
Preface

This handbook has been compiled in response to calls to broaden the knowledge base which informs the disciplines and services that pertain to career and workforce development. Accusing the West of being overbearing has become repetitive and these arguments have not gone much beyond vehement rhetoric. It is also being increasingly recognized that traditional bodies of knowledge offer epistemologies that can guide the generation of hypotheses, the formulation of research designs, and the creation of methods and techniques for practical applications. The time is ripe for us to draw from the wisdom and experiences of different cultures to consider both universal and specific principles for guidance and counseling that are socially and economically relevant to the contemporary situation.

A first step towards addressing these issues was taken by organizing an international conference on work and career under the aegis of International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) and The Promise Foundation (an Indian nongovernmental organization) in Bangalore, India, in October 2010. A careful process was followed in the conference through which a team of international scholars interacted with those who submitted papers to the conference, and helped them to develop papers that addressed the concerns raised above (for details see www.jivacareer.org). This conference forms the primary knowledge base for this handbook. Many of the chapters have been adapted from papers presented at the conference by researchers, practitioners, academics, and policymakers. Other scholars have been invited to address themes that were not covered at the conference.

This handbook also responds to calls for the discipline of career guidance and counseling to be informed by interdisciplinary dialogues. Therefore, in addition to career psychologists and sociologists, the handbook has writers from the fields of human development, economics, development studies, educational planning, environment and ecology, special needs, business and commerce, tribal studies, philosophy, and history. Stimulating the development of a literature in contexts where a field of activity is in its infancy requires close collaborations between scholars established in the field and fresh contributors. Many of the chapters in this book are the result of such collaborations, and several chapters carry data and constructs that have not appeared before in the literature.

Keeping the overall objectives of the book in mind, another feature is an attempt to maintain vertical and horizontal thematic consistency. Hence two sections are common to all chapters. These are multiple frames of reference for career guidance practitioners—sensitivity to the universal and the particular; and new concepts and viewpoints—charting new directions. This handbook rests upon the matrix of culture: a matter that has grown to acquire vital significance in a globalizing world of work. We invite the reader to look for the cultural thread that runs through the handbook.

Against this background, the handbook is designed as an academically sound teaching and reference book to be used for senior classes/advanced educational levels, as well as a practical resource book for practitioners. Many of our authors have generously provided original research instruments, questionnaires, checklists, and worksheets as part of their contributions.

An enterprise such as this depends upon a wide range of contributions. Other than us, this book is the work of 50 participating authors from different parts of the world. For their complete immersion in this project, for their forbearance with our many editorial requests, and of course for their stellar contributions, we are grateful. We thank our international team of reviewers who gave of their time generously and responded without hesitation to our short deadlines. The voluntary assistance provided by the staff at The Promise Foundation (Sajma Aravind, Kala B., and Robert D'Souza) at every stage of development of the project, from corresponding with authors, to proofreading, reference checking, developing the indexes, copyediting, and creating the graphics, often went well beyond the call of duty. For their unstinting and efficient support, we owe a debt of gratitude. We are deeply thankful to the Jacobs Foundation, for supporting this project with a generous grant. We are also grateful to the Nirmala Niketan College of Home Science, University of Mumbai, India, for their support. Tony Marsella, the editor of this series, saw the value of a work such as this and we thank him for his encouragement and endorsement. We are grateful to our editors at Springer, Sharon Panulla and Sylvana Ruggirello, who have been a constant source of motivation and have kept us on track. We are also thankful to our families for their invaluable support, and to our students. Finally, we thank in anticipation all those of you who will read this book and perhaps use it in your teaching, learning, research, and practice. We hope it will match your expectations, open new dimensions, and contribute in some way to the very important work you are doing. We look forward to your comments and feedback.

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