

Questions to be answered:

1. What do the basic competences consist of?
 2. Which cross-sectional competences are important for the method *Join in a Job!*
 3. Please describe the understanding of *resource oriented counselling* with your words?
 4. What is the understanding of *career counselling* in *Join in a Job!*
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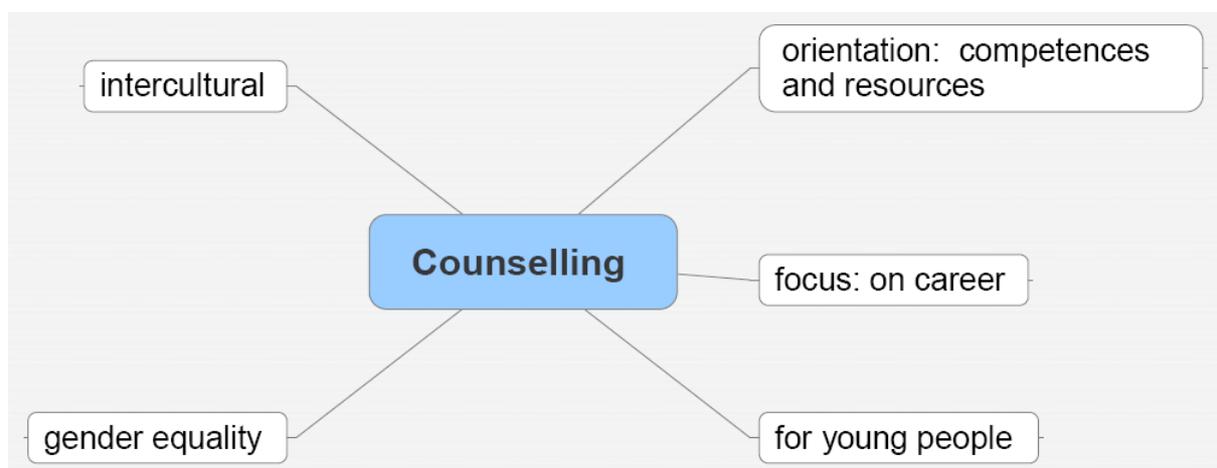
Literature to *Join in a Job!* – *The Method*

2. Basic directions of the Join a Job! Method

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The main orientation of our counselling method is aimed at enabling young people, who come from immigrant families or are immigrants, to integrate into vocational training or career opportunities. The analysis of the situation of young people results in establishing various requirements in relation to counselling tools. They must

- ü be based on competence and resources,
- ü be focused on the area of gainful employment,
- ü be specific to the age group of young people concerned,



- ü be fair in the context of gender roles, i.e. to consider gender-specific differences without prejudices against young people with regard to gender; and finally,
- ü also take into consideration the intercultural dimension.

Figure 1: Basic direction

Particular requirements will be further explained in more detail. From our point of view, they are all equally important. The biggest challenge is to integrate all these aspects into counselling conceptions and practice.

2.1. Counselling oriented at competence and resources

Counselling oriented at competence is based on elemental assumptions about human learning and developing competence that will be analysed in the first place. Around the subject of 'competence', we use a number of such notions as 'qualifications', 'skills' or 'ability'. In order to explain the purpose of our counselling method, it is necessary to explain these terms. In the final part, there is a description of how to put the orientation at competence into practice.

In the case of counselling oriented at competence and resources, we will first outline the theoretical background, and then we will present the guidance on how to put the counselling process into practice.

2.1.1. Competence oriented counselling

In its Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (the European Commission 2000), the European Commission distinguishes three forms of learning: formal, non-formal and informal.

Formal learning is conducted in institutions that provide general and vocational education and results in receiving acknowledged diplomas and qualifications.

Non-formal learning is organised beyond the main systems of general and vocational education and does not need to result in receiving a formal certificate. Non-formal learning can be organised in the work place and within the scope of activity of various organisations or groups of the civic society (such as e.g. youth organisations, trade unions and political parties). In addition, organisations and institutions that have been established to supplement the formal systems can be the place of non-formal learning (music, art and sport classes, and courses or private tuition preparing for examinations).

Informal learning is a natural phenomenon that accompanies us in everyday life. Unlike in the case of formal and non-formal learning, the essence of informal learning is not necessarily connected with intentional learning, which is why it is not perceived by learners themselves as the form of increasing their knowledge and skills (Ibidem; 9-10).

The clear objective of the EU is to attach additional significance to non-formal and informal learning through acknowledging and certifying knowledge and skills acquired in all learning circumstances. The competence portfolio such as, e.g. our Job Box (see Chapter 9), is aimed at establishing a full picture of what the given person has learned through descriptions made by him or her, as well as by others. That is why the areas of non-formal and informal learning are clearly integrated in the Job Box. Competence acquired in all these three dimensions is discovered and analysed together with the participants of the training courses. It is the immigrant environment they come from that is a place of informal learning, which, however, is regarded by few people as an area of learning and any experience related to it. The purpose of our counselling method is to make young people from immigrant environments learn how to perceive themselves as a potential source of competence, and thereby a source of their own self-confidence, and to make them be able to present all of these aspects outside their immigrant community. Thus, we will explain below what is hidden under the term of 'competence'.

2.1.2. Terms 1: competence – ability – skill

The notions of competence, ability and aptitude for a particular job are used in different contexts and their meanings partially coincide with one another. *Skills (Fertigkeiten)* refer to ‘particular talents possessed by someone to do something, such as e.g. deftness, writing, reading or counting’, whereas *ability (Fähigkeiten)* refers to ‘physical and mental characteristics of human beings to have physical or spiritual achievements’ (Hutter 2004, 7). In case of the notion *soft skills*, it is clear that the borderlines between these notions overlap. This term can be best compared with *social competence*, which more or less belongs to the scope of *ability*.

Due to the fact that in our method we attach particular significance to competence, it is necessary to present it in more detail. There are many definitions of *competence*, and each of them stresses ‘the aspect of self-organisation’ (Erpenbeck/Heyse 1999, 161), i.e. the fact that people in open, complex situations are able to organise themselves much better.

‘Competence defines this human feature that enables people to achieve the objective in given situations on the basis of experience, skills and knowledge. To be competent is to manage adequately to a situation’. (Hutter 2004, 7).

Skills and abilities affect competence. Competence is, however, something more than the fact that it depends on values and decisions of will. In other words, ‘competence is established by knowledge, constituted by values, used as ability, strengthened by experience and realised on the basis of will’ (Erpenbeck 1999/Heyse, 162). In the case of young people from immigrant environments, special attention should be paid to the scope of values, because not only their own values, but also their parents’ values can differ from the social values welcome or required by the economy. Many times the directions of young people’s values vary greatly from their parents’ values, which is of great importance for realising plans regarding their professional careers.

Competence can be grouped into different categories. Erpenbeck says about the architecture of competence (Erpenbeck 2004). Within this architecture of competence, what is important to our counselling method is the difference between *basic competence* and *cross-sectional competence*. *Basic competence* consists of:

- *Individual competence*: How do I treat myself? What makes me this particular person? What values are the most important to me? The examples can include readiness for intensive effort, flexibility, frankness, readiness for learning, etc.;
- *Social competence*: The basic question here is: What is my attitude towards other people? Can I understand their situations? Can I convince others? Do I negotiate in conflict situations? These problems are included in this area. The examples can be empathy, readiness for solving conflicts, ability to work in a team, etc.;
- *Methodical competence*: How do I work? Do I prepare a time schedule for myself? Can I plan my work so that I am able to finish it on time? What do I do when I face a bigger task? The examples are time planning, setting priorities, the competence to solve problems;
- *Professional competence*: What can I do? This issue refers best to the ability and skills that can be acquired at work or at school, such as e.g. mathematics or foreign languages.

Cross-sectional competence is a group of various basic competences that are focused on one aspect. What is especially important in our method are intercultural competence and the competence with regard to gender. For this reason, both these types of cross-sectional competence will be presented in more detail.

Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence in counselling work with young people from immigrant environments is doubly important.

- *For young people:* their intercultural competence should become visible and tangible in practice. This enables their intercultural competence to be perceived in a positive way rather than a deficiency.

- *For counsellors:* young immigrants need counsellors with intercultural competence. We should pay special attention to this in their qualifications, and during training.

What is the definition of intercultural competence?

‘Intercultural competence is connected with the readiness and ability to switch to the way of thinking and feeling of other people; it contains the ability to perceive a certain situation from the point of view of a minority or the majority, it involves readiness for a critical attitude towards one’s own method of perception of reality, it contains courage, the uncertainty of one’s perseverance, the ability to adapt oneself to the situation and environment, it means being open-minded to new beliefs and prospects, and it also involves the ability to communicate and to solve conflicts constructively’ (Schuch, a quote from Hutter 2004, 12).

In the following table individual aspects of one cross-sectional competence, namely intercultural competence, is described by means of indicators.

Intercultural competence	
Competence	General indicators (= distinctive features)
Cultural identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying one’s own thinking and feeling about one’s own historical, social, political, civic and cultural roots. - Representing cultural standards, values and customs of one’s own country. - Participating in the public cultural life. - Developing cultural values typical to one’ own country on the basis of cultural sensitivity.
Intercultural identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assimilating other national or internationalised standards, values, customs, habits and trends. - Adopting a nationally unlimited position through coexistence with various nationalities (without multicultural brotherhood). - Perceiving events and circumstances in the global environment and learning a lesson for oneself and one’s own Interculture. - Having a sense of proper behaviour.
Tolerance for ambiguity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to deal with uncertain situations in general terms. - Accepting contradictory but most often justified positions (antinomy). - Ability to deal with the dissonance of one’s own attitudes and experiences. - Developing tolerance to stress in interculturality strained areas.
Open-mindedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dealing with people of different cultures, nationalities and educational background. - Taking care of empathic and respectful relations with cultural varieties. - Submitting to the influence of the foreign environment. - Developing one’ own interest in the culture, history, tradition, geography, politics and society of other countries without prejudice. - Perceiving the possibility of increasing one’s knowledge in intercultural contacts. - Having colleagues to play with and being ready for it. - Wanting to perceive the world with all senses.

Intercultural communicability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wanting to learn more about other languages - Perceiving different accents intentionally. - Imitating the phonetics one is not used to. - Ability to perceive unknown language and communication rhythms. - Performing non-verbal communication.
Intercultural reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigating models of the behaviour and meanings of one's own cultural group. - Studying carefully models of the behaviour and meanings of other cultural groups. - Ability to perceive differences and similarities of various cultures, social forms and political systems. - Being sensitive to global justice.

Tabelle 1: Indicators of intercultural competence (Teichmüller/Culturbuero 2004)

The list presented above shows the complexity of this particular cross-sectional competence. For practical work, it brings, first of all, two consequences:

Apart from linguistic skills, it is not easy to state and prove the existence of cultural competences, because not only do they concern the area of behaviour, but also demand a developed ability for reflection, which cannot be easily measured.

In the case of people from immigrant environments, we cannot take intercultural competence for granted, just like in the case of gender competence with regard to women, because living in other cultures does not lead per se to acquiring intercultural competence.

Counsellors (also those with their own immigrant experience) need to be trained in this subject.

Competence with regard to gender

This cross-sectional competence also occupies a central position in counselling. Because of the obligation with regard to gender mainstreaming¹, what is important is not only the counsellors' qualifications, but also the organisation of institutions, which is fair in the context of gender roles. In the following table, the competence with regard to gender are described as the combination of knowledge, skills, will and permission, whereas the area of permission refers first of all to integration into organisations.

Competence in regard to gender

Knowledge	Skills
Data and facts regarding equal opportunities and structures that reproduce them.	Ability to use gender gaps in the professional area
Knowledge of the specific work division in relation to gender	Integrative support for equal opportunities
General social conditions and concepts	Ability to deal with conflicts and misunderstandings in the context of gender gaps
New concepts in the women's rights policy	Ability to identify aspects with regard to gender on one's own
Knowledge of gender specific aspects of a given area (e.g. medical care, employment policy)	Ability to organise processes
Knowledge of gender roles, stereotypes and their influence	Analysis with regard to gender
Knowledge of gender-specific correspondence styles	Specificity of the target group: considering various groups of women and men and the ability to organise education for them
Knowledge of concepts and methods of organising processes	
Will = preference, principle	Permission = general conditions

¹ Involving the gender policy into measures with regard to politics, the economy, etc.

Open-mindedness, flexibility, empathy (perceiving the opposite sex critically, but not pejoratively)	Functioning under impeding conditions and creating supporting conditions
Awareness of our own features that are the result of the family we come from, the authority where stages of our socialisation were conducted, and the environment we live in	Ability to identify or to create chances for gender mainstreaming
Ability to think about one's own gender role in the professional environment	Developing starting points for the goal-oriented strategy
'One's own professional motivation'	Creating 'the supporting administrative culture'

Tabelle 2: Gender competences (Fleischer 2005, 43)

The competence with regard to gender is the complex ability connected with self-consciousness and self-changes. This competence can be acquired through training related to gender.

2.1.3 Terms 2: qualifications – predisposition – potential

Whereas competence refers to all spheres of life, qualifications concern the limited area of professional activity. *Qualifications* are defined as 'the sum of skills, talents and knowledge necessary to do a particular job' (Hutter 2004, 8). Since the 1970s, the notion of key qualifications is used in relation to qualifications that go beyond one professional area, and are the key to enter various spheres of activity (Ibidem, 9). Thereby, it is emphasised that professional knowledge and know-how quickly become outdated in the labour market. The talents that enable people to adapt themselves to the changing conditions, help them stay in the work process and develop further. Although in the past this notion was associated with cognitive abilities, such as the ability to solve problems, now it is associated more and more with social competence such as the ability to work in a team. However, Hutter emphasises the fact that basic qualifications or 'basic skills such as reading, counting, writing and media competence' should not be forgotten and they are also included into key competence, because without them 'the access people have to professional activities to earn their living is in all probability blocked' (Ibidem, 9).

The notion of *professional predisposition* 'determines the ability to work for an individual person who requires particular professional qualifications (the level of professional achievements)' (Ibidem, 9).

The human potential refers to the development possibilities that are in all people. Whereas *key qualifications* refer to professional areas, the field of key competence is extended to all spheres of life, and also to social development; and that is why the notion of key competence is used more and more frequently.

In its *Project Definition and Selection of Competencies* (DeSeCo), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) mentions three types of key competence:

Integration into heterogeneous social groups: Its essence is to develop good and stable relations with other people, to cooperate with them and to overcome any conflicts.

Self-dependent activity: This competence requires consciousness of one's own actions in the broader context, the ability 'to create and realise practical plans and personal projects', as well as to perceive 'rights, interests, borderlines and needs'.

Interactive use of supporting tools and aids: In case of this competence, it is not only the use of supporting tools and aids, but it also contains the basic knowledge of foreign languages, competence in reading and mathematics, and the reflection about using them. (OECD 2005, 14-17)

Our counselling method is based, first of all, on the key competence called *self-dependent activity*. Through the accompanying reflection on their own situation and support to develop their goals, young people should be supported in their self-competence.

2.1.4. Resource oriented counselling

The conceptions of counselling based on resources and competence are theoretically close to each other, because ‘competence is (can be) understood as the resources possessed by everyone, which enable them to develop new programmes of activity and provide access to resources that are beyond this person’ (Lang-von Wins/Triebel 2006, 47). Besides, the main purpose of counselling, based on competence, is to strengthen self-reflection, which is in turn the central resource in order to discover, activate and reasonably use one’s own resources or those that are in the material or social environment.

The main assumption of all models of resources is expressed in the following sentence: ‘Our lifestyle, our everyday life, our comfort and our health, our successes and failures in facing requirements, problems and critical situations are independent from resources. They are connected with the availability and effective application of personal and environmental resources’ (Nestmann 2004, 728).

What are resources? They are for example:

Facilities such as a flat, a car, transport facilities,

Particular living conditions and circumstances such as family bonds, earnings, a workplace,

Personal characteristics such as self-esteem, optimism in facing various problems, awareness of control and social competence, are essential for the personal positive image, but also for the access to other resources, e.g. friendship.

Energetic resources such as money, knowledge, or trustworthiness are resources for achieving their goal (compare with Nestmann 2004, 728).

Another division is as follows:

Basic, necessary resources such as accommodation, food, as well as the ability to obtain and maintain these resources,

Social resources or socially dependent resources that refer to the family, friendship and networks of contacts, whereas what is meant here is both the ability to obtain and maintain these resources and the resources themselves,

Symbolic resources that refer to the social status and are similar to the social capital mentioned by Pierre Bourdieu (1997) (Lang-von Wins/Triebel 2006, 47).

In the theory of maintaining resources, the following argument is presented (Hobfoll zit. n. Nestmann 2004, 729):

When resources are missing, when they are lost or when there is a serious fear that resources will disappear if they are not used, people, not obtaining the expected results, are under pressure of stress and are susceptible to mental and physical problems. Thus, the loss of resources has more consequences than obtaining resources, especially for people with small resources, because the loss can be a threat to the existence of these already small resources.

Moreover, there are ‘spirals of profit and loss’ (Ibidem, 730). It means that everyone that has sufficient resources can obtain another one more easily, because the big reserves of resources enable behaviour that is more confident. On the other hand, people with less numerous resources lose not only one of them, but the loss of one of these resources means the beginning of losing more, e.g. the loss of work results in some friends disappearing, a necessity to resign from one’s flat or one’s health condition getting worse. People with small

resources are often very busy with maintaining the status quo using most of their resources for this purpose, so there are no other resources left to overcome any critical situation.

What exactly is counselling oriented at resources?

- relying on resources instead of basing oneself on deficiencies,
- sensitivity to the existing resources, or to those that will still be obtained,
- activating or reconstructing resources that have not been used by a person or his or her environment,
- maintaining and protecting resources, e.g. through problem control mechanisms that protect resources,
- preventing the loss of resources in order to stop the spiral of loss,
- shaping and influencing the environment so that individual persons can engage their resources optimally and be respected for it (adjusting resources) (compare with Nestmann 2004, 730-733).

Wegner (2004) gives precise suggestions and examples to be used within the work of a competence agency:

- *showing respect to young people*: informing young people that they are experts in regard to their own business and accentuating their strong points, so that some new aspects of perceiving reality could start functioning (e.g. in case of traumatic experiences from childhood, we should ask: 'How did you cope with that?');
- *separating a person from a situation*: it is necessary to separate judging attribution from what these young people actually do or think. Besides, it is important to try to distinguish between emotional evaluation of a situation and its analysis;
- *enabling young people to meet without any consequences*: counselling should be voluntary and be conducted within an open space, which is supposed to suggest thinking about other options. The leading purpose is their professional and social integration;
- *departing from one-sided orientation on the labour market*: through perceiving and appreciating competence acquired beyond the occupation and school education, it is possible to develop new prospects together with young people (compare with Wegner 2004, 70-74).

2.2. Career counselling

In relation to counselling concentrated on occupation, career and the lack of gainful employment, there are various terms with partially different aspects.

They include, for example:

Counselling with regard to education, the function of which is to provide support before or during particular stages of education (school, studies, professional training);

Career counselling, which is concentrated on career orientation and finding a job and informs e.g. about the possibilities of vocational training or developments in the labour market;

Counselling for the unemployed, which is concentrated, in particular, on mental and social symptoms accompanying longer periods of unemployment, whereas the special attention is paid to increasing motivation;

Careers Counselling during the period of professional activity;

Counselling with regard to rehabilitation through employment in rehabilitation centres or within supported employment;

Professional coaching which is designed first of all for managers (compare with Thiel 2004).

For our counselling method, we propose the term of *career counselling*, presented broadly as ‘counselling regarding education, career and employment’. Due to the fact that there is a wide range of both interests and living standards of young people, the following statement seems adequate here: ‘Counselling issues range from decisions about the educational path, through the actual search for a job, to counselling within case management where there can be such problems as addictions or debts.

Also, in order to help in understanding counselling, there is a wide range of possible attitudes, as it is shown in the following chart. Our method is in favour of such a way that can be understood by counsellors, teachers or instructors. The question how much career counselling is or can be, in this sense, oriented to the client depends greatly on the institutional context, because individuals have different opinions.

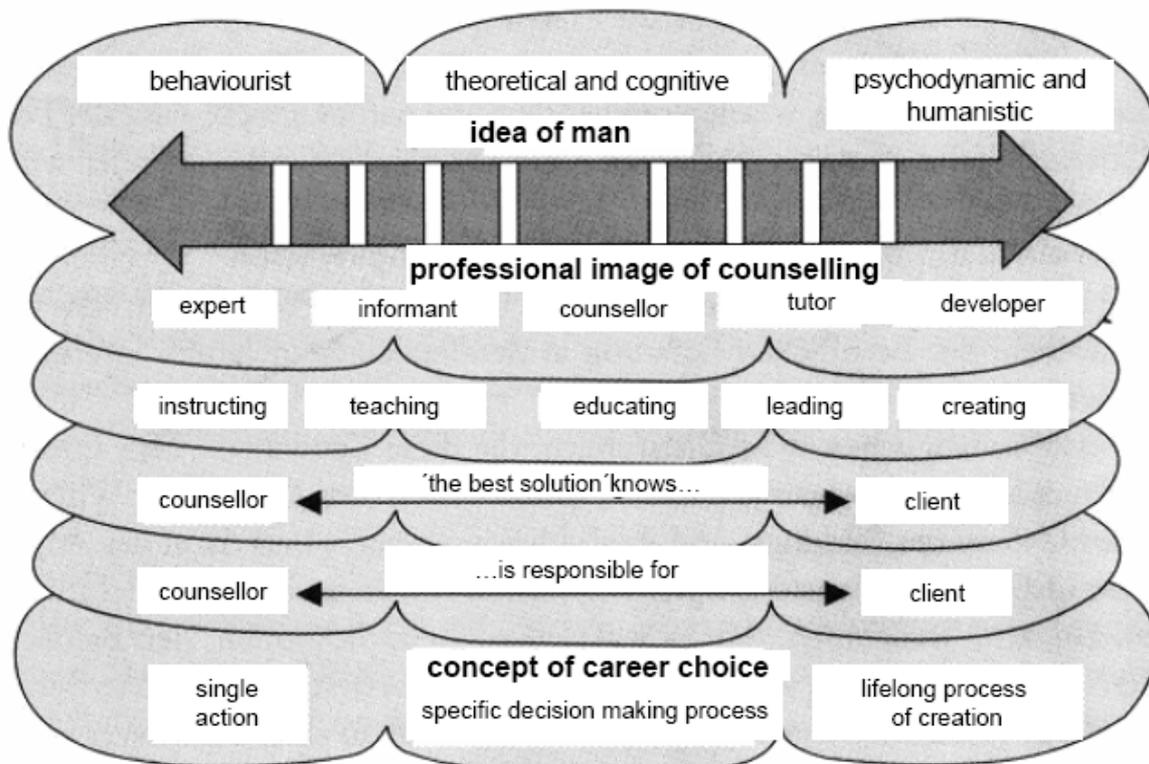


Figure 6: Continuity of counselling (Haas 2004, 926)

2.2.1. Requirements for career counsellors

Nowadays no workplace can be guaranteed and numerous changes of jobs, temporary unemployment periods or stages of unpredictable employment are becoming more and more frequent. These phenomena require additional competence from employees so that they can always find a proper job. Lang-von Wins/Triebel (2006) mention a number of factors that facilitate the creating of a professional career or enable ‘the ability to be employed’:

- *social capital*: a network of connections, contacts and cooperation, in particular a more distant circle of friends, can offer support through providing information or can make it easier to reach vacancies through recommendation;
- *Career identity*: this notion contains one’s own personal prospects and definition in the specific professional context. In this case, the determining factor is one’s own values, goals, hopes and fears with regard to career and the related spheres of life. Career identity is a ‘dynamic construction that gives sense to the past and future, enables the development of goals and thereby the direction of the future way’.

- *Individual coping skill*: this notion does not contain reactions to conditions set by others, but it means an active and responsible confrontation with changing realities of the environment. The conditions necessary for this ability include sufficient database, the ability to accept changes and individual factors (proactiveness, optimism, and perceived self-efficacy);
- *Consciousness of one's own values* that can provide orientation (compare with Lang-von Wins/Triebel 2006, 29)

Gerstenmaier/Günther (2004) show that all the above-mentioned factors are affected by gender identity or attributing gender-specific features or by the fact of belonging to any cultural minority. It should be mentioned that women have a smaller network of professional cooperation at their disposal and they can use them to a smaller degree. Professional cooperation networks are generally formed homogeneously with regard to gender and culture ('Old-boys-network'). According to research of Asiatic minorities in the United States, in the case of career choice, the area of 'cultural assimilation' plays a specific role connected with the fact that the more advanced this decision is, the more often others choose stereotypically attributed occupations.

Contemporary career counselling would refer to changes in the career area with the help of research and relevant steps in order to solve the problem of which career is 'suitable'. At present, the labour market needs career counselling that helps its clients 'in increasing their assimilating ability and in dynamical development of their identity in relation to career' (Lang-von Wins/Triebel 2006, 32). This competence cannot be proved by means of formal qualifications, especially as the process of learning this competence is often indirect or in the circumstances that are not perceived as the place for learning, e.g. in the family, in the circle of friends, in clubs or in institutions where work is carried out by volunteers. Thus, career counselling oriented at competence must be comprehensive. It cannot treat only clients' work experience and wishes as the starting point, but must also perceive their environment and the orientation of their values. Counselling oriented at competence should act as a form of assistance, not as instructions only.

2.2.2 Career orientation

For the age range to which young people belong, career orientation within career counselling is particularly important. Even if career orientation is commonly seen as the preparation for taking decisions about career choice, it seems that in the light of great changes in the labour market, it is necessary to understand the notion of career orientation comprehensively. Career orientation is a longer process, which, in ideal conditions, should be started in the primary school and should not be limited to only one professional area. The subject matter of career orientation is not restricted to years of (obligatory) school education. The first phase of career orientation is longer for those young people who go to secondary schools and for those who have not managed to start their planned professional activity at the first attempt, because, e.g. they have not found their ideal place for vocational training, they have given up education, they have been dismissed after completing the period of vocational training, or they have realised that the chosen career is not suitable for them.

The present position with the subject of career orientation results not only in dealing with the question: 'What do I want to be?', but also leads to further questions: 'How do I want to live and work?'. The changes in general conditions of the labour market and gender roles make these questions necessary, because employees are more frequently forced to have an active role in planning their future. This process of planning should also predict periods of losing gainful employment and agreements connected with taking over the earning activity, taking care of children and those relatives who demand care. In this context, the most important factor for young people is 'the ability for self-determination, one's own initiative and

responsibility' (Schudy 2002, 13). These abilities are the basis for noticing and using the existing opportunities in the face of the diminishing possibilities of a free career choice. This refers to all young people, especially to those with little chance at the starting point, because, due to advances in technology, and rationalisation, some supporting functions in the manufacturing and technical sectors are disappearing more and more frequently.

For career orientation understood in this way, the same process that operates between self-confrontation and the requirements of careers and the labour market, is proved. The Job Box (see Chapter 9) is adequately constructed for this process.

2.3. Counselling juveniles

Counselling methods for particular age-limited groups contain transparent or hidden models for relevant stages of life. For example, there is a model of 'the completed life stage' for young people, which starts at the beginning their professional career, changing their marital status or starting a stable relationship with a partner. It does not refer to the majority of young people, because the transitional phase extends over several years or this 'transitional period' takes on the form of uncertain employment conditions or unemployment periods and becomes 'the permanent state'. It is the change in the character of gainful employment that is responsible for a change in the process of integration into society. This leads to the situation where many young people cannot find gainful employment to earn their living and where they find out that they are not needed as the labour force. At the same time, gainful employment is still a central medium of social integration (compare with Reutlinger 2004, 270-272). The insufficient supply of vacancies, and in particular the insufficient supply of vocational training places, is changing general conditions of career choice for young people. As 'this probability of not obtaining any vocational training place in fact spreads - through the circles of those 'traditionally' affected with this problem, i.e. young people who come from another country, students with bad marks on their school leaving certificates and possibly young people without obligatory school leaving certificates, etc. - to all students from secondary schools and from vocational schools' (Krisch 2004, 3); thus the pressure is increased, whereas the probability of realising their career plans is reduced.

'There is a constantly increasing dissonance between socially determined goals and individual's abilities to achieve them' (Reutlinger 2004, 273). Therefore, young people are confronted with another challenge, which must be faced simultaneously, to the developmental tasks connected with their age, such as determining their own (sexual) identity, breaking away from their parents, or finding their own position in society. There is a danger that under these circumstances they can lose the sense of life and the ability to act, because the established sense (identity through gainful employment) cannot be realised.

This situation does not, however, refer to all young people to the same degree; there are winners and losers of modernisation. Whereas, in the case of failures, those standing on the winners' side can go to their family or economic networks of connections and they can retrospectively interpret their failure as a case of risk to help their chances; the losers fall behind because of the lack of resources and networks of connections or cooperation. In the long run, they will be excluded and put on the sidelines. This refers especially to neglected young people, and in the case of young people from immigrant environments, in addition, there are experiences connected with exclusion caused by racial prejudice.

How do young people deal with their unemployed status if they have never had gainful employment or they have had only short periods of uncertain employment? Their reactions go

from ‘retreating into frequently men-dominated subcultures or no-future *‘I don’t care’* attitudes to such attitudes as *‘Why should I try if I am sure I won’t manage?’*, which corresponds with the phenomenon described by sociologists, in which young people ‘give up their life plan with the optimistic educational variant’. Apart from those who give up, there are also young people who find employment in youth culture niches, or those who become rich and thereby gain social respect in their environment, by doing small business on the brink of legality or work in the black economy sector. However, more and more young people give up, they hardly exist in public life and thus go away from social work as the source of support’ (Krisch 2004, 4).

Counselling must see its most important goal in restoring these young people’s ability to take action. ‘The increased ability to take action is a condition for social participation, such as, . socially active orientation and participation. In this case, the ability to take action is defined as such factors as self-confidence, social respect and efficiency (‘to be able to do something’) (Reutlinger 2004, 275). Also, in this case, counselling should not be set solely in career orientation and visible areas, but in their competence profiles and in cultural and social potentials, as well as in invisible areas (Ibidem), ‘in order to find the way to integration by means of acknowledging invisible competence’ (compare with Oechsle/Geisler 2004)

2.4. Counselling sensitive to gender gaps

From the perspective of social background, it is perceived that with the passing of time the equality of chances has been reached, and especially young women reject comments on inequality or discrimination on the grounds of gender, regarding them as inappropriate or too severe. This in turn corresponds with the social model of interpretation, according to which successes or failures are the consequence of one’s own decisions. Inequalities and differences in social position are not associated with structural authority relations and unequal access to resources. (Compare with Oechsle/Geisler 2004)

On the other hand, in the labour market there are still differences conditioned by gender. The choice of career is often marked with gender-specific conditions; young women choose from a more limited range of occupations, which also involve even smaller chances of good income (horizontal segregation).

Because of limited career prospects, by choosing poorly paid ‘women’s jobs’, and by their responsibility for taking care of children, women’s earnings are much lower than men’s earnings (vertical segregation).

Women are still thought to be responsible for taking care of their family free of charge. In the case of girls, there is a noticeable breakdown just after finishing school; although, on average, they are more successful at school than boys, they still have more problems in the phase of going into this period of professional activity.

Even if the hierarchy and gender gaps are not official problems, in the private sphere of overcoming these difficulties there are still old patterns functioning. The gender-conditioned models mentioned below are being noticed, yet they can be perceived, especially in critical situations, often as a kind of ‘recurrence’ in traditional patterns and routines, which offer security only in the short run.

Model of mastering the situation used by men	Model of mastering the situation used by women
Externalisation.	Internalisation.

The internal feeling of powerlessness is directed outside and expressed by oppressing the poor ones, whereas the victim is perceived as someone that bears his own burden of powerlessness, and not as a human being.	They seek reasons in themselves, feel responsible for others, enter the conflict (too) late and establish borderlines (too) late. The outburst of anger is the result of patience lasting for too long.
No social permission to express helplessness.	Pathognomy of suppression, tabooisation resulting from being overburdened with household duties.
No ability to self-reference, apathy.	Access to the internal world, they can perceive and show their own feelings.
No empathy.	Sensitive to other people's feelings.
Orientation according to what must function (work, sexuality).	Few experiences of the external world, or only those provided by men.
Control.	Dependence.
Rationality = being devoid of emotions, in particular at work. Expecting that in the family feelings will be 'guaranteed'.	Analyses first of all on the emotional plane, less structurally, personalising.
Orientation patterns with regard to socially recognised customs (compare with the competitive society in economy).	Orientation according to relations with others can be easily functionalised, socially devalued.
Self-violence in the form of driving pain and feelings away.	Self-violence.
Violence against others as a way to gain self-confidence, recognition and a sense of being effective, even in the short run.	Driving away aggressive impulses, as well as one's own needs, thoughtful control, a sense of guilt, disorders of the physical and mental state.
Intervention: to establish borderlines and to enable the establishment of space intended for 'unmanly' behavior, recognising needs.	Intervention: to strengthen women in establishing borderlines and to draw attention to personal integration and self-dependence, support in going outside (a fear against losing relationships).

Tabelle 3: Models of mastering the situation (the author's own specification according to Böhnisch/Funk 2002)

In the case of young people, there are similar patterns: 'On the one hand, girls possess communicative abilities to a greater extent than boys, whereas boys have a larger number of strategies for spatial adaptation and territorial control. On the other hand, girls' positions are weakened due to their lack of self-confidence and the tendency to resign from their own needs. This specific disproportion is connected with the fact that in the case of problems, girls are good partners to talk to both for themselves and for boys, unlike boys who rarely play a role of a supporting, reliable friend for girls and, unfortunately, also for boys' (Herwartz-Emden/Steber 2004, 140).

However, the above-mentioned patterns should be understood only as external pathognomy, women and girls or men and boys 'are' not (always) what they seem to be. These forms of behavior are not biologically conditioned but have been established within socialising processes where specific models of behavior are supported or restrained. The evidence for this culturally conditioned formation of what is regarded as 'typical' to men and women is e.g. differences in socialisation patterns in Turkey where men and women are thought to have a high degree of expressivity, where showing their feelings by men is socially acceptable, and where women are expected to be more frequently treated like objects. In general, gender gaps are not so much polarised as e.g. in Germany or Austria. (compare with Herwartz-Emden/Steber 2004, 141)

Besides, the deep structures of the above-mentioned models of mastering the situation are always ambivalent, e.g. in combination of care and violence, or control and dependence. In addition, no model is better per se, because both these specific needs cannot be fulfilled. Whereas in the case of women there is a question of their 'own' life beyond the family (whether at present or in the past), in the case of men the question of their life beyond their gainful employment remains open, as they must be constantly ready to take up employment.

Developmental tasks for young people are not neutral in relation to gender. At the very early stage of their career choice, girls must confront a conflict between career and family, which is dominating in the German and Austrian culture. In relation to this, there is also a question of combining a career with the family life, the subject of 'fatherhood' in the contrast to 'masculinity'. These schemes are, however, not universal in all cultures, and in Western Europe there are big differences between, for example, France and Austria in the attitude to activity connected with taking care, whether these problems are to be solved in the private or in the public area. Young people from immigrant environments have a double task. They must 'develop in laborious learning processes (...) not only their own activity and orientation, but also those adequate to their age, at the same time they must confront the dominating social order, and its cultural objectives and concepts (...) (Ibidem, 142). In the case of this task, groups of ethnically homogeneous people of the same age can offer help in making attempts and in communication.

Another additional developmental task is to process experiences conditioned by cultural differences, such as 'discrimination on the grounds of otherness, strange appearance, skin colour, clothes, gestures or a language'. Girls' frequent reaction to experiences connected with discrimination is the loss of their self-confidence, whereas boys seek forms of reaction in the area of measures directed outside, including aggression or violent behavior' (Herwartz-Emden/Steber 2004, 143).

In relation to this, the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (compare with Connell 2006) offers some attempts to explain it. 'Hegemonic masculinity' excludes not only women from the access to power, resources and social respect, but also a great part of men, and in particular these marginalised groups such as e.g. members of the lower social groups, men from immigrant environments (with big differences inside the group and their own hierarchy) or men with homosexual orientation. For these excluded men, violence or deviations, but also sport or using the image of the family supporter (first of all in the case of male immigrants), are possibilities of demonstrating, although partially, their dominating masculinity in public.

Within the scope of social work sensitive to gender gaps, the most important activity is to provide some space for the needs of respect and self-development, which cannot be fulfilled by role patterns. However, it should be remembered that social work is carried out in cultural and social conditions and it employs the 'Doing Gender' approach. Gender-typical behavior is expected or, eventually, sanctioned, if they 'coincide' (also/just within the scope of social work), i.e. social work can stand in its own way. The reflection on the image of one's own concepts about the roles and experiences connected with socialisation of social workers are necessary in order to develop gender competence. What are also important are constellations in the setting of counselling. Depending on the gender of the counsellors and the people concerned, there are various levels of dynamics in mutual expectations, attribution of features and behavior patterns.

The consequence of these results can be compared with walking a tightrope. On the one hand, in order to reduce gender gaps, i.e. not to attribute gaps that form stereotypes to girls and boys, one shows open-mindedness to their experience and interpretation and to other important differences like their immigrant status, school achievements, religious orientation, family resources, discrimination, social class, disability, etc. On the other hand, it is also important to provide young people with the consciousness of where gender at individual

levels and relations connected with gender at the structural level of all theories of equality still play their role and limit the formation of practical plans of both girls and boys.

To sum up, it can be said that in relation to Gender Mainstreaming, there are two main objectives:

- To stop the rigid attribution of particular role patterns to girls and boys with regard to their lifestyle, planning, and career choice, in order to increase activity options in both private and professional areas.
- To stop discrimination on the grounds of gender through special offers and changes in the general structures of organisations (compare with Hörmann/Kugler 2005).

2.5. Intercultural counselling

The access people from immigrant environments have to counselling institutions is characterised by various barriers. In this situation, attention should be paid to two aspects: fears immigrants feel against crossing the threshold of any public institution and (unconscious) counsellors' barriers.

On the side of immigrants, the following obstacles can be noticed:

- language problems caused by the lack of the opportunity to use interpreter's services in institutions and insufficient knowledge of the German language,
- cultural barriers such as fears against crossing the threshold of any public institution, or other forms of regulating family problems, various conceptions of health/disease,
- lack of trust of institutions from their native country (also caused by experiences connected with them living there), preferred assistance from people with the same emigrant experience,
- lack of knowledge of the social system, educational system and medical care system,
- orientation at the middle class in the process of counselling with emphasising self-reflection can result in the lack of trust,
- fears against legal consequences of residence if one uses counselling (compare with Schröttner/Sprung 2003).

The above-mentioned obstacles are only partial deficiencies on the side of immigrants; to some extent, they are also hidden in the structure of what relevant institutions can offer, e.g. no offer of counselling in the immigrants' native languages. In addition, counsellors' (unconscious) prejudices are influential here.

Thus, on the other side we can mention:

- § 'nationalistic' defence of social privileges (isolated incidents),
- § dismissive attitude caused by ethnic or socioethnic resentments,
- § over-emphasising and stereotypical generalisation of cultural differences,
- § colour-blindness – negating the cultural variety and racial and cultural exclusion: 'We treat everyone equally!'
- § activating and denying the hidden collective sense of guilt,
- § a fear against burden caused by particularly 'difficult' and 'strained' clients – unburdening by referring them to special institutions,
- § a feeling of being overburdened with work, a fear against the loss of competence,

§ the lack of readiness and energy for learning new things (routine, syndrome of getting discouraged), (Gaitanides 2004, 315).

On the plane of counsellors, the acquiring of *intercultural competence* is of great importance. The necessity of learning can be divided into *cognitive competence* (knowledge of culture, knowledge of the history, structure and function of emigration/immigration, of the social, legal and sociopsychological situation of immigrants, of models of mastering problematic situations conditioned by contexts, of the forms of the symptoms and attempts to explain ethnic prejudice and racism, etc.) and *intercultural competence of activity* (empathy, distance to roles, tolerance for ambiguity) (Gaitanides 2004, 317).

Gaitanides emphasises the significance of competence of activity for some reasons: because of the variety of native countries and ethnic communities. It is not easy to obtain reliable information about all clients. The knowledge of the target group itself does not eliminate prejudice. That is why the most important factor is the ability for self-reflection, open-mindedness, and also the ability to cope with 'foreign experience', ambiguity and adversities (Ibidem).

Particular attention should be paid to the analysis of control (helplessness) in counselling. Their uncertain residential status, in combination with difficulties in communication and insufficient information on the social system, often result in clients' helpless behaviour; whereas, on the other hand, some survival strategies are developed, which deprives counsellors of the opportunity to help, when e.g. he or she is accused of xenophobia or degraded, which is done especially by female clients.

In the analysis of these experiences and mechanisms 'the ability to break away from the static, general way of understanding culture' is of great importance. (Ibidem) Culture is not homogenous. There is as little homogenous Austrian culture as homogenous Turkish or Bosnian culture. It should not be assumed, however, that the culture of one's native country is continued without obstacles in the country to which these people emigrate. On the basis of elements from various cultures, young people develop so-called 'patchwork-identities'. In this case, common features can be more numerous due to the mutual social situation rather than because of the cultural background (compare with Jagusch 2004).

Like in the case of social differences, the need is the following:

'Ethnicism and intercultural communication problems should not be overrated. They are also not aspects that can be neglected. Working with immigrants, one should treat them equally to other aspects of the genesis of the problem (legal status, social dimension, institutional role, gender, individual life story, local specificity, etc.)' (Gaitanides 2004, 319).

After this presentation of general and theoretical basic directions of our counselling method, in the next chapter we will specify characteristic features of intercultural counselling from the point of view of a woman counsellor.