

## Key Elements of Career and Career Management Definitions in Work with Long Term Unemployed Social Benefits Receivers

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**Abstract:** In this article theoretical aspects of definitions career and career management are researched in context of career management improvement of long-term unemployed social benefits receivers. The aim of the study was to find key elements in the definitions that might be used in connection with the fore-mentioned group and figure out the differences in defining terms career and career management by different authors which suit best for long-term unemployed social benefits receivers. Theoretical study shown in the article – different scientific sources are researched, such as printed literature, online books, scientific journals and previous researches in that area. The results of the study are the main points that should be emphasized in researching and working with the long-term unemployed social benefits receivers in term of understanding career and career management.

**Keywords:** career, counselling, planning, unemployment, career management, adult education.

### Introduction

The author has been researching the problem of the long-term unemployed social benefits receivers and their career management improvement since 2012 from different aspects. Since then the general level of unemployment decreased in Latvia, in August 2015 the level of unemployment was 8,5% (Reģistrētā bezdarba..., 2015).

In order to start the research the author needs to define the group of people that are called “long-term unemployed social benefits receivers”. The long-term unemployed social benefits receivers are able-bodied persons who have received monthly benefits for more than 12 times within the last three years and were jobless at least 9 months (Pētījums par..., 2007), and have been receiving social service support at least for the last six months.

Target group is not well researched in Latvia, especially in context of career management. It is important to clarify the key elements in definition career and career management in context of theoretical research and practical work with long-term unemployed social benefits receivers. Information might be important and useful for career counsellors, social workers and other specialists involved in work with the fore-mentioned target group. Career is one of the important definition in process of helping get back into labour market for long-term unemployed social benefits receivers.

Career, nowadays is understood not only as our journey in professional field. Nowadays career includes all different life fields – work, personal development, relationships and all other things that happen with people every day (Kas ir karjera, 2015). According to that career management is a way how people control or manage their life.

Long-term unemployed social benefits receivers have some problems in typical scheme that might be used in the context – during long period of time they are not able (or not wanting) to find a job and improve their financial situation thus abusing local budget and getting social benefits. Not only job problem is timely for that group – often also relationship is disordered, because one family member is not doing well, personal development is also quite problematic in situation when basic needs are not covered (McLaughlin, 1992).

When working with that target group it is important to remember that human’s attitude towards situation is quite proportional to the time spent in the situation, obviously, the longer a person is without work and is receiving social benefits, more acceptable his/her attitude is. He/she thinks it is quite normal to live from the benefits, not trying to find a job (Ляна, Фельдман, 1995).

In some way that creates an endless circle – they don’t have a job and don’t want to find it and vice versa. It is important to understand what key points in career context are basic for long-term unemployed social benefits receivers, what is important to emphasize while working with them.

Individuals are expected to build and maintain a positive self-concept, to interact positively and effectively with others, to change and grow through the course of life, to participate in lifelong learning support of their career goals, to locate and effectively use career information, to develop understanding about the relationships between work, society and the economy, as well as to be able to secure/create and maintain work, make career-related decisions, maintain balance among their life roles, develop understanding about the changing nature of life and its roles. They have to be able to understand, engage in and effectively manage their own career-building process. Individual career development is a unique and creative process, influenced by his or her personal characteristics and affected by his or her family, community and cultural values, as well as by geographic, economic and political circumstances (Australian Blueprint..., 2015).

Long-term unemployed social benefits receivers are not able to do so, because everything is connected – social benefits, relationships, job, attitude towards society. It is hard to expect positivity while the basic needs are not covered.

There is a tendency to think that long-term unemployed social benefits receivers are not able to manage their career and that's why they need intervention and help in order to improve social situation there are in. The author considers that long-term unemployed social benefits receivers are their own career managers, but the result is not that successful – they are continuing their career as social service clients and unemployed. The Goal of the professionals involved in work with that type of person is to change attitude and develop skills to move from negative to positive way of acting.

The aim of the study is to define the key elements in terms career and career management that are the most important for long-term unemployed social benefits receivers in order to help professionals involved in work with them to make intervention more precise and effective.

### **Methodology**

Monographic method has been used for this study. Available literature (printed and online versions) about career, career management and unemployment persons was used. The author used sources in Latvian, English and Russian. Previous researches in the field related to the theme of article were used. Statistical data from State Employment Agency was used in order to represent the current level of unemployment in Latvia.

### **Results and discussion**

Working in adults education it is important not only to give them skills and knowledge of a new profession, but also help to understand the world according to the modern development level; to get knowledge how to work with humongous amount of information people get every day; to get and renew communication skills in systems like “human-human”, “human-computer”, “human-computer-human”; to present them the idea about new social-economic situation; to help them explore and improve their own potential (Колесникова, 2007).

Professional plays a role of reconnecting element for an individual who was out of labour market for long period of time and might be afraid of entering it again, because everything changes so fast and being unemployed individual is not aware of modern trends. Professional should help to make the first steps from comfort zone toward a future job.

There is a connection between time spent as unemployed and individual's attitude towards his unemployment –the longer said individual is not working the easier he accepts his status and the lower estimates his opportunity get back into work. That's why we can conclude that helplessness and negativity grow up proportionally to the time spend without job (Леана, Фельдман, 1995).

When working with long-term unemployed social benefit receivers it is important to remember that professionals need to emphasize not only the process of job searching (because it is the goal of professional intervention), but also to maintain their psychological health and help them stay positive and active not only like a job seeker, but also like a human being.

Families (if they have one) are pushing them, because for a family it is also painful that one of the members is not employed, so family might have additional financial risks. Working with long-term

unemployed social benefits receivers it is important to help them maintain positive relationships with family members and in case of need involve them in the process of consulting such a person.

Unemployment has a strong impact on an individual's personality – psychological health, self-acceptance, welfare and self-effectivity (Lee, Johnston, 2001; Creed, Bloxsome, Johnston, 2001).

That's why it is important to use theoretical knowledge about long-term unemployed social benefits receivers while working with them in groups or individually – what kind of changes happens in their acting and thinking. It is good to remember to emphasize that long-term unemployed social benefits receivers are able to study new skills, knowledge, information not only theoretically, but also to use it practically in order to get a job or become more active socially and economically.

Only in the end of the 20th century scientists started to define career not only as change of the position in the work place or just the way to financial welfare. In 1980 D. Super proposed that career is consequent employment, job positions, tasks that person fulfil during life (Super, 1980). In the end of 1990th and at the beginning of the 21st century career is understood as person's life and separate life stage changes (such as work, family, free time). Career is not only connected with the job it is a part of general social activity which is influenced by all decisions made by person (Толочек, 2005).

Career development includes not only profession, but whole person, with his changes and activities. Relationship with important people, responsibility for children, parents, whole structure of obstacles are important to include in career guidance process (Wolfe, Kolb, 1980).

Nowadays the most important role in career took charge. Employers, clients, competition and many other factors asking from person activity, responsibility, ability to adjust fast to a new environment – people are able to change their fields of professional interest widely. Career development is connected not only with getting financial freedom, but also with mental values, possibility to achieve dreams and get satisfaction from process and result (Vorončuka, 2009).

Not only positive types of career are familiar today – long-term unemployed social benefits receivers also are making their career every day – as social service clients, as job seekers. That type of careers might be more or less marginal. They are trying to show their ability to act and achieve something by visiting many governmental organizations in order to receive benefits that they “earned”- it takes a lot of time, energy, strengths. For them it is hard to understand that society is asking from them to seek and find a job (Reardon, Lenz, 1999).

Career is consecutive with job related positions changes, roles and activities which human encounter thought life (Haase, 2007).

Career is a lifelong process of work-related activities and its development is an on-going series of stages characterized by unique concerns, themes and tasks (Simosi, Rousseau, 2015).

While working with long-term unemployed social benefits receivers it is important to emphasize development – it means changes and moving forward from existing situation not only in the work field, but in all life aspects, because starting changes in one of the aspects changes everything. It would be hard to overestimate importance of searching job which is crucial in changing their status of long-term unemployed. Finding job means also changes in financial fields – individual is able to be independent. Being employed also means having positive attitude as well as self-acceptance and mental stability (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Key elements of term “career” in work with long-term unemployed social benefits receivers.

Nowadays individual career can give society not only benefits, but also become a burden and in order to exceed it, individual should be taught how to manage his career, how to plan his future and succeed.

Riga Social Service doesn't offer career management or career development consultations for long-term unemployed social benefits receivers; they are able to get consultations from psychologist and social worker.

Career management is a complicated process during which individual knowledge, skills, and experience in order to create and manage their own career is activated (Australian Blueprint..., 2015).

Speaking about long-term unemployed social benefits receivers and working with them crucial is to find and maintain job, because the lack of it produces huge amount of different problems. While working with them in order to motivate to find a job it is important to emphasize that regular job is very important if they want to function well and fit into society. Nowadays individuals are expected to manage their own careers (McMahon, Tatham, 2008). Long-term unemployed social benefits receivers are able to maintain and manage their own way of marginal career. Professional's goal is to help them to move forward from managing destructive and unproductive types of career.

Career is very closely connected with employability possibility to find, maintain and improve job position or job relationships (Jaunzeme, 2013). Having a corporate job or any other type is important not only for financial result of it (getting regular salary that allows to function independently in society), but also it gives an opportunity to build and improve relationships with people, give and receive from society and develop his/her own personality.

Having a job is not only important for managing career successfully, it is important for having positive career management self-esteem, because people are active their own life obstacle makers and they make changes (wishing it or not) (Bandura, 1977; Бандура, 2000).

Self-esteem and career management self-esteem is second basic element in work with long-term unemployment social benefits receivers.

The key part of successful career management is planning (Figure 2). Mostly, long-term unemployed social benefits receivers have problems with planning not only in term of career, but also in general life planning (Snower, 1994). They are out of "system" living they do not need to get up early every day, be active, be on time, do certain things on time. They do not have a job in their life and said job, mostly, is the main object of planning for people, because it takes a lot of time from daily time amount.

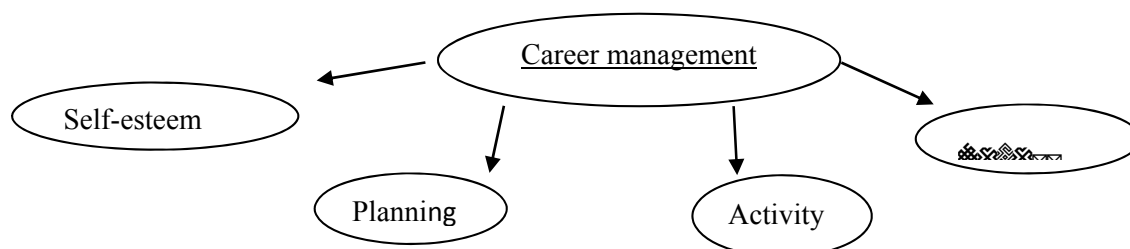


Figure 2. Key elements of term "career management" in work with long-term unemployed social benefits receivers.

Long-term unemployed social benefits receivers in order to improve their social situation and be able to find a job need to have positive self-esteem and be able to plan their life. Not only are these two obstacles important.

According to B. Hiebert career development is a lifelong process of managing learning, work, and transitions which desirable result is achievement of individually significant, self-defined aims approaching desirable life style (Hiebert, 2006). In order to have successful career development individual needs to have a vision of future and how he wants his career to be like, having a vision and planning how to get there means productive career management.

Long-term unemployed social benefits receivers assess their career management as an average (Pāvulēns, Bičkovska, 2013). For professionals it means that target group needs assessment for improving career management, when working with them it is important to emphasize planning, vision (or how they see their future), to raise activity and self-esteem.

Career and career management definitions are crucial in researching reasons of individuals being long-term unemployed social benefits receivers. Persons who now are active clients of Social Service were educated at that period of time when no one thought that it is important to teach children career planning and management that's why most of them are not able to see holistic picture of existing situation as well as services doesn't offer that type of counselling. Author with her further researches and activity in the field is hoping to bring changes and awareness to Riga Social Service in order to create and invent new service for long-term unemployed social benefits receivers.

## Conclusions

When working with long-term unemployed social benefits receivers and researching them it is important to remember and emphasize the following aspects:

- key elements of terms career and career management are found and described in article; during years of researches the understanding of term career changed from job related activities to holistic view on person and all processes that it is involved in;
- working with long-term unemployed social benefits receivers and trying to help them move their career forward it is important to remember that career includes the following aspects – job, finance, changes, mental health, positive attitude; working with career management and improving it, professionals need to emphasize – self-esteem, planning, activity, vision;
- long-term unemployed social benefit receivers are having experience of building marginalized, negative type of career. Professional should help them change way of putting impact from negative to positive, from marginalized to socially acceptable. The role of professional involved in work with long-term unemployed social benefits receivers is to change individual's attitude and moving skills, experience from marginalization to development;
- work might be done and results might be achieved only in case when a person is ready for changes and is willing to work with internal aspects of unemployment; before starting career counselling or any other type of work it is productive to find out individual's attitude towards mentioned questions – if they are strictly negative it is not worth to start collaboration.

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