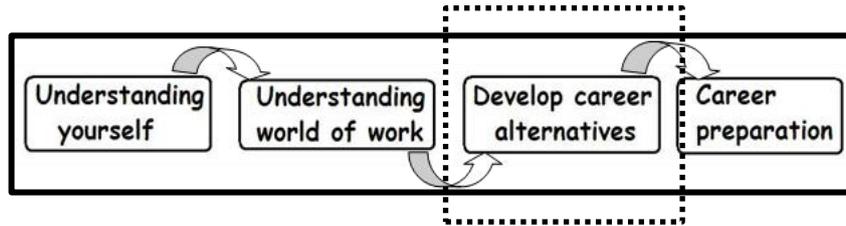


## 5. Career Alternatives



The earlier activities oriented the career aspirant to personal interests and talents, helped identify career beliefs and provided insights into the world of work. The next step is to use the information that has been collected to help the career chooser discover a small group of options that match his/her profile. Having too many options does not allow the career aspirant to develop a clear focus and target for career development. Too few options do not allow for flexibility in career development. The ideal number of Career Alternatives for career aspirants between age 15 and 21 years is between 3 to 4 careers.

A further point to be noted is that Career Alternatives could be broad at the high school stage of career development. For example a young class 10 student may arrive at Engineering, Psychology and Design as her career options. Career exploration rather than commitment to one career path, is still the target at this stage. Creating a framework for exploration is an important task before career counsellor. Career Alternatives continue to play a role as development progresses. Of the three chosen at the high school stage, one maybe selected as the final option. At the next levels of education (e.g., after higher secondary) the young person may finally select Design. It is important to note that an option earlier approached in global terms continues to present opportunities for choice. Within Design for example are many other careers (e.g., Architecture, Interior Design, Jewellery Design, Footwear Design, and so on). It is important to help the individual develop an awareness of the scope of these choices.

The counsellor and the career aspirant work on an occupational list together, using information about interests, aptitudes and the world of work. Career Alternatives are a small group of career options that match the individual's potentials.

### Developing Career Alternatives

The counsellor and the career aspirant work on an occupational list together, using information about interests, aptitudes and the world of work. It is at this stage in the career discovery process that the counsellor's role becomes special and vital. At the most superficial level the counsellor is required to merely help the career aspirant move through the occupational list and explain the nature of each career, scope and future prospects of each career. At a deeper level the counsellor might be required to help the career aspirant reflect on her own reactions to each career. It is now that the effect of factors that are likely to prevent the individual from making effective choices become sharply evident. Working through these issues, lies at the heart of helping the career aspirant arrive at suitable Career Alternatives.

The development of Career Alternatives in a context where career aspirants face poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage requires certain special considerations. Prevailing socioeconomic conditions create career beliefs that block disadvantaged young people from even considering Career Alternatives for themselves. The counsellor's role in this situation goes beyond merely enlisting suitable career options. The objective is to help the young person develop viable Career Alternatives. Counselling interventions must address negative career beliefs.

Most importantly, Career Alternatives generated at this stage in the counselling process must be such that they can be implemented in the short term as well as in the long term. In other words, the

disadvantaged young person needs to have a long term goal, which is his/her actual career development target. He/she also needs to have short term career goals which could function as a bridge across his status of disadvantage toward long term career development. Careful generation of Career Alternatives at this stage creates the foundation upon which a career development bridge could be created for the career aspirant who is a victim of poverty and disadvantage.

### The Career Development Bridge

Entry into the world of work *with* work skills places the economically disadvantaged young person on a career development trajectory that has better future prospects than if he or she were an unskilled labourer. Short, skills based courses could be planned as the young person's 'first step' into the world of work. Courses such as these act as a career development bridge based on which further plans could be made. In other words, a career development bridge could provide an economically disadvantaged young person with a mechanism to delay the need to seek employment in order to meet pressing economic and financial needs.

The most immediate target before the career counsellor therefore is to help these young people begin to consider career development as a real possibility. Career Alternatives that require long term planning and large investments may discourage these young people. The Career Development Bridge offers a *stage-wise approach* to career development. Take the example of a boy from a poor home whose personal profile indicates that he would do well as a graphic designer. Career counselling that merely makes this recommendation would discourage this young man and perhaps push him even more firmly toward unskilled employment. This young person would benefit significantly from counselling interventions that address negative career beliefs and enhance his career preparation self-efficacy. The Career Alternatives he develops could first of all focus on inexpensive short term courses within the broad spectrum of careers in the design industry. The counsellor for example could guide him toward a short course in screen printing. The skills obtained would place him in a position to command a better salary. The counsellor's role now is to facilitate his movement toward the long term objective of becoming a graphic designer by helping him plan his career development accordingly. The counsellor could help him identify government sponsored part-time courses in design. Alternatively, he could be linked up with voluntary organisations, financial institutions such as banks and other supports available at the community level. The counselling objective is to facilitate career development in short, affordable steps that lead toward long term goals.

### Assignment

The final step to complete your self-learning of this unit is to submit a simple assignment.

- Click on the link below. You will be taken to the assignment.
- Click on the **Submit** button at the end of the assignment. Your responses will be sent to us automatically.
- Proceed to the next unit.
- You will receive the evaluation from us.

**Link:** <https://forms.gle/jGRx2etULdHrUcQa7>

**Important:** You must submit all 7 assignments before the face-to-face virtual training session.