The
Cultural Preparedness Approach to Career Development
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Overview

This chapter describes the cultural preparation process model (CPPM) as a framework to understand how culture mediates the process by which individuals and communities engage with their careers and livelihood.

- The key propositions of the CPPM are presented along with its applicational dimension.

- The model as a template for intervention development is discussed with five guidelines.

  - Jiva, a specific intervention based on the CPPM, its impact and outcomes is presented with evidence of outcomes from India and adaptations implemented in other countries.

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Overview

- Applying the CPPM to develop a mixed methods approach to assessment is considered providing the Strengths and Accomplishments Questionnaire, as an example.

  - Children with special needs (dyslexia).
  - Career development needs of immigrants.

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This Presentation…

- The key propositions of the CPPM.

- The model as a template for intervention development is discussed with five guidelines.

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Concept 1: Cultural Learning

- Results just from growing up in a culture.
- Is not the result of reasoned thinking.
- Identification with a source of information.
- Is an unconscious absorption.

Human beings are biologically prepared for culture in ways that other primates are not; the cultural context is understood not merely as '…a facilitator for cognitive development but rather, a unique "ontogenetic niche" (context for development) that actually structures human cognition in fundamental ways' (Tomasello, 2000, p. 37).

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Concept 2: Enculturation

- Process by which people learn the obligations of the culture that enfolds them, assimilate the values of that culture, and acquire the behaviours that are suitable and obligatory in that culture—for specific practices.

- For example, while the practice of greeting another person is an aspect of socialization, the manner of greeting can vary from one culture to another.

Hello!

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Concept 3: Equilibrium

- Habituation to a way of life.
- Mental or emotional balance.
- Internal stability.
- Routinisation of requirements.

It is not about
- right and wrong,
- correct or incorrect,
- appropriate or inappropriate

It is about
How I have been brought up to engage with my world.

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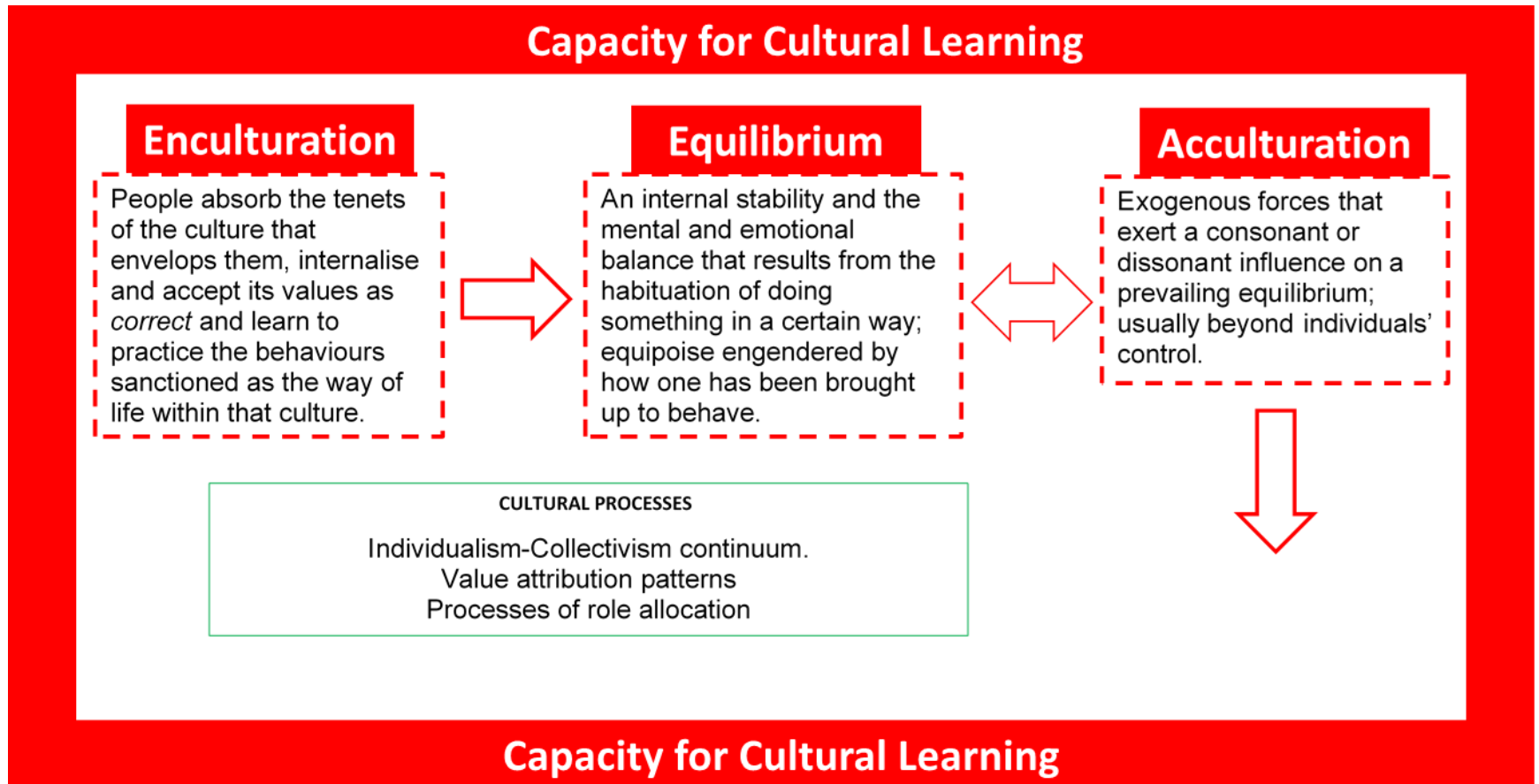**The Promise Foundation**

Concept 4: Acculturation

- External influences on a culture.

- Original cultural patterns can change.

- Usually, it is the minority/submissive group that is required to embrace the living patterns of the dominant group.

Concept 5: Alteration of Equilibrium

- Acculturative forces could be consonant or dissonant with the individual/group's cultural preparation status.

- Consonant acculturation supports, enhances, or further stabilizes the existing career preparation status equilibrium.

- Dissonant acculturation disturbs the existing career preparation status equilibrium.

- Change in economic policy

- Structural changes

- Guidance methodology

- Natural disasters

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Key Concepts

Capacity for Cultural Learning

Enculturation

People absorb the tenets of the culture that envelops them, internalise and accept its values as *correct* and learn to practice the behaviours sanctioned as the way of life within that culture.

Equilibrium

An internal stability and the mental and emotional balance that results from the habituation of doing something in a certain way; equipoise engendered by how one has been brought up to behave.

Acculturation

Exogenous forces that exert a consonant or dissonant influence on a prevailing equilibrium; usually beyond individuals' control.

CULTURAL PROCESSES

Individualism-Collectivism continuum.
Value attribution patterns
Processes of role allocation

Capacity for Cultural Learning

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- natural to that context
- manifestation is spontaneous
- culturally congruent

Mainly industrialised Western cultures

The manifestation of career can be seen in two broad contexts

- work is inherent to broader community life
- apprentice and work-based learning
- culturally alien

Mainly non-industrialised, non-Western cultures

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A template for intervention: Guidelines

1.   Recognise cultural leadership

- The role of external agents: a career development specialist or a theory or model of career development can only be secondary to the already present leadership structure within a cultural system.

"As long there are fish in the sea, there is no need to think of what you describe as "career"!

Island Chief, Kudahuvadoo, Maldives

2. **Expand the definition of "client"**

- Almost all existing career development models emerge from individualistically oriented epistemologies.

- However, in collectivistically organised cultures individuals are expected to conform to the norms and wishes of the community.

"I am a *maistry*. I learnt this job without going to school. Why should my son go to school?"

Self-taught mason, Pondicherry, India

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3. **Identify, valorise and integrate cultural symbols**

- Culturally anchored symbols are manifested in traditions, rituals, language and convention.

- A cultural artefact that is almost ubiquitous in its presence in almost all societies is the story: Legends, folktales, parables, fairytales and myths are receptacles and transmitters of culture and values.
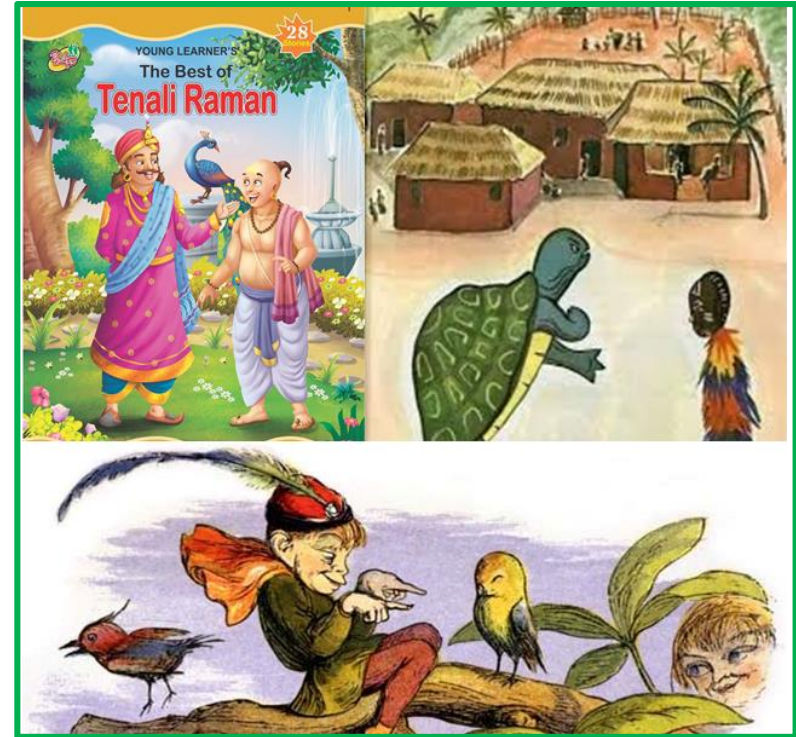
By using the story as a tool for career development, we are drawing upon the possibility of interpreting universal themes into local contexts and at the same time of extending culture-specific themes to broader contexts

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Conclusion

The Cultural Preparedness Model postulates that culture prepares individuals for all life roles including that of a worker.

It views careers work as a consonant acculturative force that could facilitate individuals' and communities' career development within the framework of their cultural preparedness equilibrium.

Rather than replacing ways of living, practicing the cultural preparedness approach entails recognising, acknowledging, and working with prevailing cultural practices.

Thank You!

Should one give away old lamps for new ones or is there value in shining up and re-lighting old lamps?

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