

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The Social Model within a Localised Debate

As Oliver (1996) states:

> The production of disability in one sense, therefore, is nothing more nor less than a set of activities specifically geared towards producing a good - the category disability - supported by a range of political actions which create the conditions to allow these productive activities to take place and underpinned by a discourse which gives legitimacy to the whole enterprise (p. 126).

The social model in Malta has been seeping through the varied and diverse contexts. One needs to recognise that the parent activist movement is very strong in Malta. This makes it sound as if the whole theoretical and practical application of the social model will not fit within this scenario. Parent activists are starting to realise that this debate is under construction and they need to re-position their discourse within a broader 'disability agenda'. Some of the parents feel rather confused and ill at ease as they get mixed messages that they are being rejected by the disability community. One of the persons with disability I interviewed reiterated that 'at times parents turn out to be another brick in the institutional framework rather than motivating us to move on'. This is a situation I interpreted as happening even when I was speaking to the learning disability representatives who repeatedly argued that they feel that parents at times hardly give them space to develop in the persons they want to be.

One of the persons with disability I interviewed reiterated that 'at times parents turn out to be another brick in the institutional framework rather than motivating us to move on'

> Despite criticisms from some quarters that social model ideas are too abstract to be of much practical use in the real world, I wish to argue that actually its focus on removing structural barriers makes if a far more logical and achievable strategy for 'inclusion' than do traditional individual model approaches. (Tregaskis 2003, p.4).

The social model is about focusing on the social barriers within the environment, culture and economy (Barnes and Mercer 2003). The social model can be used to understand this reality and the veracity they are immersed in. This model can be affianced to appreciate the family lives and the personal relationships of persons with disability. The services that are there to support the persons with disability end up constructing barriers and devalue the person and his/her lifestyle (Finkelstein 2003). This model has conditioned and affected my own thinking drastically (UPIAS 1976).

> Traditionally researchers in the field of disability studies have worked with disabled people to uncover their experiences, and to place them within a social model context in which, in capitalist societies, disability is shown to be an artificial and exclusionary social construction which penalises those people with impairments who do not conform to mainstream expectations of appearance, behaviour, and/or economic performance... (UPIAS 1976, pp.3-4; Finkelstein 1980; Oliver 1990, p.11).

> The social model of disability has been an emancipatory concept in the lives of many disabled people, in helping us to make sense of our experience… (Tregaskis 2000, p.343).

The social model brings about the realization that society needs to provide the necessary support frameworks and conditions to allow people coming with different experiences to be effective within the economy, either as providers within the economy or else in their commitment to further studies. We cannot shy away from the fact that persons with disability tend to have lower academic qualifications and struggle to achieve what most students their age manage to attain, out of no fault of their own. Even though one needs to keep in mind that we have a credential (frantic) society which may not always subsist to the development of the individual, we cannot derail ourselves from the fact that people, with disability 'may be left behind in a 'tail' of underachievement' (Strategy Unit Disability Project 2004, p.28).

We cannot shy away from the fact that persons with disability tend to have lower academic qualifications and struggle to achieve what most students their age manage to attain, out of no fault of their own

The social model has along the years shown that it can instigate change or else influence the thinking surrounding the concept at hand. The coercion from institutional care to independent living, the move from segregated special schooling to mainstream provision and the realisation of the Equal Opportunities Act, 2000 (Persons with Disability) have all been spearheaded by the social model of disability in Malta.

The social model has along the years shown that it can instigate change or else influence the thinking surrounding the concept at hand

> The social model, came about not so much as an academic discourse but as an active strategy, a campaigning tool, to change societies perceptions about the place of disabled people in this structure, it is with a reaction to what then was not thought of as a model so much as the natural social order (Larry Arnold, 2006. *Conference Proceeding*).

The challenge to the disability community in Malta is finding a way to break through and take control of, this will only happen when the community stops in-fighting and joins as a united group to contest the discrimination that each individual as well as the collective experience. Until this happens, the disability movement will continue to be a muddle of little foci groups promoting individual causes at the expense of other groups.

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Career guidance is in a position to create an effective and effectual partnership that helps minimise the damage that market considerations can compound

The ability of the individual that converges with the demands of employment and its duties are vital dimensions of disability. Despite some adjustments in working life, disability is still intimately connected to a weak position in the labour market. Unemployment or unemployability became more prevalent for this minority and this has weakened further the labour market position of persons with disability. Career guidance is in a position to create an effective and effectual partnership that helps minimise the damage that market considerations can compound (Makela and Hulkko 1999).

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> When an archer is shooting for nothing
> He has all the skill.
> If he shoots for a brass buckle
> He is already nervous.
> If he shoots for a prize of gold
> He goes blind
> Or sees two targets -
> He is out of his mind!
> His skill has not changed. But the prize
> Divides him. He cares.
> He thinks more of winning
> Than of shooting -
> And the need to win
> Drains him of power
> (Wicks 1998, p.21).

Introduction

This is the story of a 28-year-old physically disabled man[2]. I have known Dean for years. He is also a distant relative. We have crossed paths a number of times in our life. He was an informant for my Bachelor and Masters degree research projects. We also used to share the same secondary school and worked together for a number of years at a social work service.

This is the story of a 28-year-old physically disabled man

The story of Dean lies coated in pliability. His thinking is tremendously and excitingly elastic. He stands through with his principles, core values and beliefs. He does not compromise with his Christian values. He practices his faith ardently and enthusiastically. Dean would also attend prayer group and Bible study sessions. Dean is no exhibitionist. He is low profile, but 'everyone' seems to know him! He is a symbol of success to many, especially to other persons with a disability. He doesn't fit the 'super-crip' mould although he has said that he feels that he has been used as a token disabled person in the past on a number of occasions. This chap keeps strong and is unwavering in what he believes in. It seems that his inability to change physically in certain aspects has been transferred in his ability to adapt himself. On the other hand, he loves an audience if it gives him the opportunity to debate on the social paraphernalia he is entrapped in. This may sound like a freedom story but in reality Dean makes the most complex of complexities, the most tough of harsh experiences - sound simple and straightforward. He is one to reckon with.

He is low profile, but 'everyone' seems to know him

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2   I have adapted this life story from my unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Sheffield (2005).

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The Story:
New Born Baby
I was born 28 years ago. I was my parents' first and only child after my mother had three miscarriages. Her gynaecologist suggested that she spends most of her pregnancy in absolute bed rest, which she did.

I was born by a caesarean section. Since my mother was still under the effect of the anaesthetic, my father was the first to know about my impairment, a medical condition known as Spina Bifida. He was also given the option to consent to an immediate surgical intervention, which I needed, without which I could not have survived for more than a couple of weeks. What was interesting (?!?!) was the way he was 'advised' about this…although rather implicitly, he was encouraged to "let nature take its course" because…"anyway…with or without the operation, my life in the future will not be anything similar to what parents dream for their children…he would not be able to do this, that and the other". Thankfully, my father, in spite of this 'wise talk', consented to the surgery.

> What was interesting (?!?!) was the way he was 'advised' about this… although rather implicitly, he was encouraged to "let nature take its course" because… "anyway…with or without the operation, my life in the future will not be anything similar to what parents dream for their children…he would not be able to do this, that and the other"

The surgery entailed that I had to be transferred to another hospital. Before I was relocated to this other hospital, my father wanted my mother to see me and hold me at least a couple of minutes (this could have been the last time she had the opportunity to do so). As I already said, she was still under the effect of the anaesthetic, but she remembers seeing my feet a little bit bluish! This little incident was relevant because when my father eventually told her that I was transferred to the general hospital, he did not tell her immediately about my condition, but told her that I needed a little bit of oxygen. Having observed my bluish feet, she believed this story.

My mother had to stay in hospital for some more days. One fine day, she asked my father to bring her something to read. He went home to my grandma and asked one of my mother's sisters to give her some stuff to read. She had just bought a Reader's Digest edition, which she gave him to give it to my mum (without having read it herself yet).

When my mother was reading this Reader's Digest, she came across a story about a couple who had just had a baby with a 'strange condition' known as 'Spina Bifida'. This story was about the struggle with coming to terms with the fact that they did not consent for a surgery, which was required for their son's survival. Eventually, the baby died. This story set my mum thinking about what she would have done where she in their situation! She thought she would surely have given the baby the chance to live, to survive[3].

That day, my father went to visit her as usual and she started discussing this story with him... one can imagine what my father felt when hearing this! Obviously, he could not tell her all this, there and then! When, eventually, it was time for her to leave hospital and she asked my father to take her to see me, he had to tell her that "something was wrong"…when she asked him what was it that I had, his answer was: "Bħal tal-ktieb! (The book's same story!)" Eventually, she interpreted the 'Reader's Digest' incident as the way through which God prepared her for what was to come!

The Patient
It was obvious that I needed frequent medical attention, and my parents used to take me to hospital to visit various consultants at least three times a week. In spite of this, my parents were never really told about my needs and most of the things they had to learn themselves. They could sense an almost total lack of support. I was very often quite sick, and when I was eleven months old, they could not take it any longer and decided to seek consultation abroad. Obviously they needed some sort of referral, or at least some medical information about my condition. The consultant they sought advice from listened to their story and to their concerns, and eventually gave them his feedback: "Listen…he's got so many problems, it's just no use wasting money on him!" No need to comment further on this statement!

My parents persisted, and eventually I was taken to Queen Mary's University Hospital, in Roehampton, UK. What immediately struck my parents was the completely different approach adopted by the doctors and other professionals there…what was important was not that the 'glass was half empty', but that 'it was half full'. I was a human being who had the potential to lead a fulfilling life if only I had the necessary support, something which my parents were all for giving me!

> My parents persisted

> I was a human being who had the potential to lead a fulfilling life if only I had the necessary support, something which my parents were all for giving me!

I was taken to that same hospital one other time with my parents paying all the expenses. In 1977, I needed another urgent operation, and since the doctors in Malta were on industrial action, the government had no alternative other than to send me to have the operation abroad. I was taken to the same hospital I had been before. I remained their patient for the years to come, and the government used to send me for check-ups and/or interventions needed at least once a year, up till 1992, when my condition was considered stable, and when the UK doctors decided that I could be adequately followed by doctors, surgeons, and other professionals locally.

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3   I was particularly intrigued by this part of the story. The illustration made by Dean is significant. The power of stories change people, affect their understanding and create a ripple affect not only on the person him/herself but the rest of the people that are intimately related. Stories change us.

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Breaking a Leg or Two
When it was time for me to start my schooling, my parents opted for mainstream schooling, again in spite of going against what was being suggested to them by some local professionals. The people at the first kindergarten school they went to were not too keen to accept me (the nun 'could not cope with my needs', even though my mother offered all her help and support). Another school in the vicinity was approached. This time the problem was that the class was already full, but I was accepted anyway. My mother used to come to school every single day during mid-day break to see to my needs. Although the concept was not at all known at the time, she was fulfilling the role of my facilitator. A very good 'working relationship' developed between my mother and the nun that was teaching me, so that my personal, social and educational needs could be addressed adequately.

After a scholastic year in this kindergarten school, it was time for me to move to a primary school. Again a school in the vicinity was chosen. Yet again, my mother went to the school before the beginning of the scholastic year to speak to the person who was to be my teacher. She was hesitant in the beginning because it was her first such experience, but seeing that my mother was willing to offer all her support, she decided to give me a chance. What was fascinating was the fact that after about three weeks of me being in her class, my teacher felt that she had to apologise with my mother for being so hesitant initially. Again, even this time round, my mother used to come to school every single day during mid-day break to see to my personal needs. Moreover, I had absolutely no problem in participating in all the activities in class… my classmates did not only 'accept' me as one of them, it was simply natural for them to give me the support in those circumstances - I required it from them. What was sometimes annoying were the comments my mother used to indirectly hear from some of my classmates' mothers… concerns that my presence in their children's classroom could in a way hinder the fast and steady progress of their children's education.

Things proceeded well for the next two years. I was just a typical boy. I participated in class activities and always found ways to do things my own way. I once 'defended' myself from one of my classmates by almost running over his feet with my wheelchair with all the strength I had. Were it not for the fact that my mother was watching, this poor fellow would surely have ended with a broken leg or two!

Speaking of my mother, it is important for me to point out that both my parents never pitied me. They disciplined me whenever it was necessary (the above example was a case in point!). They always demanded from teachers that I be given the grades and marks that I deserved, no more, no less!

Although the concept was not at all known at the time, she was fulfilling the role of my facilitator

Speaking of my mother, it is important for me to point out that both my parents never pitied me

When I was to start my fourth year at primary school, the first major difficulty with physical accessibility arose. My classroom was to be on the second floor. There was no lift installed in the school. When my mother went to speak to the headmaster to see what support we could get, this guy was anything but helpful! His solution was for me to move to a 'special school' where I could have all the necessary support. Obviously, my mother was furious, but at the same time she felt helpless! Going out of the school after the meeting, she coincidentally met a friend of hers, who happened to have her husband who worked with the Education Department. She offered her help and later during the day phoned my mother to tell her that according to an Education Department official, it was my right that my classroom is moved to the ground floor in the same school. The headmaster had no option other than to accept this decision, and things proceeded smoothly from then on.

The Piano
My life, even then, did not consist of just hospitals and schools. Through the constant encouragement I received from my parents to try and develop my potential as much as possible, I was always very eager to participate in extra-curricular activities.

My life, even then, did not consist of just hospitals and schools

One fine day, I announced to my mother that I wanted to play the piano. She said, "OK… fine!". She approached one music teacher:
  "My son wants to learn the piano. Would you teach him?"
  "Can he make any use of his legs?"
  "No"
  "A piano has pedals… they are important! If he can't use them, I can't see how he'll be able to study the instrument formally".
  "Oh… really!?! OK… thank you very much then!"

Obviously, my mother being the way she is, was not to be discouraged so easily. She approached another teacher:
  "My son wants to learn the piano. Would you teach him?"
  "Of course! Can he read the alphabet?"
  "Not yet."
  "When he is able to do so, please contact me".
  "What about the pedals?"
  "What about them?"
  "He can't use his legs."
  "Let's take things one step at a time. Pedals are important for higher grades… we'll see what we can do about them, when we get there!"

Eventually, I learnt the alphabet, and eventually I started my piano lessons. When I reached the point where I was to use the pedals,

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my teacher wrote to the Examining Board abroad and explained the situation. Their reply was:

"OK, no problem, he can sit for examinations just the same. The examiner will be informed about the situation and will examine him on other important aspects of piano playing".

I managed to reach Grade 8 level, and had to stop only because of other commitments.

I Want to Play Soccer!

Piano lessons were not my only extra curricular activity. I was involved in quite a number of other things. This meant that I needed support especially from both my parents. My father was taking me here and there himself. The lack of an adequate transport service, which was accessible for my needs, proved to be a problem when I started schooling at another College after my first four years at a Government School.

My father used to take me to school himself, before he started work at 7:00am. This meant that I usually had to be at school by about 6:40am every single day. Thus at a young age, I had to get used to getting up really early so that my parents could help me get organised for school.

Life at secondary school was fun although not barrier-free. I had problems with accessibility. My classroom was situated in the second floor. However, this time, I had the support to make way there because older boys were given a roster to help me to get to wherever I needed to go. There were occasional problems. I remember being carried by one of my teachers single-handedly (a very frightening experience I must say!) down two flights of stairs because the people who were supposed to come to help somehow did not turn up!

Apart from the accessibility issue, I had all the necessary support from all the teachers. Again, my mother used to come to school every day for the first four years I was at secondary school. This helped in building a relationship with my teachers, enabling problems to be sorted out as soon as they cropped up.

Again, I was actively involved in extra curricular activities. A particular experience is worth mentioning. It was my first year at secondary school and the PE teacher came in class to take the names of those boys who were interested in taking part in the soccer league. Obviously, I put up my hand! He started taking names and left me to the very end. When it was finally my turn, he looked at me perplexed! I read his mind and anticipated whatever he was going to say; "please sir, may I be the Team Coach?", irrespective of the fact that I hardly

knew that a football is a round object made of leather, and that a soccer team is made up of eleven players. What was important for me was that I participate in as many activities as possible - which I did!

Writing Like a Hen!

When I was in my second year at College, I needed to undergo a major surgery in my back. I had to be taken to the UK for this to be done, and we knew that our stay there would not have been a brief one.

I was almost eleven years old at the time and so I was to be admitted to a children's ward in the hospital. However, when I was to be admitted, there was a guy who had some sort of chicken pox or measles or whatever, and so they couldn't admit new patients there. I was placed in the teenagers ward. It was a blessing in disguise! I was the youngest among them all, but I managed to integrate fully with all my fellow patients in the ward. The staff there was fantastic! We used to be given syringes to play with, which we used to fill with whatever liquid we had on our bed side, after which we all engaged in 'fierce' water fights!

What was important in the experience was the fact that the doctors and other professionals always and unfailingly explained to me clearly and with a language I could understand, whatever was going to happen to me. This gave me my dignity and helped me understand.

Although I have beautiful memories of the experience at Stanmore, it was not all plain sailing. During the operation, I had a cardiac arrest, which according to the doctors lasted for five-and-a-half minutes. When they finally managed to resuscitate me, the doctors were more than 100% positive that I had brain damage, considering the length of time that my brain was starved of oxygen. According to my parents, I did show signs of brain damage, but with their perseverance, and with them continuously talking to me not to let my brain go to sleep, I somehow managed to get over it in ten days. Even after that, my motor skills were affected (my handwriting looked more like the 'finger' printing of a hen left to roam about on a piece of paper). It required hard work and constant support to get back to almost the same point I was before.

Some Teachers are Good

When we got back to Malta, I had to make up what I had lost in school. It is worth mentioning here that while I was in the UK, one thing that helped me tremendously was the fact that some teachers used to write to me frequently, informing me what they were doing in class. This contributed tremendously both as a means of keeping in touch and to maintain my morale!

Chapter 6

Resilience

When I was back in Malta, teachers used to come to us at home to help me make up for what I had lost. Although it was hard work, considering that it was a very hot summer and that I had a plaster jacket from neck to waist, we managed to get through it as well.

Eventually, it was time for me to start preparing for my O-levels. One particular teacher offered to coach me through this 'ordeal'. He helped me prepare a plan so as not to sit for the examinations all in one sitting. He helped me get the necessary support in the subjects I needed most. He also made me aware that I had a right for extra time during examinations to compensate for my slow handwriting. This proved to be very useful. Eventually, I sat for the examinations successfully. Often, other arrangements had to be made, especially when it came to choosing accessible examination venues.

Chemical Dean
My natural next step was to start studying for my A-levels. I chose the science subjects. I had decided to remain at the sixth form of the same school I was in. I must say I was a bit angry, because the sixth form complex had just been built, but it lacked necessary amenities for people with a physical disability. The biggest problem was the lack of a lift. I had to be carried one or two flights of steps two or three times a week because the laboratories and the library were on the upper floors.

This time, the problem of accessibility was a little bit more complex for me. At that age, I was becoming more self-conscious then when I was a child and the fact that I had to be carried in front of other students, that also included girls, was sometimes a bit difficult to handle.

As I said, I had chosen to study the sciences. When it came to chemistry, the teachers thought that it would be too dangerous for me to handle certain chemicals because of my reduced manual dexterity. So their solution to the problem was for me to drop chemistry and choose another subject (for example religious studies or philosophy). They summoned my parents to tell them about their suggestion (without me knowing, even though I was sixteen years old!).

We refused to give in to their pressure and wrote to the examining board abroad

We refused to give in to their pressure and wrote to the examining board abroad. They replied saying that there was absolutely no ground for me to be asked to drop a subject I wanted to study. They suggested that I participate in all the practical sessions like other students with one of my classmates helping me to handle the chemicals. They also granted me exemption from the practical sessions of the A-level examinations. The marks allotted for the

practical sessions where distributed evenly among the other papers. Eventually, I successfully obtained my A-levels in Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

Of Ramps and Revolving Doors
After Sixth Form, I wanted to go to University to study Physics and Computer Science. I knew that the place was not very accessible, and thus the summer before the commencement of the academic year, we went to meet the people responsible to see what arrangements needed to take place. This exercise proved to be very useful. I was given a power wheelchair, because the ramps were too steep to cope with because of the limitations imposed by the infrastructure.

We made sure that I had access to whatever I needed for my academic work. The apparatus I required was transferred from a laboratory in an upper floor to another one in ground floor. My father, for the umpteenth time throughout my school years, made another desk which was accessible and comfortable for me. Lecturers made themselves available to help me sort out any problems I might have encountered.

In spite of all this, there were some problems that remained with me till the very end. Access to the student house was non-existent and when a lift was finally installed, it was used as a service lift. This meant that to access it I had to use a back door, pass through an area where garbage bags were stacked, and when I finally made it to the lift, I often found myself accompanied by a tray or two of pizzas and *pastizzi* (Maltese cheesecakes)!

Another problem was the library. A revolving door had just been installed. There was no way I could pass through it with my wheelchair and so, every time I needed to go into the library, I had to wait for someone to go get the key to a side-door, a key which was very often misplaced. This meant that very often, I could not manage to get to do the work I needed to do because of the time wasted prior to my even getting into the library.

There were problems that were slightly beyond my control. For example, I often found myself blocked, because I needed to use a ramp, after having found that 'some kind-hearted' individual parked immediately in front of it; when I wanted to use the ATM, which was way too high for me; when I wanted to use a newly installed lift in which I barely managed to get in, it being so narrow.

There were problems that were slightly beyond my control

At University I also had my first formal IEP. Since the course I opted for was proving to be a bit too taxing on my physical stamina, I

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asked that something be done about it. I was eventually given the opportunity to finish the course in twice the amount of years, and also to be assessed by whatever the individual lecturer deemed fit, and not necessarily by test or examination. These arrangements proved to be very useful.

Eventually, I opted to change course, to study management and public policy, being able to get the degree after three years. The constant support I received from most of the lecturers was amazing. My graduation day was an important landmark, because it was my way of reaping the fruits of all the effort over the years, and my way of showing appreciation to my parents and to all those individuals who supported me in one way or another.

Another issue worth mentioning was the fact that by the time I started my University degree, an accessible transport service was set up, which proved to be crucial for me to be able to pursue my dream of getting the degree I was after

Another issue worth mentioning was the fact that by the time I started my University degree, an accessible transport service was set up, which proved to be crucial for me to be able to pursue my dream of getting the degree I was after. Even though I must say, the service was not completely hassle-free!

Saturday Night Fever

Over the years, one thing that I always felt missing as I started growing up, was a group of peers, especially for Saturday night activities. University life helped in this respect as well. One of my extra curricular activities at University was my involvement with the Catholic Movement. Through this involvement, I managed to build a circle of friends. This circle of friends is important to me up to this very day.

What I miss sometimes is a lack of close disabled friends. I have always grown up in an almost exclusively non-disabled environment. Although this had its positive aspect, it also had its negatives. I always 'competed' with non-disabled people, and my targets were those that were important for other non-disabled. As a consequence, such targets as being able to do certain important things (e.g. self-care) on my own, were never given priority, and I found myself lagging behind in these areas up to this very day.

Bridging the Gap

A very important landmark in my life was when eventually, about four months after I graduated, I found the job I am in now

A very important landmark in my life was when eventually, about four months after I graduated, I found the job I am in now. I must say that I am very lucky to be in this job. I enjoy the contact with the disability field; I greatly appreciate the constant support from my colleagues and friends; I am continuously challenged to work towards becoming a better, more efficient, more-capable-of-doing-it-on-my-own person; to develop my potential further. My colleagues understand the

needs that arise from my physical condition and were/are willing to accommodate for them when these were/are necessary.

All this has helped me to eventually start thinking seriously about starting to develop further support systems, such as the recruitment of a personal assistant and getting my own transport organised.

Feelings

Having a disability for me does not mean that one is condemned to a tragic life, as my parents were made to believe as soon as I was born. Challenges exist all the time, but every hurdle one manages to surpass makes one stronger.

Challenges exist all the time, but every hurdle one manages to surpass, makes one stronger

One hurdle I am working towards at the moment is giving myself permission to feel. More importantly, doing something about those 'feelings' - all the range of possible human emotions, be it anger, loneliness, sadness or love. I still have a long way to go, but I will get there - eventually!

End of story.

The Experience of Jon

This is yet another experience I feel compelled to share. The person with a disability is English and this is what he says about Career Guidance:

Hi Andrew… I can confirm from experience, the scarcity of careers advice (within the UK, though I suspect this is widespread) which fails to recognise the individualistic approach which careers advice for disabled students require - I am currently undertaking a PhD, but have been a disabled student now for seven years and sought careers advice repeatedly throughout that time. I have a non-visible impairment and more often than not it is people's attitudes that I find to be the disabling factor in my life. In relation to careers advice I have seen advisors be positive and enthusiastic when looking at my CV until I choose to disclose my head injury as something which needs to be worked around, and then find officers shying away and appearing embarrassed to discuss the subject. It seems something which their is no training on, and little guidance on working with disabled students, and non-visible impairments in particular appear to be 'distasteful' for some careers workers to deal with…. (E-mail 13/11/2006)

When I asked this person to tell me more about his way of interpreting Career Guidance he said:

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Hi Andrew… The conceptual dilemmas [in guidance], appear to focus more upon the traditional perceptions of 'lacks' within Disabled People - for example their lack of skills. This isn't always the case. It depends hugely upon the nature of the impairment/disability a person has as to how accurate these 'lacks' are. For instance, if a person acquires an impairment for example at the age of 12, rather than being born with it they are likely to have a very different experience and understanding of disability and of the educational system. The onus placed here appears to be on the lack in the disabled person.

a. Careers guidance workers lack knowledge and training of specific requirements of disabled people in terms of educational need.
b. Tendency of authority to assume and treat disabled people as a homogenous group with the same needs - inability to shape the services to the needs of the individual.
c. The fear and perceptions which many people in mainstream society hold regarding to disabled people, compared to how disabled people perceive themselves.

Resulting from my comments above, I would therefore feel that disability awareness training and recognition of individual needs rather than collective concepts of disability should be given greater prominence. (E-mail, 12/12/2006).

Engaging Stories

Young people need groups to belong to. They are looking for places where they:
- Have a role;
- Feel a sense of purpose;
- Discover positive peer relationships;
- Join others who have similar interests or abilities;
- Learn things;
- Experience inspiring leadership;
- Find a safe, comfortable and accepting place to be.

Career guidance has an important role in teenage years to encourage an inclusive mindset, as students with disability are experiencing emotionally intense setbacks and obstacles along their journey to adulthood

This was the call that Dean was making when writing his story and Jon sharing his insight. Resilience in youth is a combination of many components. However, they certainly have the ability to bounce back from difficulty, complicatedness and intricacy. Career guidance has an important role in teenage years to encourage an inclusive mindset, as students with disability are experiencing emotionally intense setbacks and obstacles along their journey to adulthood. With the right kind of support from the school community and other non-formal activities, those strong emotions will neither hold them

back nor misdirect them. Career guidance for such students refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to eventually manage their career trajectories.

Schools are complex and social places and their cultures are not easily perceived even by those working in them. No culture is static or monolithic, but rather fluid and experienced differently by different people depending on their perspectives and understandings. Schools necessarily exist beyond their playgrounds and gates. Students and staff do not attend school in a vacuum. They bring with them the rest of their lives: their families and homes, friendships, and previous educational experiences. The local community and local and national politics also help to shape the cultures of a school. How people identify themselves, and how they are identified by others, contributes to the culture and is determined by the culture (Black-Hawkins 1999, p.3).

The role of support, monitoring and to provide the necessary bridges to make for the gaps that the systems create, is an important dimension of career guidance

The accounts of Dean and Jon bring into the debate the important role of career guidance for persons with disability. The role of support, monitoring and to provide the necessary bridges to make for the gaps that the systems create, is an important dimension of career guidance.

One of the main settings for delivering guidance services is - and has been for a long time - the school, and indeed, that is where young people are most likely first to come across formally-provided guidance (Sultana 2004, p.41).

Ultimately

This debate is undoubtedly governed by social justice. Disability is socially constructed and inclusive/segregated education is conceptualised through a debate that is amply loaded with rhetoric. Industrialisation and disability have not yet converged. The educational programmes that people with disability are engaging with are simply not meeting the needs of industry, making disabled people feel useless and getting this minority set on the poverty line. This is manifested locally primarily through the distribution of pensions, 'place' people in Adult Training Centres, high unemployment/unemployability rate amongst persons with disability and segregated schooling that mean absolutely nothing to 'their' future development, citizenship and social contribution.

This debate is undoubtedly governed by social justice

Conclusions, Commitments, Recommendations

> Too many people are ready to carry
> the stool when the piano
> needs to be moved
> Anon

Introducing the Finale

The need to ensure that guidance staff in schools are knowledgeable about the world of work and the opportunities that exist in the labor market and the economic trends that are likely to have an impact on the opportunity structures available to students (Sultana 2003, p.12).

An important notion that emerges out of this work is the development of 'a culture of encouragement' which is *sine qua non* with the career guidance job description

An important notion that emerges out of this work is the development of 'a culture of encouragement' which is *sine qua non* with the career guidance job description. We have to create the right milieu that will enhance this debate and push forward opportunities for our young students with a disability.

The disabled community requires a stronger disability voice at all levels of government and a forceful presence of parent and student participation in the organisation of school communities. Schools need to contribute to create an inclusion policy that starts from school and continues in 'adult' society. The contribution that this work has made is for its representation of the voice of people with a disability (Corbett 1996; 1998; Fulcher 1999; Tregaskis 2000). The purposes and the values of inclusive education are re-examined and re-thought but at the same time ingrained in the creation of new strategies for more effective career guidance for persons with a disability. We need to develop new creative relationships in a very different world with dissimilar pressures and diverse realities. Inclusion is the core function in initiating and bargaining career guidance for persons with disability.

Inclusion is the core function in initiating and bargaining career guidance for persons with disability

Recommendations

I have split up the recommendations and commitments we need to construct in five domains:

1. Recommendations: Policy and Training
2. Recommendations: (Long term) Strategy
3. Recommendations: School Practices
4. Recommendations: Disabled Activists
5. Recommendations: Parent Activists

1. Recommendations: Policy and Training

Underlying assumptions address; the complexity of inserting into compulsory post-school services, the focus on services designed around <u>all</u> students with disability and the (ultimate) goal of employment as an important outcome of education. A conceptual framework of transition views three bridges from school to post-compulsory schooling: transition without special services, transition with time-limited services (such as vocational rehabilitation and post-secondary vocational education), and ongoing services that allow persons with disability to maximise on work opportunities. Additional model components centre on the school and employment foundations. Policy needs to reflect on a fundamental question, that is, in which sectors and communities are career guidance services not being met? (OECD 2004).

Policy needs to reflect on a fundamental question, that is, in which sectors and communities are career guidance services not being met?

Recommendations and commitments:

1. Instruct all guidance teachers, counsellors and school administration in the social model of disability.
2. Provide impartial and realistic advise and guidance for persons with disability.
3. Start organising career guidance meetings in collaboration with the National Commission Persons with Disability.
4. Sustained and unrelenting involvement of employers in school programs.
5. Shift from career trajectories that are exclusively academically oriented to ones that are vocationally biased.
6. Introduce life-long education opportunities that would give people with disability the opportunity to make up for lost education/training opportunities.
7. Re-organize the way guidance teachers are selected, for example, asking for a related degree to career guidance, apart from the degree in teaching.
8. Introduce a post-graduate certificate purposely designed for guidance teachers offered by the University of Malta and sponsored by the Education Division that would address specialised minority related issues.
9. Re-think the way counsellors are organized whereby one group would look into the general regional/college responsibilities whilst the second group would be focusing on particular issue groups and servicing all regions according to the specific need.
10. Introduce guidance teachers in the second part of primary education (year 4 - year 6) to start instilling the concept of lifelong support.
11. Utilize and apply for more EU funds into on-going, on-the-job training and professional development programs for career guidance teachers in this sector.

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12. Develop a national policy on guidance and counselling that includes strategies on working with disadvantaged groups. Such a policy should be designed with the NCPD.
13. Appoint a coordinator for the Counselling and Guidance Teacher Services within the Education Division.
14. Improve co-ordination of para-professionals and support services, namely, social workers, youth and community workers, psychologists.
15. Ensure that the career guidance for persons with disability is placed on the mental map of policy-makers, service providers and people at risk.
16. Draw in the sustained involvement of employers to encourage work-based learning.

2. Recommendations (Long-term) Strategy

The demand for career guidance exceeds the supply, and many people do not have access to it. It is delivered in too limited a range of locations, ways, times of the day or week, or points in the life cycle. ….people with disabilities….and a range of disadvantaged groups are among those whose needs are not adequately catered for (OECD 2004, p.34).

Recommendations and commitments:
1. Develop partnership with FITA on possible development and dissemination of software and hardware that would enable guidance teachers to have more resources to share with students with a disability.
2. Create a forum for ongoing debate between NGOs and Education Authorities on various strands of education including career guidance for persons with disability.
3. Career education should be introduced in special schools/resource centers.
4. Career guidance for persons with disability should be incorporated into the curriculum that will include strategy development related to cultural identity, development of self-identity, and the strengthening of literacy and numeric skills.
5. Involve and constantly inform politicians about the issues, concerns and notions of career guidance for persons with disability.
6. Career education for this particular interest group should not be separate from vocational and personal guidance.
7. Design and develop Workforce Centers in each College, whereby every individual (including a person with a disability), has the right to access basic or "core" services that include: skill assessment services, information on employment and training opportunities, unemployment services, such as job search

Career education should be introduced in special schools/ resource centers

Involve and constantly inform politicians about the issues, concerns and notions of career guidance for persons with disability

and placement assistance and up-to-date information on job vacancies. This initiative could be developed in partnership with the ETC.
8. Enthrall Local Councils in providing resources that exist within their community in the publications they circulate. Such publications would include information issued from the Education Division on career guidance services, information and support schemes for persons with disability.
9. Instruct students with a disability on how to manage Direct Payment Schemes[4].
10. Organise a national seminar on career guidance for persons with a disability - to take this debate onto a national agenda platform.
11. Discussion needs to take place with the Health Division to provide clinics and medical services outside school hours, to avoid disrupting the school programme of persons with disability.
12. Collect and organize up-to-date career and educational information in a database made available to guidance teachers and students.
13. Encourage career-related activities during the 'student's spare time' (for example, getting involved in voluntary work).

Collect and organize up-to-date career and educational information in a database made available to guidance teachers and students

3. Recommendations: School Practices

We need to start from schools (Debono, Camilleri, Galea & Gravina 2007). There is no way we can be effective in our work practices if there isn't a decision at school community level to engage with career guidance services as a central system of support for the whole school community. This work needs to emphasize that it is not the responsibility of the guidance teachers alone to support our students with a disability but it should be part of the school ethos and the good practice of all teachers to ensure that students are being driven and supported 'pastorally' by the whole teaching community. We cannot read the different services within a school in isolation.

Recommendations and commitments:
1. Career development materials need to be customised for students with disability and the necessary adaptations are made according to the individual educational characteristics of each student.
2. Job shadowing for all students with a disability must be part of the career guidance programme of work.
3. A school needs to be responsive to individual needs via Individual

Job shadowing for all students with a disability must be part of the career guidance programme of work

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4 Direct Payments for persons with a disability is a system whereby government through an appointed Agency offers people money or the equivalent in vouchers to purchase services instead of having all provisions set up and managed by the State. In this way persons with disability will have more control on what services to purchase. The support package is developed following an assessment by a Case Manager/Social Worker in collaboration with the person with a disability.

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Educational Programmes[5] (IEPs), Multi Action Planning Systems[6] (MAPS), Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope[7] (PATH), Circles of Friends[8], Mind Maps[9], Sociometric Tests[10], Individual Transition Plans[11] (ITPs) and Individual Family Service Plans[12] (IFSP).

4. Emphasize careers and future aspirations rather than labels which leads to inabilities and weaknesses within the student.

Introduce and conduct professionally and person-centered needs assessments

5. Invite industrialists and potential employers to school orientation programmes.

6. Introduce and conduct professionally and person-centered needs assessments.

7. Promote community awareness on established programmes and services.

8. Fosters student's ability to relate knowledge to life experiences via meetings and personal counseling.

Create a frame of mind whereby we view career guidance for persons with disability as a process and not a 'one off' enquiry

9. Develop an adapted resource/information pack for the school community.

10. Create a frame of mind whereby we view career guidance for persons with disability as a process and not a 'one off' enquiry.

Schools/colleges should recruit guidance teachers directly to ensure that the needs of the zone/region are being supplied with the most suitable human resources

11. Schools/colleges should recruit guidance teachers directly to ensure that the needs of the zone/region are being supplied with the most suitable human resources.

12. Career guidance for persons with disability should be incorporated into a curriculum that will include a strategy that advances related cultural identity development and the strengthening of literacy and numeric skills.

13. Career development (information) materials need to be customized for students with disability.

14. Start providing on-line advise by setting up a website with all the information - possibly run by the Guidance and Counselling Unit, that includes all the available services.

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5   The IEP creates an opportunity for the school community (including parents and persons with disability themselves) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. The IEP is the cornerstone of a quality, personalised and strategic education for children with a disability.

6   MAPS is a planning process for people with a disability. MAPS lists a series of questions that engage a person to share some of the personal milestones on their life journey, so that as a school community we can get to know them and begin to build a plan to move in the direction of their aspirations.

7   PATH is a creative planning tool which starts in the future and works backwards. It is excellent for team building. It has been used to mediate conflicts. It is a very result oriented task.

8   Circles of Friends is about how we take care of each other in families and communities. It lies at the core of our relationships.

9   Mind maps were developed in the 60s by Buzan to help students make notes that only use key words and images. The non-linear nature of mind maps makes it easy to link and cross-reference different notions. They are much quicker to make and much easier to remember.

10 Sociometry is a method for measuring social relationships.

11 Individual Transition Plans assist youths with disabilities to become successful adults.

12 Individualized Family Service Plan is a roadmap through the family life system. It identifies where you want to go and how you want to get there depending on your family's priorities, concerns, lifestyles, and routines.

15. Promote non-formal educators (Youth and Community Workers) in schools to complement the work of guidance teachers in the community.

16. Full integration of youth with disabilities into the school-to-work system rather than separate, set-aside programs.

Promote non-formal educators (Youth and Community Workers) in schools to complement the work of guidance teachers in the community

4. Recommendations: Disabled Activists

One more engagement we need to make is to have 'a culture of questioning'. We need to learn how to ask questions positively and assertively. We require opportunities to learn to ask without feeling threatened or intimidated. The impact of marketization, performativity, competition, selection and the hierarchical organisation of power has become much more controlling and more distant from the grassroots. However, this divide is less evident because professionals are more skillful in the use of politically correct language.

It is imperative that disabled activists are continually involved in the process of career guidance developments. It is crucial that the voice of persons with disability is allowed to come through. Career guidance is just one other service in the fabric that develops the complex weaving of services. If we are not vigilant there is the danger of developing an oppressive professionalisation attitude based on arrogance and conceit rather than collaboration and association.

It is imperative that disabled activists are continually involved in the process of career guidance developments

Recommendations and commitments;

1. Full-participation of the student with a disability in the planning and decision-making process with a focus on student preferences.

2. Full integration of youth with disability into the school-to-work system rather than separate, set-aside programs.

3. Mentor persons with disability in job-search strategies and follow up on placement suggestions.

4. Start matching particular vacancies in employment to individual skills and competencies.

5. Develop job shadowing and employee tailing schemes.

6. Support persons with disability in employment maintenance.

7. Provide impartial and realistic advice and guidance.

8. Full-participation of the student with disability in the planning and decision-making process with a focus on the student's preferences.

9. Introduce peer mentoring in on the job-placements.

10. Create awareness programs for employees on disability issues.

Full integration of youth with disability into the school-to-work system rather than separate, set-aside programs

Develop job shadowing and employee tailing schemes

Introduce peer mentoring in on the job-placements

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We have a sense of insularity that is worrying

It is part of our social construct that parents are still highly involved in the support that is provided to their children even because parents are part of the service-delivery system

The importance of an "open school" with two-way communication, whereby parents of students with a disability are not made to listen only but to share their views and 'expertise'

5. Recommendations: Parent Activists

Professionals are still mistrusted, especially by parents and relatives and their interest is dealt with caution. This experience of hostility that was manifested in my work with the informants can only be transformed in time (Corbett 1996). We have a sense of insularity that is worrying. Heightened forms of self-awareness can further constrain people and not just empower them. It is a social process and a social outcome. There is no room for arrogance or complacency but for sharing, supporting, encouraging and mutual effort to engage with the complex debates if we want to witness progress. Persons with disability need training in self-advocacy to enable them to have a better say in decisions which affect their lives. Parents on the other hand need training in how to cope and handle the self-advocacy of their children. That is why organisations like FES and the schools themselves need to bring in courses and training schemes that will also educate and support parents in dealing with this new way of looking at the disability discourse.

It is part of our social construct that parents are still highly involved in the support that is provided to their children even because parents are part of the service-delivery system. It is still very unreal to imagine the role and involvement of parents as being less prominent than it already is. Despite of the drastic improvement, the services in our community still have a long way to go.

Recommendations and Commitments:
1. The importance of an "open school" with two-way communication, whereby parents of students with a disability are not made to listen only but to share their views and 'expertise'.
2. The need for consultation and personal involvement in the development of the school policies and school development plans. Schools are not simply the end of the implementation line. Policy needs to be developed in schools and with parents (Slee 1993; Clark, Dyson and Millward 1995).
3. The experience of parents and their children with disability reflect a marginalised institutional struggle involving professionals, academics and bureaucrats. Parents are at times confused where their allies and allegiances lie - a need for more transparency.
4. Parents intermittently feel disorientated about the whole debate of 'inclusion' - we need to create more fora for debate.

   I know of facilitators who put hyperactive children in the corner and shout at them because teachers don't know what to do. Guidance teachers should support them [teachers] in such a situation (Sharon, Parent Activist).

I have just experienced discrimination against my son at school. He could not go to school because the facilitator was out on long sick leave. I mean I fought and fought but what do I get - nothing! I expected the guidance teacher to help me in this situation (Jeremy, Parent Activist).

I don't think the guidance teachers really know what they are dealing with. From the feedback I get from the teachers, teachers tell us that 'we don't know what we should do, no one tells us anything' (Lina, Parent Activist).

My son has autism. When he went to school for the first time his guidance teacher spent a whole week observing him (John, Parent Activist).

Apart from supervision and guidance teachers, I believe that there should be SENCO's in schools (Petra, Parent Activist).

An Intricate Relationship:
Inclusion as an Interlace with Career Guidance

'Inclusion' is by no stretch of the imagination a resolved issue - it can never be. It hasn't even, in my opinion, permeated our cultural DNA and is still an alien notion to many (Clough and Corbett 2000; Barnes and Mercer 2003). The disabled community has progressed following a strenuous struggle against oppression. It is not at all easy to give space within a scenario, like education, that disallows the struggle (Oliver 1996). 'Inclusion' has massive issues to sort out, deal with, think about and find solutions to. It is important that people talk and listen to each other and to have a respectful ear. There is also a danger of seeking the easy and quick slick solutions rather than thinking things through in these highly complex and difficult issues.

The struggle for improved career guidance services for persons with disability within an inclusive education discourse, is part of a wider conflict to bring about an inclusive society in which all individuals and groups enjoy full and equal membership. As such, it involves asking questions and making demands that are disturbing, because they challenge the familiar and the way in which our societies are organised.

We, as professional allies and 'disabled and parent activists' need to keep questioning our own practices around the processes that make up these discourses

Within this instability and uncertainty there are some firm notions that can integrate these complex debates. There are always issues around 'inclusion' that we need to work around and struggle for. We, as professional allies and 'disabled and parent activists' need to keep questioning our own practices around the processes that make up these discourses. The quickest way to wipe out 'inclusion' is

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by not providing adequate resources. We need to develop 'a culture of reduced fear' of human differences. The most effective means of combatting discrimination is creating welcoming communities, designing an inclusive society and achieving education for all (Booth and Ainscow 1998; Bartolo et al. 2003). 'Inclusion' is about participation, friendship and interaction.

Each school has to develop on its own steam drawing from the most important of resources - the students themselves

Schools are idiosyncratic communities, each with their own biographies, circumstances and profiles. Each school has to develop on its own steam drawing from the most important of resources - the students themselves. There is a need for flexible patterns in schools, structures that are conducive to meeting the informality within the complex and formal structures that exist in our educational institutions. Career guidance can provide the necessary bandwidth to enhance this openness and creativity. We have to develop a critical discourse that does not put us down but encourages the roles and relations within them. Students with disability in our schools are atypical. Their disability is represented as being an impairment and as a result disability is pathologised in the form of essentialist abjection.

The social model, in this study, helped us to bring into contention a number of debates that will enable 'us' to read the 'inclusion' debate. The social model is an important social response suitable to this reality and poses an important struggle whereby people choose to analyse whose side they are on (Clough and Corbett 2000)? Literature has often accused researchers as being dogmatic and officious, professionals have regularly been considered as defending their status and protecting their 'own' rather than helping people find solutions to the social constructions that they come across (Oliver 1996; Barnes and Mercer 1997). Policy makers and politicians are often seen as more concerned with the economic value of services and their search for standards (Corbett 1998). Parent activists seem to govern the debate and as a consequence disabled activists are excluded (Brown 1999; Ware 1999).

Nonetheless, there are some interesting changes that are starting to take place

Nonetheless, there are some interesting changes that are starting to take place. Parents, students with a disability, guidance teachers and other professionals are searching for examples of positive inclusive practices and are demanding a more active involvement in research which they want to participate in. We can and need to follow paths which other countries and societies are adopting to make 'inclusion' work. We need to apply the right communication channels. We must be creative and find ways how to make it happen. The local scene still lacks dialogue, debate and fora. The people who manage the coalition in Malta are either immersed in personal issues or else are too tired and too uninvolved to make the necessary moves

and changes. Our agenda for 'inclusion' must be planned around this key notion of dialogue. It is necessary that we discuss how to make 'inclusion' and not just define it. We need to exchange data, information and reflections (Barton and Armstrong 1999). This model helps us to find ways how to minimise the individual function into creating a collective agenda, without riding the crest of the other dangerous wave of homogeneity (Corbett 1998).

> Unless there is recognition of personal, cultural and locational differences which influence the ways in which disability is experienced, the medical and social models will offer limited scope for effective use in analysis beyond the most elementary level (Corbett 1998, p.30).

The community school's leadership should be one that nurtures enthusiasm for the participation in a journey that enables community members to grow and develop personally and collectively

'Inclusion' in itself can provide a response to political inventiveness. Students convey their ambitions for the improvement of their own education and development, and of the challenges they face in realising these targets within a society that declines their legitimacy. 'Inclusion' depends on an experience of interaction, participation and partnership in their neighbourhood. 'Inclusion' does not exist in a vacuum. The community school's leadership should be one that nurtures enthusiasm for the participation in a journey that enables community members to grow and develop personally and collectively (Giordmaina 2001, p.358).

Students at the margins have a right to equal participation in all aspects of society and in all decisions that concern them. School institutions endeavour to be accessible to all and to strive towards a comprehensible society. This applies not only to 'inclusion' in education, employment and social life, but also to participation in the political processes they are engaged with.

Contests trigger exclusion

Inventiveness, national standards, types of examinations, voice and participation, active engagement in the struggles, and community-focused teaching, stories that expose transformative agendas, good/bad practices, narrative expositions are divergences that are very difficult to bring together. At the heart of this is the 'inclusion' discourse within a system that has been denied its distinctiveness. Contests trigger exclusion (Stirling 1992; Armstrong, 1999). The optimum contradiction in this is in trying to implement a discourse on 'inclusion'. The reality of schools to-day is still one of segregation.

> …schools vary in their general ability to promote the positive development of their students... The consistency of school effectiveness in promoting different student outcomes, however, is an area of considerable complexity… Studies which focus

Conclusions,
Commitments,
Recommendations

on the major domains of activity (academic, affective, and behavioural)… are likely to prove helpful both to practitioners seeking to improve different aspects of the performance of their schools and to researchers exploring the nature of school influences (Mortimore 1999b, p.479).

If we have a belief that 'inclusion' is more than merely education and is more than categorisation of students, then it is important that we give time to really think about this. 'Inclusion' goes beyond the restricted thinking of a classroom, it is a force to reckon with.

For me the critical issue is how can disabled people have a meaningful, if not revolutionary, impact on the disabling society? Clearly, as long as we remain 'socially dead' we are unable to engrave our signature in the fabric of society - in particular those material aspects of social relations which render our 'disabilities permanent' (Finkelstein 2001, p.7).

By reading stories of 'inclusion' and engaging with different perspectives I have come to list out an agenda for 'inclusion'. I reiterate what the well-known academic Professor Len Barton is often contending in his typical archetypal and emblematic problem, 'what is 'inclusion'? Through strong institutions like education, non-disabled adults are constructing a society that is increasingly making it difficult for children with a disability to engage with and have a noteworthy voice.

It is interesting that most of my informants consider that an effective 'inclusion' programme is based on a school community that supports different forms and styles of teaching

'Inclusion' in Malta is essentially a contemporary debate in education. It is interesting that most of my informants consider that an effective 'inclusion' programme is based on a school community that supports different forms and styles of teaching (Giordmaina 2001). Disability is constantly being placed on the fringes of society where tolerance is a rare ingredient. Schools are there to affect change, design an agenda and engage with the stories - will this happen?

Unless we can address career guidance as a key component in educational services for persons with disability, we risk not managing to have a system that guarantees equality. Guidance teachers have a fundamental role of creating opportunities, serving as brokers and advocates for students with disability. Good intention and will-power, while noble, are not enough to create the changes that are necessary (Freire 1970).

Conclusion
Guidance teachers should be the main resource for students with a disability in our schools (Galea-Curmi et al. 1996; Pagliano 2005).

They need to be a central structure in the development of any individual educational or transition programme. All guidance teachers are to be expected that their call of duty includes working effectively and efficiently with students with a disability rather than identifying their competencies as exclusive of people they are not yet able to engage with because of misconceived fears. This, however, does not remove the importance of creating specialization within this band of professionals. Career guidance for persons with disability is now a multifaceted and complex service that addresses multifarious needs in our community (Galea-Curmi et al. 1996).

Career guidance for persons with disability is now a multifaceted and complex service that addresses multifarious needs in our community

Students who experience difficulties making connections between education and life roles learn best by being actively engaged in real life learning activities… These students need to be explicitly exposed to a wide variety of work, leisure and life skill roles so that they might choose those that suit their lifestyle (Pogliano 2005, p.25).

Making career guidance for persons with disability work is about addressing a lack of national policy on guidance and counseling that converges all of civil society. We need to discontinue fragmentation of important resources and address the occasional inability of schools to capitalize on their 'own' resources rather than wait to make it happen on its own. Career guidance for persons with a disability is the corner stone for an effective and meaningful quality of life for this minority.

Career guidance for persons with a disability is the corner stone for an effective and meaningful quality of life for this minority

*Begin at the beginning and go
till you come to the end; then stop.*
Lewis Caroll from Alice in Wonderland

Career Guidance
for
Persons with Disability

Presentation by
Dr Andrew Azzopardi
University of Malta

to Guidance Teachers
and Counsellors

in collaboration with
European Union Programmes Agency
(EUPA)

December 2006

Begin at the beginning and go till you come to the end; then stop.
Lewis Caroll from Alice in Wonderland

The diversity that prevails in the Mediterranean is also apparent if we had to focus on the education sector… An obvious one [difference] concerns the divergent educational histories of each country, where present structures and practices are a complex reflection of colonial influence, and accommodations that have been made to that in response to political, economic and cultural pressures (Sultana 2001, p.11).

The Guitar Story

The evidence that disabled people experience severe economic deprivation and social disadvantage is overwhelming and no longer in dispute, whether it be from the Government's own commissioned research, from research institutes, academics or disabled people themselves. For example, after over a century of state-provided education disabled children and young people are still not entitled to the same kind of schooling as their able-bodied peers and nor do they leave with equivalent qualifications (Metzer, Smyth and Robus 1989). The majority of British schools, colleges and universities remain unprepared to accommodate disabled students within a mainstream setting. Thus, many young disabled people have little choice but to accept a particular form of segregated 'special' education which is both educationally and socially divisive… (Oliver 1996, p.64).

The quality of career education and vocational guidance for students with disability in the Maltese educational system is unacceptable on all counts. In effect, the more challenges a disability places on a student's transition from school to adult life, the less career education and vocational guidance is available (Galea-Curmi et. al., 1996, p. 229).

Definitions - 1

• Over time 'career' has been identified as a lifelong, lifespan process and the term 'life/career' has become widely used in order to capture this paradigm shift. The need for active involvement by individuals in their career development is another aspect of the change in thinking. (Career Corporation, 2003).

• The emerging definitions of career development are reflective of a proactive, individual centered, lifespan, life/career management process where individuals are active in responding and adapting to change in creating, constructing, designing and identifying paid employment opportunities, life and learning experiences that will enable them to create satisfying lives. (McMahon, Patton and Tatha, 2003, p.4).
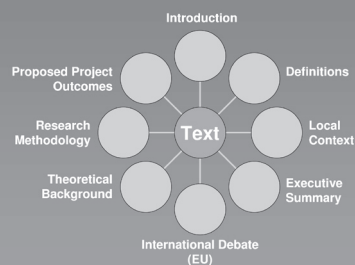
Definitions - 2

- Social exclusion refers to the structures and processes which exclude persons and groups from full participation in society…. (It) can be succinctly described as cumulative marginalization: from production (unemployment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family neighbors), from decision-making and from adequate quality of life… It is not just about lack of money, but may also be about isolation, lack of work, lack of educational opportunities and discrimination' (Irish National Report, p.98 cited in Clayton,1999).

Definitions - 3

- Transition has been defined as "….a process that seeks to establish and implement a plan for either employment or additional vocational training for students with disabilities." (Murphy, 1987, p. 1).

- The term career guidance is replacing the term vocational guidance …. Vocational guidance is focused upon the choice of occupation and is distinguished from educational guidance, which focuses upon choices of courses of study. Career guidance brings the two together and stresses the interaction between learning and work (Hansen 2006).

Text Layout

- Introduction
- Definitions
- Local Context
- Executive Summary
- International Debate (EU)
- Theoretical Background
- Research Methodology
- Proposed Project Outcomes
- Text

Research Paradigm

Reflection → Editorial board → Field work → Research Analysis

Study Issues - 1

- Life long learning goals
- Labour market outcomes
- Social equity and social inclusion goals
- Life long guidance systems
- Development of career information
- Promotion of work choice and search
- Maintenance skills development
- Staff development to support service delivery
- Improved coordination
- Role of the family and community

Study Issues - 2

- Ensure continuous development of worker's capabilities and competencies
- There is a perceived gap in the competencies of a domain that is offering (Education) and what the other domain is expecting (Employment) (Triganza Scott and Cassar, 2005)
- Impact of globalisation

Career Guidance Activities
(Hansen 2006)

Employment
Counseling

Career
Counseling

Career
Information

Job
Placement

Career
Education

Principles of/for Guidance Provision - 1

• **Independence/Inter-dependence**
• **Confidentiality**
• **Equal opportunity**
• **Holistic approach**
• **Active involvement**
• **Empowerment**
• **Positive self-regard**
• **Transparency**
• **Friendliness and empathy**
• **Continuity**

Conceptual Dilemmas

• **Lack of career maturity and awareness of own abilities (Biller & Horn, 1991)**
• **Poorly developed planning and monitoring skills (Biller and Horn, 1991)**
• **Lack of problem solving skills (Hoffman et al., 1987)**
• **Immature social skills and social awareness (Biller, 1987)**
• **Low academic achievement, particularly in literacy (Hoffman et al., 1987)**
• **Parental over involvement**
• **Conservative institutions (namely 'education')**

Questions

• *Should career education be a separate 'subject' in our curriculum? What is the role of other teachers (apart from the Guidance Teachers) in this issue?*

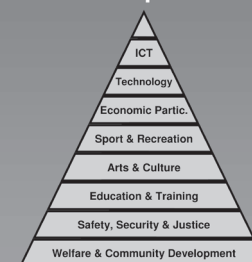• *What strategies are we using to ensure that all students receive the necessary support in school?*

Questions:

• *Should career education be a separate 'subject' in our curriculum? What is the role of other teachers (apart from the Guidance Teachers) in this issue?*

• *What strategies are we using to ensure that all students receive the necessary support in school?*

Key strategic domains in a person's development

ICT
Technology
Economic Partic.
Sport & Recreation
Arts & Culture
Education & Training
Safety, Security & Justice
Welfare & Community Development

Important skills

- ICT/Assistive Technology
- Self-esteem & initiative
- Learning how to learn
- Interpersonal skills
- Ability to work in groups
- Leadership effectiveness
- Competence in reading, writing, comp.

Statistics

January 2005 the number of students with individual Educational Needs stood at 1,499 distributed in the following way:

- 77 in Kindergartens
- 997 in State Primary Schools
- 422 in Secondary Schools and
- 3 at the Higher Secondary Schools
- The school population at this time stood at 69,055
- Unemployment rate (2002) – 7.4%
- Unemployment rate – youth ages 15-24 (2002) – 11.2%

Research Strategy

The research strategy was based on six main phases:

Phase 1: Literature Review
At this stage it was important to identify the literature that exists in this area of study. It was evident that a great deal has been written in different countries but Malta when it comes to career guidance stands out, especially with the work that has been done by Professor Ronald Sultana especially in the innumerable reports and monographs he was involved in.

Phase 2: Grassroots
This phase included interviewing and meeting up people who are involved in this issue directly, namely parents and disabled people. I have interviewed in depth 3 parent activists and 4 disabled activists. I have also had a meeting with the representatives of the Maltese Council of Disabled Persons. I will be meeting two representatives of the MCODP section which supports/represents people with learning disability.

Phase 3: Policy Makers and Service Providers
This stage included interviews with policy makers:

1. Mr. Marcel Pisani, Agency SAPPORT
2. Mr. Joe Camilleri Chairman, NCPD
3. Ms. Ann Marie Callus, Policy Maker, NCPD
4. Ms. Joyce Mifsud, Coordinator, Adult Training Centres
5. Mr. Charles Cassar, Senior Manager, ETC
6. Mr. Albert Debono, Student Advisory Services, UOM
7. Mr. George Borg, Coordinator, Special and Inclusive Needs, Education Division
8. Professor Ronald Sultana, Academic and Researcher, UOM
9. Equal Parents Foundation

Phase 4: Guidance Teachers and Counsellors
During a Seminar being organized by EUPU, a set of Workshops were organized which served as an opportunity to draw out reflections from Guidance Teachers and Counselors in collaboration with Disabled Activists on the area I am researching. Circa 80 Guidance Teachers and Counsellors were consulted during this Seminar. I also had in depth interviews with 2 Counsellors and 5 Guidance Teachers

Phase 5: Email Questionnaire - Schools
This stage included sending an email questionnaire to all primary, secondary and post-secondary schools in Malta and Gozo. I made it a point to send in the email to all Private Independent, Church and State Schools. I received circa 35 replies. I also sent a questionnaire to all the Associations that are registered as supporting disabled people and/or their families. Only 7 associations replied.

Phase 6: Unions
At this stage I met three main Unions/Employers Associations;

- General Workers Union
- Union Ħaddiema Magħqudin
- Malta Employers' Association

Recommendations – 1

To improve services we must address challenges in compulsory education, in upper secondary schooling and in tertiary education and for young people at risk.

- Develop an adapted resource pack for the school community
- Career education should be introduced in Special Schools/Resource Centers
- Help students make a smooth transition via an ITP
- Career Guidance should be incorporated into the curriculum that will include strategy development related to cultural identity development and the strengthening of literacy and numeric skills
- Job shadowing must be part of the career guidance program
- Career development materials need to be customized for students with disability

Recommendations - 2

- Develop partnership with FITA on possible development and marketing of software and hardware. Create an ongoing debate between NGOs and Education Authorities
- Guidance Teachers and Counselors are to be provided with on-going professional development sessions
- Put Career Guidance for persons with disability on the mental map (of both policy makers, service providers and people at risk)
- Take the service where the students are
- Work in the community
- More collaboration with parents/careers

Recommendations - 3

- Start organising/dedicating career guidance meetings in collaboration with NCPD
- Set up a website with all the information – possibly run by the Guidance and Counseling Unit that includes all the available services (and possibly start providing on-line advise)
- Provide impartial and realistic advise and guidance
- Be responsive to individual needs
- Promote non-formal educators (Youth and Community Workers) in schools
- Introduce a career guidance policy in schools
- Guidance teachers should be better trained in minority issues

Recommendations - 4

- **Sustained involvement of employers**
- **Longitudinal planning (Long-term planning)**
- **Emphasizing careers not labels**
- **Work-based learning**
- **Connection to community resources**
- **Full-participation of the student with disability in the planning and decision making process with a focus on the students preferences**

Recommendations - 5

- Design and develop Workforce Centers in each College, whereby every individual (including persons with disability), has the right to access basic or "core" services that include: skill assessment services, information on employment and training opportunities, unemployment services, such as job search and placement assistance and up-to-date information on job vacancies.
- Encourage career-related activities during the 'child's spare time'. For example doing voluntary work
- Start introducing Individual Transition Plans
- Peer Mentoring, Disability Mentoring, Group Mentoring
- Separate Vocational/Career from Personal Guidance (Roles)

Recommendations - 6

- We need to move from career trajectories that are academic oriented to ones that are vocationally based
- Life-long education opportunities would give people with disabilities the opportunity to make up for lost education/training opportunities
- Re-jigging the way guidance teachers are selected (for example asking for a related degree in Guidance apart from the Teachers Degree, …. introducing a post-graduate Certificate or Diploma offered by the University of Malta in collaboration with the Education Division, during working hours
- Re-think the way Counselors are organized (For example, two groups, regional/college responsibilities and specialisation/central)
- Involve politicians

Globalisation:

This reality has intensified the mobility of capital, jobs and people. The increased mobility of wealth entails that employment opportunities rise and fall more rapidly, with subsequent losses and gains (Hansen, 2006).

Globalisation

This reality has intensified the mobility of capital, jobs and people. The increased mobility of wealth entails that employment opportunities rise and fall more rapidly, with subsequent losses and gains (Hansen, 2006).

Quote…

My physical impairment is not something I
would choose. I would rather be able to walk than have to use a wheelchair. I would rather the spasm in my legs didn't wake me up at six o'clock in the morning. I would rather I didn't have to worry about incontinence when I share a bed with someone. I would rather I didn't have the burning sensation in my legs which is there every waking moment of my day and night. Yet I love how I am and the life I lead.
I like what I see when I look in the mirror.
I value so much the contact I have with other disabled people and with non-disabled allies – in our struggle against –
prejudice and discrimination.
The Fall by Jenny Morris
Must' Grumble, (Keith's 1994, p.170-1).

Quote…

Too many people are ready to carry the stool when the piano needs to be moved
Anon

Some Important Documents

• The Fundamental Principles of Disability (1976).
• The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
• The UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993).
• The UNESCO Salmanca Statement (1994).
• European Training Foundation: Review of Career Guidance Policies (2003) – Profs. Ronald Sultana.
• Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (2006).
• Career Guidance – A resource handbook for low and middle income countries (2006).
• Career guidance in Europe's Public Employment Services: Trends and Challenges (2005) – Profs. Ronald Sultana.
• Guidance policies in the knowledge society – trends, challenges and responses across Europe – A CEDEFOP synthesis report (2004).

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