



From career guidance to designing lives acting for fair and sustainable development

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Abstract

How could interventions for life- and career-construction contribute to a development that would be ecologically sustainable, socially just and based on decent work activities? Most career interventions today generally only aim to include individuals into the current systems of work and economic exchange without questioning the role that these forms of organization play in the terrible Anthropocene crisis. In fact, these interventions only consider one of the aspects of active life distinguished by Hanna Arendt: work. They ignore labor and action. Dealing with this crisis therefore implies an in-depth renewal of interventions for life- and career-construction so that they become sources of action towards equitable and sustainable development by means of decent working activities. Transforming these interventions in this way supposes to base them on the principle of responsibility defined by Hans Jonas and to take into account certain political, legal and ecological requirements. Renewed intervention methodologies have already been outlined. However, an actual development of such action-interventions implies an in-depth review of the conceptual field on which support to life- and career-construction is based and the setting up of public or community services delivering them to the population.

Keywords Career development interventions · Sustainable development · Work

Résumé

De l'orientation professionnelle à la conception de vies agir pour un développement juste et durable Comment les interventions d'accompagnement à l'orientation pourraient-elles contribuer à un développement écologiquement soutenable, socialement juste et reposant sur des activités décentes de travail ? Les interventions d'accompagnement à l'orientation aujourd'hui les plus courantes ne visent généralement qu'à insérer les individus dans les systèmes actuels de travail et d'échanges économiques sans mettre en question le rôle que jouent ces formes d'organisation dans la terrible crise actuelle de l'Anthropocène. En fait, ces interventions ne consid-

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èrent qu'un des aspects de la vie active distingué par Hanna Arendt: « work ». Elles ignorent « labor » et « action ». Faire face à cette crise implique par conséquent de renouveler en profondeur les interventions d'accompagnement à l'orientation afin qu'elles deviennent sources d'action vers un développement équitable et durable par la médiation d'activités décentes de travail. Métamorphoser ainsi ces interventions suppose de les fonder sur le principe responsabilité défini par Hans Jonas et de prendre en compte certains impératifs politiques, juridiques et écologiques. Des méthodologies d'interventions ainsi renouvelées ont déjà été esquissées. Cependant le développement de cette orientation-action implique de revoir en profondeur le champ conceptuel sur lequel se fonde l'accompagnement à l'orientation et d'instituer des services – public ou communautaire – les offrant à la population.

Zusammenfassung

Von der Berufsorientierung zur Lebensgestaltung Handeln für eine gerechte und nachhaltige Entwicklung Die meisten Karriereinterventionen zielen heute darauf ab, Individuen in die aktuellen Arbeits- und Wirtschaftsaustauschsysteme einzubeziehen, ohne die Rolle zu hinterfragen, die diese Organisationsformen in der Krise des Anthropozäns spielen. Diese Interventionen berücksichtigen nur einen der von Hanna Arendt geprägten Aspekte des aktiven Lebens: die Herstellung. Sie ignorieren die Arbeit und das Handeln. Die Bewältigung dieser Krise impliziert daher eine gründliche Erneuerung der Interventionen für den Aufbau des Lebenslaufs, damit sie zu Quellen des Handelns für eine gerechte und nachhaltige Entwicklung durch menschenwürdige Arbeit werden. Diese Eingriffe auf diese Weise zu transformieren, setzt voraus, dass sie sich an dem von Hans Jonas definierten Verantwortungsprinzip orientieren und bestimmte politische, rechtliche und ökologische Anforderungen berücksichtigen. Eine tatsächliche Entwicklung solcher Handlungsinterventionen impliziert eine gründliche Überprüfung des konzeptionellen Feldes, auf dem die Unterstützung bei der Gestaltung des Lebens und der Karriere basiert, und die Einrichtung öffentlicher oder kommunaler Dienste, die sie der Bevölkerung anbieten.

Resumen

De la orientación profesional al diseño de vidas actuando para un desarrollo justo y sostenible La mayoría de las intervenciones profesionales de hoy tienen como objetivo incluir a las personas en los sistemas actuales de trabajo e intercambio económico sin cuestionar el papel que juegan estas formas de organización en la crisis del Antropoceno. Estas intervenciones solo consideran uno de los aspectos de la vida activa distinguidos por Hanna Arendt: el trabajo. Ignoran el labor y la acción. Abordar esta crisis implica, por tanto, una renovación profunda de las intervenciones de construcción de vida-carrera para que se conviertan en fuentes de acción hacia un desarrollo equitativo y sostenible a través del trabajo decente. Transformar así estas intervenciones supone basarlas en el principio de responsabilidad definido por Hans Jonas y considerar ciertos requisitos políticos, legales y ecológicos. Un desarrollo real de tales acciones-intervenciones implica una revisión profunda del campo conceptual en el que se basa el apoyo a la construcción de la vida y la carrera y el establecimiento de servicios públicos o comunitarios que los entreguen a la población.

Introduction

How could interventions for life- and career-construction contribute to a development that would be ecologically sustainable, socially just and based on decent work activities? To answer this question, this paper started from an observation (recalled in the first paragraph below): although for some 50 years, anthropologists have underlined the serious threats that our mode of development poses to the human species, the still dominant conception of interventions for life- and career-construction do not ask any question about the future towards which people should be helped to direct their lives. A reference (in the second paragraph) to analyzes of active life by Hanna Arendt accounts for this paradox. While active life has three dimensions—labor, work and action—most current interventions focus on just one: (paid) work. They only consider active life as a development by individuals of their skills, interests, values, etc., through their work within current work systems. In doing so, these interventions ignore the other two fundamental questions guiding the construction of an active life: that relating to labor—“How can I ensure my survival?”—and the other referring to action: “What can I do to contribute with others to a collective life that is good and just?” Some studies have already underlined these limitations of the currently dominant models of career counseling and vocational guidance. In particular: the psychology of working by David Blustein, the model of “counseling for work and relationship in the social world” by Mary Sue Richardson or the “dialogues of construction of active lives” by Jean Guichard et al.

The sharp worsening in recent years of the Anthropocene crisis—which the UN General Secretary and the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) reports constantly underline and which is now brought to bright light by COVID 19—implies going much further in this direction. This path is explored in the third part of this text. First, by specifying the fundamental principle (Jonas’ imperative of responsibility) and the political, legal and ecological requirements of “action-interventions”, the purpose of which would not be to include individuals in the world of work and economic exchanges as they function today. Differently, it would be to allow them defining future perspectives that answer the question asked at the opening of this text: that of the forms of active life contributing to a development that would be ecologically sustainable, socially fair and based on decent work activities. Interventions based on this principle and these requirements must therefore be developed: the broad outlines of two such interventions are then presented.

A key question remains: what conditions are required for interventions for life- and career-construction undergo such a metamorphosis? This question is dealt with in this article’s conclusion that focuses on two requests: that of a renewal of the conceptual field on which these interventions are based, and that of the setting up of public or community services for their delivery to the population.

An issue ignored by most current interventions for life- and career-construction: towards which future should people be helped to direct their active lives?

On November 21, 2008, the Council of the European Union and the governments' representatives of the member states agreed to give an official definition to lifelong career guidance:

[It is] “referring to a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used. Guidance covers a range of individual and collective activities relating to information-giving, counselling, competence assessment, support, and the teaching of decision-making and career management skills” (Council of the European Union, 2008).

The following year, a group of researchers who were working together for several years has made this approach in a way more radical, in proposing to replace expressions such as “vocational or career development” by the concept of “life designing”:

“Career problems are only a piece of much broader concerns about how to live a life in a postmodern world shaped by a global economy and supported by information technology. (...) Managing interactions between different life domains has become a paramount concern for the many peripheral workers whose employment is contingent, free-lance, temporary, external, part-time, and casual. A major consequence of the interconnectedness between the different life domains is that we can no longer speak confidently of “career development” nor of “vocational guidance.” Rather, we should envision “life trajectories” in which individuals progressively design and build their own lives, including their work careers. Not only adolescents will encounter the big question: What am I going to make of my life? This question is at issue for everyone as they negotiate a series of major transitions in their lives occasioned by changes in health, employment, and intimate relationships” (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 241).

These two approaches differ somewhat. The European Union one emphasizes occupational careers and the training of the skills required to be able to give direction to a life centered on a professional trajectory. For its part, the analysis in terms of “life designing” considers, on the one hand, that not all working lives can be thought of in terms of trajectory and, on the other, that work is only one element among others contributing to a life construction.

Beyond their differences, these two conceptions proceed from a neoliberal vision considering that individuals are autonomous beings, responsible for the direction they give to their life courses. In both cases, interventions supporting clients in such endeavors consist in helping them project themselves into a certain future that gives meaning to their present existence. But, in both cases, an issue—fundamental both

for the individual and the community—is left in the dark: for heading towards which future?

Over the past decades, however, this issue has gradually come to the fore under the impetus of movements—and large international organizations—concerned about the extreme worsening of demographic, ecological and social justice problems. The COVID-19 pandemic has given this concern an acuteness that it had never had before, as for example, underlined by Frédéric Keck, director of the Social Anthropology Laboratory of the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) in an interview published by the newspaper *Le Monde* on March 27, 2020:

“Since the 1970s, all indicators have shown that our mode of development produces more harm than good, especially the emergence of infectious diseases transmitted by animals under the effect of anthropic changes. Climate change warnings have been scarcely heard, whilst a health alert forces governments to take swift decisions to prevent emergency deaths. Lockdown, an unprecedented measure to manage a health crisis, produces a mixture of accelerating signs of ecological change and slowing down of economic activity which is conducive to fundamental reflection on our mode of development” (Keck, 2020).

For professionals helping people design their lives and careers, this concern is accompanied by another question: how to help individuals and groups to head towards which other “mode of development”?

Hanna Arendt’s (1958) analyzes of the concept of “active life” seem able to offer a solid basis for providing answers to this double question.

Designing one’s life: giving a future perspective to one’s active life

Active life: labor, work and action

In 1958, Hanna Arendt published *The Human Condition*. As indicated by the title of this book German edition—“*Vita activa*”—it shows that active life is the mode of existence of human beings.

“Active life is no longer seen as an optional mode of life to be chosen among many and to be assessed as an end or a good; it is the condition of all human existence, which has always been and can only be active because of this condition” (Faes, 2015, p. 345).

Active life is made of three dimensions: labor, work and action. Each of these can be understood to describe a—more or less important—component of the today’s various jobs, trades, professions, professional functions and un-paid workings.

The first of these dimensions is labor. Labor refers to a kind of activity that human beings must do for sustaining their lives. This is the activity required for our survival as animals, both as individuals and as a species. It needs to be always started again without leaving the trace of any made works. Food searching and caring for

children are prototypical examples of labor. This concept applied to today's working activities makes clear that some of them are essentially labor. For example: jobs of immigrants harvesting fruit and vegetables, those of people cleaning at night at the headquarters of large companies, those of employees taking care each day of different elderly dependent people or those of people making home meal's deliveries. Besides, most unpaid activities (cleaning, washing, cooking, caring, etc.) traditionally assigned to housewives are equally labor.

The second dimension of active life is work. It refers to the making of relatively durable goods. For example: the development of a first plow. The production of such goods allows the human species to free itself to a certain extent from its animal condition (and therefore partially from the constraints of labor) by transforming its conditions of existence. Through work, human beings construct a certain human world in which they construct themselves. Work is an activity in which each person can get involved because they can identify with the object of their production: they relate to themselves as "capable of" beings who develop and construct themselves through their activities. The intellectual and artistic professions and all craft trades are examples of working activities in which work is predominant. In today's world of work, the creation of derivative products in banks or of software—as the Uber Eats one that organizes the labor of their delivery employees—are examples of jobs implying work.

Action is the third dimension of active life. Action is the human collective agency that allow us—together—to face the problems we encounter as a group, and to give a certain direction to our world and, therefore, to our existences in this world. The designing of laws fighting the global warming that human activities produce is a (current) prototypical example of action. Action refers to the whole—properly human—acts consisting in making together a world by initiating something new through the mediation of reasonably acting. Using the vocabulary of Eric Weil, we can say that action is this "doing" characterizing the life of this being "of which no definition can be given" (Weil, 1967, p. 5) because [men as species]:

"are the beings who are not, since they are essentially their own becoming, and this becoming is not a natural and describable becoming, but their own self-making¹" (Weil, 1967, p. 5).

And this "self-making" is action, a power to act on one's own making:

"Without the faculty to undo what we have done and to control at least partially the processes we have let loose, we would be the victims of an automatic necessity bearing all the marks of the inexorable laws which, according to the natural sciences before our time, were supposed to constitute the outstanding characteristic of natural processes. (...) If left to themselves, human affairs can only follow the law of mortality, which is the most certain and the only reliable law of a life spent between birth and death. It is the faculty of action that

¹ « Il [l'homme] est l'être qui n'est pas, puisqu'il est essentiellement son propre devenir, et que ce devenir n'est pas un devenir naturel et descriptible, mais son propre *se-faire* ».

interferes with this law because it interrupts the inexorable automatic course of daily life (...). The life span of man running toward death would inevitably carry everything human to ruin and destruction if it were not for the faculty of interrupting it and beginning something new, a faculty which is inherent in action like an ever-present reminder that men, though they must die, are not born in order to die but in order to begin” (Arendt, 1958, p. 246).

“Action” refers—in particular—to the collective organizational activities that are required as a consequence of the ongoing generation by labor and work of “something more” than their immediate results. This “more” is something new, which has usually not been forecasted. Coping with this unexpected outcome requires collective decisions. For example, home meal deliveries create large amounts of packaging waste. Solving this problem requires organizing collectively: should some regulation be enacted? Should we reorganize the collection and sorting of garbage and how? And, in the longer term: how to recycle it? In other words: action stresses that active lives lead to such transformations of the world that they make it imperative to organize collectively, failing which humanity would run to its destruction. This organization is never definitively established since the active lives of human beings constantly produce unexpected outcomes.

Some people have active lives in which action dominates: politicians, NGO leaders, organizers of collective actions, certain journalists and intellectuals, etc.

The three questions of active life designing

Arendt’s analyzes make it possible to differentiate the main types of questions that, today, individuals may ask themselves about their active lives. Some human beings are in such an economic and social situation that they can only ask one question:

- What kind of labor can I immediately engage in to ensure my daily life survival?
This question is frequently asked by immigrants or women living in areas in economic decline (Coquard, 2019).
Other questions relate to the work:
- What working life would allow me to become who I expect to be?
This type of questioning is that of people who relate to themselves as skills’ holders. Most often, they have succeeded in their initial education and detain a capital of socially valued qualifications.
Some people finally focus their thinking on the dimension of action. They ask themselves:
- What active life would allow me to contribute with others to the resolution of certain problems (economic, social, etc.) that we are facing? Such a question is at the basis of the thinking of citizens who enter into the social and solidarity economy. It is also the bedrock of climate demonstrations organized under the impetus of figures like Greta Thunberg.

In summary, each of the three questions encompassed into a life designing questioning can be summarized as follows:

- How can I ensure my survival? (Living on);
- What working life could give me a good life? (Self-realization);
- What can I do to contribute to a collective life that is good and just? (Acting reasonably).

This three-dimensional breakdown of people's questions about the designing of their active lives leads to underlining the limits of the support interventions that are usually offered to them and, more over to outlining ways to help them head towards a human, equitable, and sustainable future.

As summarized by the above quoted European definition of vocational guidance, it usually aims to help clients give direction to their occupational career on the basis of an analysis of their actual and potential skills, of their expectations, of their interests, and of their values. Such support refers exclusively to the second dimension of the active life. It only considers it as (paid) "work", seen as the sole source of human construction. As Mary Sue Richardson wrote:

The discourse of vocational choice and the technology of matching persons and occupations, based on interests and abilities that was the foundation of vocational guidance, did not acknowledge that many people had to take whatever jobs they could get with no opportunity to engage in an idealized matching process. Thus, the paradigm and discourse of vocational choice masked the ways in which "choice" was, in fact, very limited or even nonexistent for some (Richardson, 2012, p. 195).

This reductive approach to active life is still the premise of most research on career development and guidance (see, for example: Brown & Associates, 2002; Athanasou & Perera, 2019). In his last book, Mark Savickas, summarized it as follows:

As agent directing their own life through motivational schema and adaptation strategies, individuals implement their self-concept by constructing activity preferences or selecting work-roles in which to pursue their career goals (Savickas, 2019, p. 28).

But, as observed by David L. Blustein,

The notion of career (reflecting a hierarchical and planned series of job that are thoughtfully selected) is deeply embedded in a sociocultural framework that is relevant to only a minority of individuals around the globe (Blustein, 2006, p. 3).

This is why he has developed a "*Psychology of working*" that seeks:

To embrace work that is engaged in for survival and work that is engaged in as a means of expressing one's interest in the world (Blustein, 2006, p. 4).

In other words: not ignoring the first dimension of a questioning about active life—What labor to engage in for my survival?—is a matter of great importance. This is all the more so since, as numerous studies underlined it, more and more

jobs are labor: a succession of piecemeal tasks, endlessly started again, and having no other purpose for the person who performs them than to earn a living. Charlie Chaplin gives an image of such jobs in *Modern Times*.

If most theories of career development and vocational guidance ignore the vital questioning of a person who must engage in a labor in order to survive, it is because they only consider active lives as working lives (in the sense defined by Hanna Arendt): lives by which people construct themselves through the mediation of a development of their skills, their interests, their values, etc. But the role of skills, interests, values, etc., is very weak—even nil—in entering a labor. Thus: this Syrian graduate male nurse, a refugee in Europe, has had no other solution than laboring as a night watchman in a shopping center. Or again: this young single mother, holder of a beautician diploma, living in an area in economic decline has, as only possible source of income, a repetitive and poorly paid labor of coding images for artificial intelligence software.

Along with Blustein's and Richardson's analyzes, the approach of "Life design dialogues for self's construction" (Guichard, & Pouyaud, 2018; Guichard et al., 2017) is another exception to this usual reduction of the concept of active life to that of professional career. These dialogues aim at helping individuals define future prospects—not necessarily career related—that give meaning to their lives and commit themselves to see these prospects' through to completion. These dialogues refer to a model of identity construction that considers any individual's subjective identity as a dynamic system of identity forms: identity is not seen as a monolithic substance, but as an ongoing process of structuring and unifying various forms. Each of these forms corresponds to a life domain in which individuals act in certain ways, and relate to themselves, to others, and to objects, in specific ways. These forms, and the system they make, evolve over time. This identity dynamism originates in all phenomena that mark a life course as well as in the ways in which an individual makes sense of them.

This understanding of subjective identity as a dynamic process of unifying a system of identity forms highlights that one of these forms (sometimes two) usually holds a central place in the system's organization at any given time. This identity form then plays a major role in defining a future perspective by which a person gives his/her active life a meaning. Thus, this nurse, a refugee from Syria, who labors as a night watchman, can set up with compatriots an organization aimed at facilitating their integration into European society. Likewise, the young beautician coding images for artificial intelligence programs, can devise, with members of her community, a local system for exchanging goods and services. Such activities are "actions" as Hanna Arendt understands this term: acts by which a person seeks to contribute with others to the resolution of problems which affect them collectively. This dimension of active life—a central dimension in some people's construction of their subjective identities—is generally not considered by the usual forms of lifelong guidance and counseling. However, it seems to have a bright future, as shown by the growing number of young people who wonder with fear about what life will be like on earth when they are in the middle of their existence.

Towards a shift to support action

The observations that have just been recalled—the growth of labor, the pending questions about our model of economic and social development—lead to a same conclusion: lifelong guidance and counseling, as limited supports to careers' construction of “workers”, cannot cope with the challenges of today's world (see: Hooley et al., 2018; Pouyaud & Guichard, 2018). Facing them supposes not to ignore the two other dimensions of any active life and—more particularly—to develop supports to “action” that aim to cope with the three-dimensional crisis to which humanity has been confronted for more than three decades.

This crisis—which is worsening from year to year—indeed combines three aspects (for a synthesis, see Guichard, 2018a). First: a critical problem of demography and social justice (there should be around 2050, 10 billion human beings living in conditions of extremely unequal wealth). Second: major ecological issues (depletion of natural resources, accumulation of waste, global warming, various planetary pollution, etc.). And, thirdly, serious degradation of labor, work and employment (relocation of jobs to countries with low labor costs, global weakening of labor laws, development of the precariat, creation of very flexible forms of jobs, etc.). Combined with these three dimensions is the current global pandemic that appears to be, as noted, just another manifestation of this global crisis. It is now of such magnitude that the UN General Assembly adopted unanimously, on September 25, 2015, a (non-binding) plan of action to deal with it. This resolution is entitled “*Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” (UN, 2015).

Many analysts—Illich (2000, 2001), Castoriadis (2011), Gorz (1987, 2011), Serge Moscovici (2002a, 2002b), Bourg (2019), Arnsperger (2009, 2011), etc.—concluded that this deleterious state of affairs is the result of the current organization of the world economy. Solving this crisis requires therefore to profoundly transform our economic and social model and to question the current relations between mankind and nature.

How could life designing interventions become supports to “action” contributing to such transformations? This is the core question of the works by the UNESCO Chair for “*Lifelong Guidance and Counseling*” and by the UNESCO-UNITWIN project “*Life designing intervention (counseling, guidance, education) for decent work and sustainable development*” that brings together about 20 universities around the world (see: Cohen-Scali et al., 2018a, 2018b; Guichard et al., 2016). On the basis of a seminal principle and in relying on three major imperatives, this chair and this network have outlined sketches of interventions supporting “action” towards such changes (Guichard, 2021a).

Seminal principle and imperatives of interventions supporting an “action” life designing

An active life based on a founding principle: the imperative of responsibility (Jonas)

The founding principle of interventions supporting an “action” life designing is Hans Jonas’s “Imperative of Responsibility” (1984): the imperative of a sustainable economic development that is socially just. The main objective of such interventions cannot therefore be that of an inclusion into the world of work as it is now. Differently, it consists in helping clients think about their future in connection with targets such as those defined by the UN in 2015, whilst bearing in mind the imperative of decent active lives for all.

As in lifelong guidance towards work and careers, the reflection induced by the interventions supporting “action” life designing is about the knowledge, know-how, interpersonal skills, interests or values that the client intends to develop. But their “final interpretant” (Peirce: cf. Atkin, 2010)—what active life could stir their developments and give my existence a meaning?—is not the current world of work, jobs, functions, careers, unpaid labor, etc. Their final interpretant needs to be progressively constructed by pondering, first, the various possible forms of organizing activities producing such good or service, secondly, the diverse possible forms of exchange of this product, and thirdly, the “life form” (Spranger, 1921) that each option would imply for the client and its consequences for other people. These issues hark back to a single question: which of these forms seem to best contribute to a sustainable and socially just development that equitably distributes the share of labor? This issue—referred to a person—can be stated even more simply: what direction could I give to my life so that, by 2050, around 10 billion human beings can have a truly human life in a world of limited resources?

In order to allow everyone answer this question, this support to an “action” life designing aims to contribute to the achievement of three imperatives.

Implementing a universal labor law

As it is known, since the end of World War I, the International Labor Organization (ILO)’s mission is to define regulations and standards guaranteeing decent working conditions everywhere in the world. But the ILO only has an advisory role: if it can think about the basic principles of a universal right to decent work, it cannot enforce such law around the world.

However, the current global ideological context—dominated by the belief in the benefits of economic competition that no principle of law should hinder—is such that labor law, far from developing, is gradually being called into question in most countries. Gradually, measures favorable to employees are deleted, because they increase production costs and, consequently, place the companies subjected to them in a situation of unfavorable competition compared to those of other countries where the labor laws are more lax or non-existent. The different states are thus engaged in a competition with each other in the direction of an increasing fading of labor laws (Supiot, 2012, 2018).

These changes have had the consequence of a development of modes of work organization and forms of employment (see in particular: Linhart, 2015) which “corrode the character” (Sennett, 1998), cause “mental attrition” (Dejours, 2000), trigger burnouts, induce occupational diseases and accidents at work and push certain employees to commit suicide in their workplace (Dejours & Bègue, 2009).

This is the reason why the implementation of a universal right to decent and human work is a priority imperative. This implies that all citizens of the world are made aware of it and demand the enforcement of this Right.

Committing to the achievement of the UN “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Given the ecological dimension of the current global crisis, the imperative of establishing a universal labor law must be combined with that of equitable and sustainable development. The above mentioned Agenda adopted by the 2015 UN General Assembly details an action plan centered on 17 major goals and specifies targets corresponding to each of them. A total of 169 targets to be achieved by 2030 are set. For example, goal 12 reads as follows: “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”. The third target under this goal states: “By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses”.

Achieving this action program involves political and economic decisions, but it also supposes that each citizen reflects on her/his active life, asking her/himself how she/he could contribute to the attainment of one or another of these goals. This implies that everyone become sufficiently aware of these goals and targets in order to selecting those they will place at the core of their personal reflection. (Other analyzes than those of the UN General Assembly could serve as a basis for such reflections. Meanwhile, the catalog of actions to be undertaken set up by the UN has the advantage of having been officially endorsed by all member states of this world organization).

Reducing the human ecological footprint (notably by re-territorializing certain productions and their distribution)

Each year, the Global Footprint Network (2020) shows that mankind is living more and more beyond its means in terms of consumption of natural resources and the production of waste and various pollutions.² This phenomenon is mainly the result of the forms of life of the richest fractions of the world population (Bourg et al., 2016; Hunyadi, 2015). The most affluent humans must therefore shift “Towards new lifestyle” to quote the title

² 2020 was a happy exception in the occurrence of the “overshoot day” (the day of the year when mankind has consumed more natural resources than the planet can generate and produced more waste than it can absorb). Generally it is observed earlier each year. In 2019, it was on July 29. In 2020, it was on August 22. This good news was unfortunately a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

of the first part of the sixth chapter of the encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* of Pope Francis, of which paragraph 203 (immediately under this title) specifies:

“Since the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products, people can easily get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending. Compulsive consumerism is one example of how the techno-economic paradigm affects individuals. (...) The gadgets and technics forced upon him by the patterns of machine production and of abstract planning mass man accepts quite simply; they are the forms of life itself (...) This paradigm leads people to believe that they are free as long as they have the supposed freedom to consume. But those really free are the minority who wield economic and financial power. Amid this confusion, postmodern humanity has not yet achieved a new self-awareness capable of offering guidance and direction, and this lack of identity is a source of anxiety” (Francis, 2015, pp. 58–59).

For about thirty years, economists (in particular: Dumont, 1991; Latouche, 1992; Latouche & Tamba, 1992) have emphasized that reducing the ecological footprint implies to “re-territorialize” production and trade (Azam, 2007). This means that—for certain goods—short circuits of production and trade replace world trade and that processing industries be developed near the places where natural resources are harvested (for example: in Africa. Cf. Nubukpo, 2019).

Therefore a world economy based on a “*Principle of territorial subsidiarity*” (or “*ecological subsidiarity*”) needs to be created. It consists in giving an all the more high priority to production’s organizations and exchange systems than their ecological footprints are lower (see: Guichard, 2018a, 2021a, 2021b). This principle leads to distinguish, on the one hand, goods that can only (or mainly) be designed, manufactured and traded in a globalized trade system (for example: drugs, scientific research, major technological innovations, etc.) and the other, productions that can be local, regional or interregional, depending on their immediate and longer-term ecological footprints. It is therefore essential to develop local systems of production and exchange of goods and services forming the basic level of such an economic organization (see: Laville, 2016).

But, as stressed by Azam et al. (2007, p. 65):

“This requires a profound reform of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which bear a heavy responsibility in the current crises”.

Therefore, a transformation is needed of the underlying principles both of the organization of world trade and of global and intra-European trade treaties. As a consequence, supports to “action” life designing must both make citizens of the world aware of this imperative and help each of them specify the kind of active life she/he could design in order to reduce her/his ecological footprint.

Two preliminary intervention projects supporting an “action” life designing

Based on this principle and in line with these three imperatives, interventions supporting an “action” life designing have been outlined (Guichard, 2018a, pp.

320–324 and Guichard, 2018b, pp. 198–202). They are, on the one hand, an education for an active life designing, aimed primarily at young people and, on the other, counseling workshops and dialogues mainly intended for adults.

- Designing decent and human lives acting for sustainable and fair world

This remodeling of “career education” would include two parts:

- A learning about the essential role of active life, of the modes of organization of labor, work and action, and of their forms of exchange, in the construction of a common world and of each person’s subjectivity. This learning (involving active pedagogy) could be based on an adaptation to the levels of knowledge and reflection of the various groups of young people, of works such as those of Bergson (1911), Arendt (1958), Gorz (2011), Dejours et al. (2018), Supiot (2012, 2019 & Supiot, ed. 2019), Linhart (2015), ILO (2017, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c), etc. This learning’s goals would be to make participants aware of the role of the different forms of organization of labor, work and action and of their exchanges (1) in the development of individual talents, of certain modes of relating to self and others, and of representations of self and others, and (2) in the transformations of the world. As a whole, the objective would be to make young people aware of the deleterious consequences of some forms of work, labor and action, and of their exchanges, and, as a consequence, of the fundamental importance—for individuals and the human community—for a universal right to decent and human work and labor.
 - A reflection of each person on her/his future active life in view of contributing to the achievement of the goals and targets defined by the UN 2030 agenda. This reflection implies: (1) that the participants become aware of these different goals and targets, (2) that each of them selects those to which she/he would like to commit, (3) that she/he reflects on the forms of “working” (Blustein, 2006) likely to best contribute to the achievement of these targets (taking into account the imperatives of a sustainable and socially just development, without ignoring the concern of a fair sharing of labor), (4) that she/he becomes aware of the talents she/he needs to develop in order to engage in such or such form of working, and, (5) that she/he selects the best ways for developing these talents.
- Constructing active lives that minimize the ecological footprint and contribute to solidarity economy

This intervention would be aimed first at adults wishing to think about the forms of active lives in which they could—collectively or individually—engage in order to minimize their ecological footprint and contribute to solidarity economy. It would include a collective component and an individual moment.

- The objectives of the collective workshops would be (1) to make participants aware of the need to reform the global system of organization of the production and exchange of goods in order to “re-territorialize” certain productions and to organize short circuits (Azam, 2007) and (2) to reflect collectively on the possibility of developing together, in a certain geographical area, a “local system of production and exchange” of goods and services (Which needs are not or poorly satisfied? What forms of working and exchange activities could best satisfy them? How to organize this system? How to find the necessary initial funding? Etc.) (see: Laville, 2016; Mandin, 2009).
- One-to-one counseling dialogues would aim to help everyone think about their own active life, on the basis of the imperatives of minimizing its ecological footprint and of contributing to solidarity economy. In which working to engage? For producing which durable and tradable goods or services and satisfying which human needs? In what types of work organizations and exchange systems? Does the person have the opportunity and wish to participate in the organization of a local trading system (or to join an existing one)? etc.

Conclusion: two required conditions for constructing and implementing life designing interventions aiming at a sustainable, equitable and human development

As we have just seen: lifelong career guidance refers back to only one of the three dimensions making active life, which were distinguished by Hanna Arendt: work. As a result, the future implicitly postulated by that guidance is that of functions considered “skilled” in current work organizations, inserted into today’s economic exchange system. However, the imperative to face the triple global crisis (and even fourfold with the current pandemic) which has been worsening for more than three decades implies to develop interventions based—this time—on the “action” dimension of active life: interventions that help clients to design—with others—active lives that head towards an economically sustainable and socially just future, through the mediation of decent and human active forms of life.

Two sketches of interventions of that kind nature have been outlined. Both are only outlines that deserve to be developed, tested, evaluated, and no doubt revised, before being offered to larger populations. These sketches are based on the work of academics, jurists and economists, all of whom conclude that the current global crisis cannot be resolved without the institution of universal labor law and without radical reform of world trade organization (and therefore of trade treaties). Such interventions aim, on the one hand, to sensitize addressees to the need for such reforms. But, on the other hand, they take notice that, as long as these reforms have not become effective, all human beings will not be able to construct their future active lives within such a fair and sustainable future. It is in this sense that this support is an “action life designing”: an activity which, by connecting human beings together, creates a space for public debates and gives “faith in and hope for a new beginning of the world” (to express it by paraphrasing Hanna Arendt, 1958, p. 246). These sketches of interventions are only examples: other methodologies have already been

constructed (see, for example: Cohen-Scali et al., 2018a, 2018b). In addition, developments are underway (see, for example: Di Fabio, 2018).

However, in order for interventions supporting the designing of active lives fully contribute to resolving the current global crisis, two conditions must be met: on the one hand, a development of systematic research programs (Cohen-Scali, 2018; Drabik-Podgórná & Podgórný, 2018) and, on the other hand, the implementation of institutions offering these interventions to the public.

Such research programs will first have to construct the concepts on which to base these new interventions. Leads have already been opened in this direction. The concept of “working” (Blustein, 2006) has already been mentioned. But other seminal works cannot be ignored. For example (and taking the risk of forgetting some major contributions): The “developmental contextualism” model by Vondracek et al. (1986), the hermeneutical studies of lives in context by Richard Young and Audrey Collin (Collin & Young, 1992), the concept of “goal-directed action” by Richard Young and Ladislav Valach (Young & Valach, 2004) and those of “constructing lives through working and relationship” and of “agentic action in context” by Richardson (2012, 2015), etc. For its part, the analysis model of activities forming the heart of a life by Jacques Pouyaud (2016) opens another avenue which, starting from the notion of decent work, has developed it scientifically within the frames of “clinic of activity” by Yves Clot (1999) and of “psychology of personalization” by Jacques Curie (2000).

The concept of “form of life” should also find a central place in the renewal of this research domain. “Form of life” held a core role in the developmental psychology of the early twentieth century (Spranger, 1914, 1921). But throughout that century it underwent a series of devaluations which first has transformed it into “Types of men” (Spranger, 1928), before giving birth, in psychology, to a quite different conception: the typology of John Holland (1966). Updated, the concept of “form of life” is now at the center of many works in philosophy, sociology and political science. And, along with Serge Moscovici, we can only plead for its regaining the place it should have never lost in psychology. Indeed:

The cornerstone of ecology is to create a new form of life. The goal of ecology – and it is indeed the role of the movement that must do these things – is to create, to think, and to experience in order to get to new form of life. (Moscovici & Lecœur, 2006, p. 39).

More generally, this research will need to undertake a radical critique of concepts that were—and still are—at the core of current lifelong career development interventions. Indeed, these concepts—like all those used for the government of self and others (Foucault, 2010)—are outcomes of a triangulation: a today’s examination by a person of her/his various experiences and behaviors, past and present, from the perspective of the standards of a certain future state to be reached and of the required behaviors for achieving it. In the case of current lifelong career development interventions, the third pole of this triangulation—the future state to be reached—is the world of work of yesterday and today. And the resulting concepts bear its mark: “career”, “adaptation”, “interest”, “values”, etc., are conceived from the point of view of such a future perspective. It is therefore not surprising, for

example, that Spranger's religious "life form" underwent a radical transformation to become a John Holland type (in this case: conventional) and that core values of sustainability—such as solidarity—(Supiot, ed., 2015) don't appear in the repertoire of work values.

Can such research be undertaken? In the current context, where the bulk of research funding often comes from contracts with various agencies and private companies (see Guichard, 2021b), nothing is less certain. Nor is it guaranteed that services and schemes supporting people towards equitable and sustainable development will be created.

The report coordinated by Anthony Watts and colleagues in 1993 on educational and vocational guidance services in the European Community (Watts et al., 1993) unveiled a dividing line between a German model of organization of these services and an English project (see Guichard, 2021c). The German organization was that of public offices, employing staff trained in a dedicated university, whose missions were linked:

“to the realisation of constitutionally rooted rights, including: protection of human dignity; free development of personality; equality of opportunity; protection of family; and the right of free choice of occupation, place of work and place of training” (Watts et al., 1993, p. 65).

The British project consisted in transforming public career services into structures competing with each other in a quasi-market. This organizational model was the correlate of an ideology considering that the sole purpose of support to career construction was to providing companies with the workforce they need to face economic competition. Guidance and counseling were thus seen only as a preparation of individuals for hiring processes. Over the past 30 years, as a consequence of the power of neoliberal ideology in Europe, forms of organization of career construction services close to the English view were gradually (and more or less surreptitiously) set up in most European countries. It is doubtful whether such services—the objective of which, given their mode of financing, can only be that of rapid integration of their clients into training or employment in today's world of work—could offer them interventions contributing to the development of fair and sustainable economy.

In an interview given on the occasion of the 2019 UN General Assembly, António Guterres—its General Secretary—said:

“(We must) recognize that we are not on track and then take the decisions necessary in investment, in policies, in changes of different forms of cooperation; also, at the international level or with the businesses, the civil society, the local authorities, in order to come together more effectively to make sure that Agenda 2030 is successfully implemented” (Guterres, 2019).

Therefore, today, less than 10 years from the term, in the context of the current pandemic, we need more urgently than ever:

“More investment, more political action, more priority to those aspects that are described in the Goals that we have fixed to have a fair globalization, to have

a development that is simultaneously sustainable and inclusive” (Guterres, 2019).

In the field of supports for the construction of active lives, such “political action” would consist in setting up schemes and public services helping people to direct their lives towards sustainable—and socially just—development and in providing researchers and practitioners with required means for developing ad hoc rigorous methodologies.

Will the current pandemic be the wake-up call for such “political action”? Or, as economist Coriat (2020) thinks, will it take recurrent pandemics for changes to occur?

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