

CAREER COUNSELING PROGRAM

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the National Agency and Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT REALIZED WITHIN THE PROJECT:

Path to Success - Empowering youth for the future through career guidance

KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth

Project no.: 2023-2-RO01-KA220-YOU-000184435

Project website: <https://pathtosuccess.beyoueurope.eu>



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

COORDINATOR
Asociația Be You

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Youthfully Yours SK

Zavod za podjetništvo, turizem in mladino Brežice (ZPTM Brežice)

Fundacja Akcelerator Obywatelski Spark

The Career Counseling Program is available in open source and free to be used as an educational resource.



.zptm



Index

➤ INTRODUCTION	4
➤ Syllabus	9
➤ Guidance for Youth Workers	22
➤ DISCOVER THIS PROGRAM STEP BY STEP	28
➤ Activity overview	29
➤ Labour market dynamics	33
➤ Career readiness	41
➤ Self-knowledge: Who am I?	53
➤ Career and personality	66
➤ Career fields exploration	78
➤ Careers of the future	85
➤ Soft skills exploration	94
➤ Soft skills exploration: Communication	100
➤ Soft skills exploration: Teamwork and leadership	112
➤ Soft skills exploration: Adaptability	120
➤ Soft skills exploration: Problem-solving	130
➤ Personal branding	143
➤ Socio-emotional learning	150
➤ Managing failure and success	159
➤ Job portfolio	165
➤ Interview preparation	178
➤ Social media and career readiness	186
➤ Goal setting	196
➤ Career plan development	204
➤ Assessment	215
➤ CONCLUSIONS	222
➤ APPENDIX: COMPETENCE AND SKILL MATRIX	224
➤ BIBLIOGRAPHY	239

INTRODUCTION

At the moment you read this, there are probably thousands of young people in Europe – most of them school graduates – looking ahead to their future with a lot of distrust and insecurity. Stepping from the hallways of any school in Europe towards the crowded and noisy stairs of an employment agency could be a scary experience, especially for those unaccustomed with it. Job recruiters and employers generally appear unfriendly, cold and distant, unwilling to help you much, while you are under pressure to get a job – and maybe move out of the house. For many, it is very difficult to surpass such a gap. But we believe we can help.

The present Career Counselling Program is part of the *Path to Success* project which was conceived and designed especially for those insecure youth (school graduates) with the purpose of making their transition easier and guiding them towards a future that should not necessarily be insecure. One would think now: all generations were confronted with the problem of integration on the labour market and transition was difficult for everyone. Perhaps this generation is too... delicate and vulnerable. It could be so, but not necessarily. Reliable data from the European Commission and the International Labor Organization demonstrate that, unlike the generations of their parents or grandparents, decades ago, this particular generation is confronted with additional challenges deriving from the impact of technology and the rhythm of changes.

The increasing dynamic of the economy where services and products are constantly subjected to transformations while the demand is very selective and pretentious in relation to the offer determines a very intense rhythm of transformation in what concerns economic activity. Therefore, the need for specialized labour force is not only high, but also in continuous change. Companies need highly skilled labour force with many digital, technological and innovative abilities in order to respond to the challenges of the market, especially since most companies permanently struggle to improve products and services, to innovate and run ahead of their competitors while maintaining reasonable prices and all requires mobilization of both work and imagination, ingenuity and perseverance. European statistical data reveals that a large number of companies in the EU are in terrible lack of skilled labour force which impedes upon their economic performance. Changes on the market determine changes in the skills required from employees and formal education can hardly keep up the pace. Apart from that, people themselves are required to change and adapt very quickly to new circumstances which – coming back to the initial idea – makes the professional environment of the current generation much more challenging than before. Finally, globalization and freedom of movement increase competition because

the labour market is not closed as before and generally allows competition for jobs and professions from numerous other countries all over the EU.

Adapting to such challenges is not easy, even for the best school graduates because adaptation requires not only good skills, but also the capacity to find the most suitable job and to advertise your skills correctly and convincingly in a labour market of which school graduates know almost nothing about. It also requires the capacity to adapt and acquire new skills permanently, to improve and reinvent your abilities according to changes in socio-economic context. Further statistical data from the European Commission reveals that more than four million young people in the European Union are unemployed which represents a major problem from both a social and economic perspective. There are many causes which generate such a situation but one of them is insufficient career guidance in schools. Certainly, most schools in Europe implement career counselling at various levels but the absence of holistic programs, of reliable support materials, of innovative and attractive tools, they all reduce the efficiency of such counselling initiatives. This program intends to compensate that absence.

When it comes to schools and education, the role of this program is complementary in its nature and aims to add up and supplement what schools are doing, providing new instruments and new solutions for problems that schools are rarely designed to address. Considering the relation between education and career, our project focuses on a key moment in the life of any young person: transition. School environments can be rather warm for children and young people, educators are trained to surround them with warmth and friendship, to encourage their development, both intellectual and emotional, to support their transformation into adults. On the other hand, the labour-market environment can be very different. It is competitive, challenging, selective and certainly less-friendly. There is hardly anyone interested in encouraging a young adult looking for a job or providing support for young people beginning their careers. Employers, companies, institutions etc. have their own problems to address and young people on the labour market are only interesting to them as long as they manage to satisfy an internal economic need. Making the step from the school environment to the labour-market environment can be very mystifying for young people.


In order to find their way in this confusing world of jobs, skills, employment and competition, young people need something new: career education. This is an independent field of study which does not require only knowledge or information, but also experimentation, distinct competences and abilities, specially-trained youth workers and so forth. Most of the schools in Europe have insufficient time or resources to address this topic independently or extensively. Curricula offers limited time and

topics for career education and most of the teachers – although willing – are either insufficiently trained in the field or insufficiently supported by existing resources. This project intends to compensate by providing specialized training to youth workers and resources to both youth workers and teachers so that career education may receive the attention it deserves, only for the benefit of those young people stepping for the first time on the stairs of that employment agency.

Career education provides information and competencies concerning: career selection according to one's interests and abilities, labour-market rules and functioning, identification of opportunities, steps necessary to obtain a job etc. Apart from that, *career management* concerns the decisions one has to make in order to select a career but also to sustain its progress by cultivating certain skills and abilities, selecting the best choices for jobs, adapting to changes and the life-long learning process which is necessary in order to respond to current-day challenges. Both fields have their own specificity, their own rules and their own contents. This career counselling program provides elements of content from both fields – and others – aiming to guide the beneficiaries through the complicated journey of professional life.


The Career Counselling Program presented here is distinct from many other similar programs through some features which emphasize its innovation. Firstly, it is addressed especially to youth workers as a resource at hand aimed to facilitate their work and increase its qualitative level for the benefit of the young people. Secondly, it was designed and elaborated especially for a particular age group 14–24, responding to its particular needs and expectations, providing guidance in selecting and managing both career choices (as long-term endeavours) but also job applications (which may or may not be permanent). Thirdly, the diversity of its content offers a holistic and integrated approach to career counselling because it addresses concomitantly the professional, emotional and social implications of career options, thereby supporting the decision-making process on multiple levels.

This program helps explain what the labour-market is and how it works but also how a young person may adapt to it, and how to find the best ways for successful insertion. Furthermore, it guides young people in making informed choices, emphasizing the importance of being aware of one's interests and abilities when selecting a certain profession. Successful job applications and career choices depend on the correlation between the abilities one has and the abilities wanted by the employer for a particular job or profession. Knowing how the market works and what you need to do in order to succeed would provide an encouraging start for any young person climbing the stairs of the employment agency. Once these conditions are fulfilled, another major challenge



is to “advertise yourself” – in other words, be able to present and explain in a convincing manner that you do master the abilities and competencies that the employer is looking for. Managing one’s emotions along the way is yet another challenge.

In their effort to support young people in making informed career choices, youth workers shall find consistent support in this Career Counselling Program. The Syllabus below explains clearly what type of content is available to them, what are the best methodological approaches and also provides additional guidance for implementation. The workshop scenarios designed cover a wide variety of inter-connected topics which all focus around one single ambition: how to help young people find good jobs.



Syllabus

Program Description

This program of career counseling represents an innovative and holistic approach based on the experience of several partner organizations from different countries, capitalizing on their expertise in working with young people in the field of career counseling. Activating in different contexts and with different age groups, the partner organizations have accumulated various experiences which may contribute to a complex and nuanced program, providing synergies and complementarities. This way, the program has a considerable transnational component. Also, prior to its development, surveys and questionnaires were applied among similar organizations with the purpose of identifying and selecting good practices in the field, so that the content presented below would actually reflect the experience of those working in the field and respond to present-day challenges.

The present program provides an integrated solution consisting in a series of 16 topics related to career counseling, elaboration of content for the respective topics, theoretical explanations aimed to assist the facilitator, methodological guidance aimed to ensure efficient implementation, workshop scenarios and other resources. These elements are combined in a participant-oriented approach which intends to support the development of skills necessary for a successful integration on the labor market.

This career counseling program is addressed to youth workers, trainers, educators and facilitators working in both formal and non-formal education with the intention to support and facilitate their work in career counseling by reducing the time necessary for documentation and planning and by delivering methods and solutions which had proven their efficiency in the past.

Its overall aim is to support and improve the insertion of young people on the labor market, including disadvantaged youth by improving the career counseling provided to young people by trainers and facilitators inside or outside school framework.

Objectives

1. To provide youth workers with the instruments necessary in their work on career counseling.
2. To improve the skills and techniques of youth workers who undertake activities on career counseling with young people.

3. To provide young people with interactive solutions aimed to facilitate their understanding of the career challenges and opportunities.
4. To assist young people in defining their career options and preferences.
5. To facilitate the understanding of the labor market by young people.
6. To develop good control and knowledge of job application steps and procedures such as interviews, CVs, job search portals etc.
7. To encourage young people to explore the social and emotional implication of both their career choices and of job applications.
8. To stimulate a positive and confident approach to career choices and job applications in order to overcome potential failure and persevere in pursuing personal goals.
9. To foster flexibility and adaptability in the way young people approach careers and jobs, emphasizing the need to change according to new opportunities.
10. To support young people in making informed choices about careers and professions, exploring multiple variants according to their skills.
11. To improve the quality of the assistance provided by trainers/facilitators to young people in need of career counseling.
12. To provide young people from disadvantaged groups with adapted and personalized assistance in order to reduce the gap in opportunities which exists in relation with more advantaged youth groups.

Learning Outcomes

Upon finishing this program successfully:

1. Participants would have the capacity to identify and select relevant information from the labor market concerning existing opportunities.
2. Participants would be able to make informed choices about careers, connecting relevant information from the labor market with their own skills and abilities.
3. Participants would have the capacity to evaluate their own interests and talents and determine which skills and abilities they wish to develop in the future in order to improve their opportunities on the labor market.
4. Participants would demonstrate proficiency in using tools and instruments related to job applications such as interviews, CVs etc.
5. Participants would exert improved control over their own emotions when making career-related choices or performing the steps necessary for job applications.
6. Participants would understand the benefits of adaptability and flexibility in career-related choices, maintaining an alert and well-informed attitude in what concerns labor-market dynamics.

7. Participants would be able to engage in dialogue with peers or job recruiters, to express points of view, request information or provide information according to criteria or relevance.
8. Participants from disadvantaged groups would demonstrate improved abilities to access job opportunities and capitalize their skills and abilities on a competitive labor market.

Methodology

The methodology suggested for the implementation of this career counseling program is student-oriented and is intended to produce learning outcomes in line with the objectives and overall scope of the action. Therefore, the teaching methods advanced for each element of content are active-participatory and focus on experiential learning in a non-formal framework.

The teaching methods are shaped in accordance with each element of content and adapted to its specificity as listed below. Given the integrated approach of the program, most elements of content require similar teaching methods but their application varies according to the topic and the receptivity of the group. In a non-formal learning framework, the facilitator must focus not on transferring knowledge but rather on creating suitable conditions for the participants to experiment, simulate, imitate real-life situations. Guidance and steering on part of the facilitator should focus on the three basic elements of experiential learning: firstly, experimenting new situations, secondly reflecting on the experience and drawing conclusions from it, and thirdly, applying those conclusions to new contexts. Further details are provided in the section “Guidance for Youth Workers.”

A list of learning methods is provided below in relation to elements of content suitable for application:

Learning methods & approaches	Elements of content suitable for application
Collaborative learning	Labour market dynamics; Soft skills exploration; Personal branding; Socio-emotional learning; Interview preparation; Goal setting
Problem-based learning	Careers of the future; Managing failure and success; Social media and career readiness; Career plan development
Inquiry-based learning	Career fields exploration; Careers of the future; Socio-emotional learning; Job portfolio; Interview preparation
Discussion & debate	Career readiness; Career and personality; Soft skills exploration; Goal setting; Career plan development
Differentiated instruction	Soft skills exploration; Socio-emotional learning; Goal setting
Peer-teaching	Career fields exploration; Careers of the future; Personal branding; Socio-emotional learning; Managing failure and success
Questioning & brainstorming	Career readiness; Career and personality; Soft skills exploration
Independent learning	Labour market dynamics; Personal branding; Managing failure and success; Job portfolio; Career plan development
Case studies	Career fields exploration; Careers of the future; Managing failure and success; Career plan development
Blended-learning	Labour market dynamics; Career fields exploration; Careers of the future; Job portfolio; Interview preparation; Social media and career readiness

Requirements

Participation in this program is dependent on certain conditions:

- cognitive skills such as: capacity to remember information, ability to explain the meaning of the information, capacity to use abstractions to describe concrete

situations, ability to analyze data by breaking down an entirety into its component parts, capacity of synthesis; youth of gymnasium-level education generally fulfill these conditions according to EU standards in the field of education;

- organizational conditions: the existence of an institutional/organizational framework (either formal or non-formal) which complies with the legal conditions necessary for undertaking youth activities;
- social requirements: the participation of a group of young people who manifest interest for the topics as well as the objective need to improve their chances at insertion on the labor market; their age should be above 13 and below 30 but maintaining a range of maximum 5 years between the youngest and the oldest in the group; a youth worker/facilitator with at least 3 years of experience in youth work.

Completing this program successfully involves the following achievements:

- completing the tasks assigned by the facilitators during each workshop;
- providing meaningful and well-measured answers to the questions and queries which would be discussed during each workshop;
- engaging in dynamic interactions with the other participants with the mind open to receive and transmit messages and conclusions;
- pro-active attitude concerning the contents discussed;
- availability to accept change and transformation, to redefine goals and expectations according to social and labor-market context.

Required materials

- Hall/room with sufficient seats to fit the number of participants (numbers can vary according to local conditions and organizational decisions; there is no standard requirement in what concerns the number of participants but at least 10–15 would usually be necessary in order to provide efficient social and peer inter-relations as required by the workshop scenarios.
- Paper and other stationery products necessary in order to fill in charts, lists, questionnaires etc.
- Internet access and the equipment necessary in order to use it (computers, tablets etc.)

Content structure

No.	Element of content	Specific competencies
1	Labour market dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding the dynamics of the labour market and the factors influencing changes. • Being able to actively monitor changing trends in the labour market and adapt to them. • Applying the theory learned to practical tasks during workshops and everyday life. • Being more aware of changes in the labour market and more open to them.
2	Career readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing job posting and their demands to evaluate information critically and anticipate application success. • Familiarizing themselves with various digital tools and platforms, boosting their confidence and competence in navigating modern technological environments. • Understanding the benefits of international opportunities in long-term career planning. • Identifying their shortcomings in career readiness and anticipating what steps to take to improve career readiness.
3	Self-knowledge: Who am I?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding personal values, emotions, interests, and strengths. • Deepening self-understanding and making well-informed career choices. • Evaluating career opportunities based on alignment with personal values, strengths, and career attractiveness factors. • Understanding career attractiveness factor and articulating personal insights and career goals effectively.

4	Career and personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the six personality types in the RIASEC model (realistic, artistic, investigative, social, enterprising, conventional) and how these types relate to careers. • Identifying their personality traits. • Establishing the connection between their personality traits, various career fields, and potential choices, leading to informed career decisions.
5	Career fields exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the key characteristics, skills, and requirements of different professions. • Analyzing career paths and evaluating professional opportunities based on individual strengths and aspirations. • Comparing and contrasting different career options. • Enhancing communication, collaboration, and creative thinking. • Strengthening decision-making and problem-solving abilities in real-life professional scenarios.
6	Careers of the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to identify key changes in the labor market and predict which professions and skills will be most sought after in the future. • Ability to plan their career taking into account future industries and necessary competences. • Developing teamwork skills, creative thinking and effective communication. • Gaining knowledge and skills on how to cope with dynamic changes in the world of work and how to adapt their competences to new challenges through continuous improvement and acquisition of new skills.

7	Soft skills exploration	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing and de-escalating conflicts, addressing misunderstandings, managing difficult situations by using assertive communication and active listening. • Enhancing interpersonal communication that will serve them well in the workplace, helping them build better and more resilient relationships with colleagues. • Improving mental health by setting boundaries in the workplace environment, which leads to reducing stress, work overload and better managing high-pressure situations. <p>Teamwork and leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding different roles within a team and their responsibilities, while balancing personal opinions with group consensus. • Expressing ideas clearly and persuasively under stress, and pressure while engaging in constructive debates and professional discussions. • Evaluating risks and consequences before making decisions that affect others, and understanding teamwork as a professional community with organizational hierarchy and role responsibilities. • Gaining confidence in public speaking and formal discussions. • Recognizing how different leadership styles impact team dynamics and understanding your values within. <p>Adaptability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a growth mindset.
---	-------------------------	---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating career change while adjusting to new situations, therefore remaining flexible in career planning. • Understanding personal strengths and areas for growth in career adaptability, leading to more informed decision-making. • Developing action plans to enhance weaker adaptability dimensions and setting clear, achievable career improvement steps in adaptability. <p>Problem-solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people will develop the ability to think critically, identify problems, and come up with practical solutions, even when faced with unexpected challenges • Young people will learn different problem-solving techniques. • Young people will develop resilience: to recover and stay motivated after setbacks or challenges. Resilient individuals can cope with failure, adapt to changes, and maintain focus on long- term goals despite obstacles or disappointments.
8	Personal branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to articulate and present a clear, authentic, and consistent personal identity that aligns with individual values, skills, and aspirations, promoting a positive impression in both personal and professional interactions. • Learning how to enhance their online presence through professional platforms. • Gaining confidence in networking and presenting themselves effectively. • Creating an adaptable strategy for updating their personal brand as they grow.

9	Socio-emotional learning (identifying emotions, emotion management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions while empathizing with others, developing stronger interpersonal relationships and effective conflict resolution. • Applying emotion regulation techniques to manage stress and conflict. • Developing strategies for applying socio-emotional learning in personal and professional contexts.
10	Managing failure and success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to recover, learn, and grow from obstacles while maintaining a balanced perspective on achievements and challenges, using them as stepping stones for personal and professional growth. • The ability to embrace challenges and view failures as opportunities for learning, creating a mindset that values persistence and continuous improvement. • Learning how to apply lessons from failure and success in academic, professional, and personal contexts.
11	Job portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about their strengths and learn to use them consciously. • Gaining a clear vision of the future, which will help them make decisions and set priorities. • Creating specific action plans, thanks to which their dreams and goals will become more achievable. • Building motivation to act, learning how to consistently implement their intentions. • Strengthening their sense of agency, thanks to working on positive experiences and opportunities.

12	Interview preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a logical connection between one's skills and abilities, on one hand, and the skills and abilities wanted by a potential employer for a particular job. • Selecting and describing those skills and abilities which the candidate possesses in a creative and convincing manner. • Managing one's emotions in such a way as not to impair the performance in front of an interview commission. • Anticipating the sequencies and successive steps of a job interview in a real-life situation in order to avoid unexpected or unanticipated evolutions which may disrupt the candidate's performance in front of a commission. • Obtaining and processing real-life feedback in a simulation of a job interview situation in order to familiarize oneself with the specificity of an interview.
13	Social media and career readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to prepare a post and evaluate interesting content. • Learning 10 rules for an effective social media profile. • Ability to recognize what content should be included on social media. • Learning how important it is to build a professional image on the Internet – for example in the context of job searching.
14	Goal setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to set clear, achievable goals aligned with personal or organizational objectives, and systematically plan and implement steps to achieve them • Distinguishing between short-term and long-term goals and how they interact • Learning to create SMART goals and break them into actionable steps.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building motivation and persistence by tracking progress and celebrating milestones.
15	Career plan development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying their skills, values, and interests in relation to career choices. • Setting both short-term and long-term career goals and breaking them down into manageable steps. • Creating a concrete career map, including defining obstacles and resources needed. • Developing strategies to overcome barriers and identifying potential solutions to challenges. • Strengthening their belief in their abilities to achieve career goals and manage uncertainties.
16	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing self-assessment skills by learning how to critically evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and career progress using structured self-assessment tools. • Improving the ability to create, interpret, and apply feedback surveys to measure personal growth and program effectiveness. • Strengthening their ability to analyze assessment results and translate insights into meaningful career and learning adjustments. • Using assessment findings to establish short-term and long-term career goals that align with their skills and aspirations. • Learning to view assessments and feedback as opportunities for continuous improvement rather than judgment, promoting adaptability in career planning.

Evaluation

The evaluation of this program would be done in phases corresponding to different moments of the implementation, according to professional evaluation methodologies. Three types of evaluation shall be used for this purpose:

- A. *Formative evaluation*: conducted by the facilitator during each activity by means of direct observation, dialogue etc., noticing the ways in which participants react to the proposed workshop scenario, how they respond to the tasks, how they adapt to each other, their involvement in the activity;
- B. *Summative evaluation*: conducted by the facilitator at the end of each activity by means of direct observation, questionnaires or feedback forms for the purpose of establishing the measure in which participants managed to assimilate and internalize the notions discussed and the situations experimented;
- C. *Outcome evaluation*: conducted at the end of the program, after all 16 workshops are concluded, in order to determine the measure in which new competences were acquired, how the behavior of the participant has changed, how ready he/she is to approach the labor market directly by applying for jobs.

Evaluation methods suggested:

- formative evaluation: analysis of participants' work and behavior; questioning, observation;
- summative evaluation: assignments, projects, questionnaires;
- outcome evaluation: questionnaires, interviews.

Guidance for Youth Workers

Youth workers, trainers, teachers, educators at all levels work very hard to help young people improve their chances of insertion on the labor market and success in their careers. However, sometimes the instruments and tools necessary to support their work are either missing or insufficient. This program is addressed to all those workers who assumed the responsibility to change young people's lives and aims to ease their effort and assist them in the mission they took upon themselves.

It goes without saying that the success of such an endeavor depends very much on the dedication, personal involvement, charisma and talent of each youth worker involved. When it comes to human relations, especially if it means reaching out to young people, the assertiveness and intuition of the youth worker is fundamental in creating a relation of trust and convincing young people to open up. In this sense, creativity and ingenuity are the keys to a successful workshop. However, a little advice here and there could do wonders. A youth worker takes an immense burden upon his/her shoulders when showing up in front of a group of teenagers and the coherency and consistency of the intervention often depend on a good strategy. This section comes to your help by providing methodological guidance which could support you in devising efficient strategies, in finding solutions, in innovating.

What is experiential learning?

Most youth workers and educators are familiar with the concept. For the sake of argumentation, let us remember that according to definitions, experiential learning means "learning by doing." It is a model of education and training which focuses on the participant and the formation of competences and abilities through direct action followed by reflection on the actions undertaken. Experiential learning regards experience as a primary method of learning. According to theory, experiential learning consists of four different stages:

- concrete experience: when the participant actually does something practical, an action from which lessons could be drawn, information obtained or abilities developed;
- reflective observation: when the participant sits back and thinks about what he/she did, how it went, how it felt, what went wrong or right;
- abstract conceptualization: when the participant, knowing how things go, decides to do it again in a different way; this time, the participant knows what he/she is doing and makes conscious decision based on the information obtained or the ability developed;

- active experimentation: when the participant does it again, applies new approaches and tries new ways according to what has already been learnt before.

In this sense, the youth worker's most important responsibility is to create the environment necessary for direct action, to provide the content of the experiential learning and to offer possibilities of reflection and conceptualization so that the participant could actually internalize the process.

For example, let's consider participant Andy. In a simulation of a job interview without prior preparation, Andy would present himself and his CV, trying to convince the interviewer that he should be selected. During the interview, Andy received unexpected questions for which he was not really prepared and therefore his answers were partially incoherent. After this phase (concrete experience), Andy would have to reflect on what happened. The youth worker can direct this process and guide Andy through carefully-chosen questions: "Is there something you disliked about your presentation?" After reflective observation, the youth worker could encourage Andy towards taking initiative based on what he already noticed (active experimentation) and direct him through further questioning: "Is there something you would do differently?" In a repetition of the interview, Andy would most certainly have the answers prepared. The youth worker could also encourage his initiative in the phase of active experimentation by suggestions: "You could just include answers to those questions in your presentation so that the questions would become redundant; this way, you gain control..."

Experiential learning is provocative in the sense that it engages the most important abilities of a youth worker, from both an educational and a psychological point of view. In order to avoid potential failure, the youth worker could visualize the scenario beforehand in the perspective of experiential learning and compile a list of questions/suggestions to use during activity. Also, after each activity, it is recommended that the youth worker makes notes with his impressions, emphasizing the difficulties encountered (in order to anticipate them in other workshops) and also questions/interventions which proved very efficient in generating a positive response from participants.

This way, the youth workers learn along with the participants and both have a chance to improve themselves through a shared experience.

When planning your workshop, you may wish to consider...

- ✓ documenting well on the topic and preparing lists of potential questions so that you would not be surprised by an unexpected evolution of the debates;
- ✓ ensuring a proper organization: have the needed materials nearby so as to avoid unwanted breaks caused by the absence of a certain resource; such breaks alter the flow of the workshop and ruin concentration; according to the duration of the workshop, you may wish to include a break in your planning;
- ✓ keeping an eye on the clock, both when you allocate time for different sequences of the workshop and when the workshop is under way; participants may prove to be very interested and energetic on a certain topic but if you allow discussion to flow naturally, it may take a very long time and undermine overall coherency; allocate reasonable segments of time and stick to them;
- ✓ adapting to the specificity of the group in terms of age or social background; there may be major differences between a group aged 14–15 and a group aged 17–18; also, there may be a major difference between a group of disadvantaged youth coming from isolated rural areas and a group coming from elite schools in major cities; in all these cases, examples or questions should be properly adapted;
- ✓ maintaining a steady rhythm between different sections of the workshop: you do not need to dwell too much on a section but you do not need to accelerate either; participants need time to interact and get to know each other;
- ✓ creating a friendly-environment in which all participants could feel comfortable and willing to speak up; in order to achieve that, it is essential to remember that they would rarely be shy/embarrassed in relation to you but more likely they would feel shy/embarrassed in relation to each other (for example: boys versus girls, social conventions and prejudices often determines them to hide their real feelings in order to avoid looking vulnerable); it is essential for any non-formal workshop relying on experiential learning to benefit of constructive and sincere interpersonal relations among the participants;

When conducting your workshop, you may wish to consider...

- ✓ *Peer-teaching*: when participants take the role of both facilitator and learner; this is highly efficient because it obligates them to structure content and formulate explanations as to make themselves well understood; on one hand, it is a valuable exercise of rhetoric and argumentation which could be used in different contexts on the labor-market; on the other hand, pedagogical studies had revealed that it is much more efficient than traditional methods because

students usually understand better from one another, having no barrier of mentality or language;

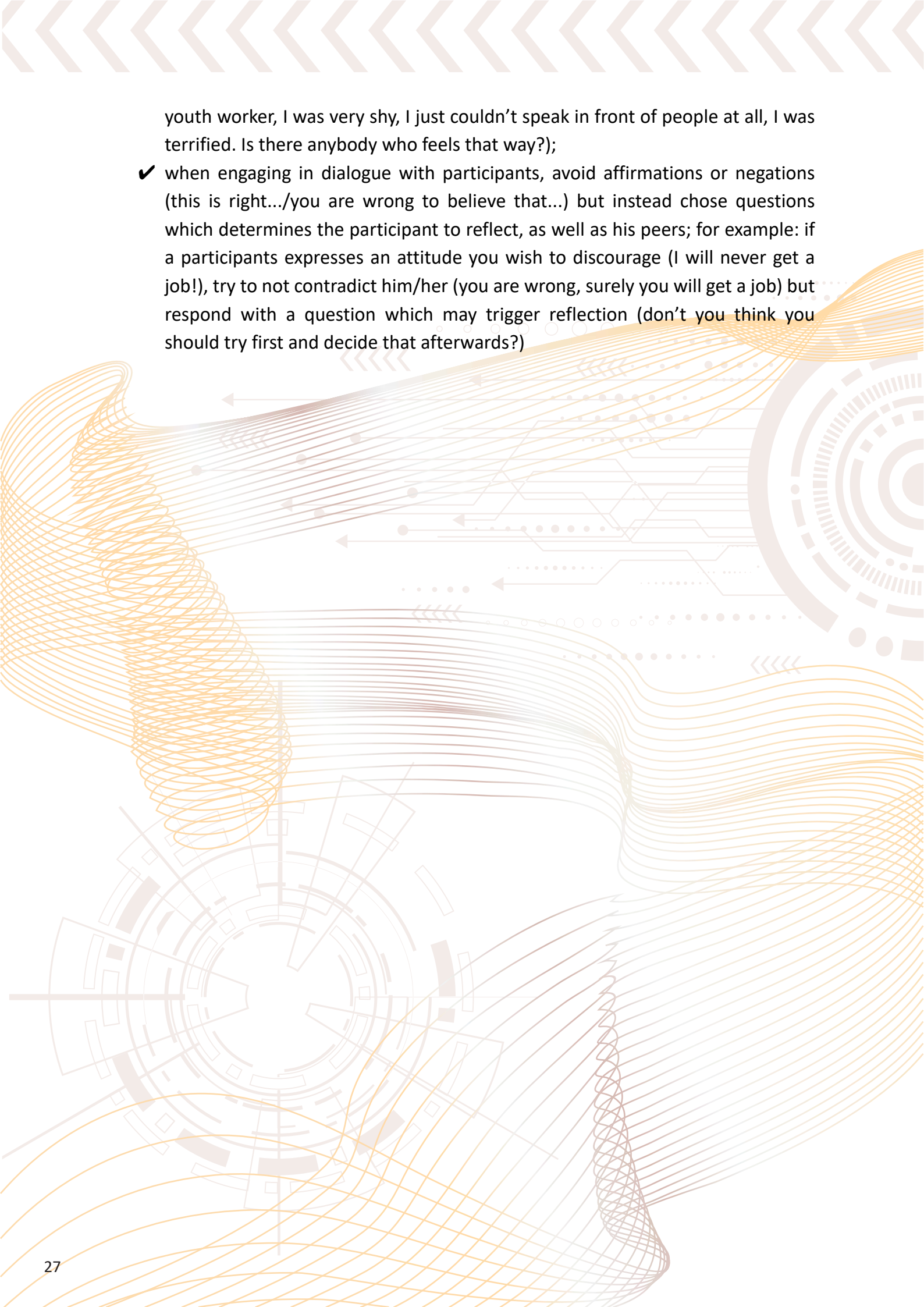
- ✓ *Collaborative learning*: when participants are divided in small groups and given tasks to resolve in group; participants have to work together, to explain their points of view to one another, to be receptive to the arguments of a colleague and compromise in order to reach consensus; it is a learning method which contributes to the formation of various other skills and abilities, apart from the concrete learning tasks provided by the youth worker;
- ✓ *Problem-based learning*: when participants are provided with a real-life problem to examine and they have to discover information and concepts while analyzing the respective problem in groups; in such case, the participants have to examine the problem on many sides, differentiate what they know from what they don't, explore various solutions to solve the problem and later present their conclusions;
- ✓ *Inquiry-based learning*: when participants are invited to discover and learn notions and concepts through inquiry; such inquiries should be raised by themselves while the mission of the youth worker is to create the framework necessary by selecting a particular learning task, usually related to real-life problems; a simple example of how inquiry-based learning can be applied is represented by open debates on a given topic: in this case, participants must ask different kinds of questions covering a multitude of aspects but also reflect on potential answers and explore other points of view;
- ✓ *Differentiated instruction*: when participants are given different tasks with varying degrees of difficulty from which they can choose according to their own particular interests; it is a form of instruction tailor to each participant's needs, providing flexibility and a chance for each individual to approach a problem of personal significance; this is especially necessary when dealing with different skills and abilities, different choices in careers and so forth;
- ✓ *Independent learning*: when participants are given tasks that allow them to have full control over the educational process, to manage their time and resources independently, to focus on particular aspect of personal interest and set their own goals; in this case, the youth worker is only responsible for providing the framework (deciding on the topics or deciding on the type of results expected) and supervising the process in case assistance is needed.

In the Syllabus, youth workers can find a table where various learning methods are related to various elements of content as suggestions aimed at making their work easier. However, any youth worker should use imagination, experience and creativity

when selecting the proper teaching method for different elements of content in the present program.

When evaluating the activity, you may wish to consider...

- ✓ quantitative indicators: they are to be determined according to the specificity of each workshop in particular and must refer primarily to the number of participants who manifested improved skills following the activity; usually such indicators are easy to obtain by applying questionnaires in the final phase of the workshop; please bear in mind that questions must be specific in order to avoid polite statements of satisfaction and should offer a grading scale for more precision; in this sense, you should avoid formulations such as: were you pleased with what you learnt today? – most participants would usually answer yes but that could provide a false impression of success; instead, you may choose a scale for measuring satisfaction, such as: in a scale of 1 to 5 (in which 1 is the lowest indicators and 5 is the highest indicator), how satisfied were you with...;
- ✓ qualitative indicators: they are much for difficult to asses and may require you expertise and talent as youth worker; on one hand, you can add special queries in the questionnaires (for example, in Interview preparation: chose one of the following answers in order to express how prepared for a job interview do you feel now: a) more emotionally prepared; b) less emotionally prepared; c) interview practice is clearer to me now; d) I am not sure I understood how to behave at an interview... (please add further choices; the more nuanced and varied they are, the better chance they have to actually catch a glimpse of the qualitative progress made by the participant);
- ✓ do not rely on questionnaires and formal instruments of evaluation solely; trust your experience and expertise, rely on your intuition in order to detect and perceive cognitive and emotional changes your participants may go through; when unsure, please address questions or allow a certain participant to speak up because dialogue had the capacity to reflect changes of behavior very well; this is the purpose of formative evaluation which may help you guide your participants towards the desired outcomes;
- ✓ maintain an assertive attitude during workshop because it would facilitate your formative evaluation; encourage the participants' self-esteem by focusing on their qualities; remain attentive to the features of personality manifested by each participant (for example: avoid making a shy student stand up before class as he/she may feel discomfort and failure to convince may further reduce his/her self-esteem; instead, try to build a situation in which he/she would chose to stand up free-willingly by creating a comfortable context: before being a



youth worker, I was very shy, I just couldn't speak in front of people at all, I was terrified. Is there anybody who feels that way?);

- ✓ when engaging in dialogue with participants, avoid affirmations or negations (this is right.../you are wrong to believe that...) but instead chose questions which determines the participant to reflect, as well as his peers; for example: if a participants expresses an attitude you wish to discourage (I will never get a job!), try to not contradict him/her (you are wrong, surely you will get a job) but respond with a question which may trigger reflection (don't you think you should try first and decide that afterwards?)

DISCOVER THIS PROGRAM STEP BY STEP

Activity overview

Here we are: you are ready to discover this program step by step. This section provides various activities in the area of career counseling, including key components, detailed instructions, and tips on the program's implementation. Each activity in the program is structured to provide a comprehensive learning experience focused on career development.

The Career Counseling Program consists of 19 structured activities of 60 to 120 minutes, each designed to support young people in their career development journey. Every activity incorporates essential components for effective implementation. These components ensure that the facilitator is fully prepared for implementation and that participants gain valuable insights, develop key competencies, and apply learned strategies to real-world career planning and decision-making.

Workshops implementation can be done by professionals working with youth such as youth workers, trainers, educators, or teachers. The term used in this Program - "facilitator" – refers to the person conducting the workshops.

Therefore, you are kindly invited to look at topics and summaries of activities as well as the legend, both helping choose the right activity for your group.

Activities

Labour market dynamics – Introduces key labour market trends, helping participants understand employment structures, job sectors, and economic influences. It provides an overview of demand and supply in various industries.

Career readiness – Focuses on assessing participants' current career preparedness, addressing skills gaps, and setting development goals. The workshop encourages self-reflection and action planning for entering the job market.

Self-knowledge: Who am I? – Encourages participants to explore their strengths, weaknesses, and personal values. Through self-assessment tools, they identify key personal and professional attributes.

Career and personality – Explores the connection between personality types and career choices using psychological and career assessment tools. Participants reflect on how their traits align with different career paths.

Career fields exploration – Introduces various industries and professions, helping participants explore career options based on interests and competencies. Activities include researching job roles and required qualifications.

Careers of the future – Examines emerging job trends influenced by technological advancements and societal changes. Participants analyze future work opportunities and skill demands.

Soft skills exploration (4 workshops) – Focuses on developing essential soft skills. Through practice activities, participants enhance communication, listening, teamwork, leadership, adaptability, and problem solving abilities in the work environment.

Crafting your personal brand – Guides participants in building their brand by defining their unique value, creating professional profiles, and improving their online presence. Exercises include branding statements and networking strategies.

Socio-emotional learning – Helps participants understand and manage their emotions to improve personal and professional interactions. Emotional intelligence exercises foster resilience and self-awareness.

Managing failure and success – Teaches coping strategies for setbacks and achievements in career progression. Participants reflect on personal experiences and learn from case studies.

Job portfolio – Focuses on compiling a career portfolio that highlights skills, experience, and achievements. Participants create a structured presentation of their professional journey.

Interview preparation – Prepares participants for job interviews by practicing self-presentation, answering common questions, and managing nerves. Simulations provide real-world experience.












Social media and career readiness – Highlights the role of professional networking and social media in job searching. Participants analyze LinkedIn profiles and create posts to improve their online image.


Goal setting – Introduces the SMART framework for setting and achieving career goals. Participants develop action plans and learn strategies for maintaining motivation.

Career plan development – Assists participants in mapping long-term career paths, setting milestones, and identifying necessary skills. Activities include career timeline creation and mentorship discussions.

Assessment – Guides participants in using self-assessment tools to evaluate their skills and career progress. The session emphasizes continuous learning and adaptability.

Legend

-  (book) — theoretical introduction: the topic is being introduced and explored.
-  (target) — objectives: describes the main goal or purpose of the activity.
-  (trophy) — competencies: refers to the skills, knowledge, or abilities participants will gain.
-  (tools) — methodological approach: the methods, techniques, strategies and learning approaches employed.
-  (people) participants — the individuals involved in the activity, referring to the number or types of participants needed.
-  (checklist) — needed resources: the list of resources or materials required to carry out the activity effectively.
-  (hourglass) — duration: the time allocation for the activity, indicating how long it should last.
-  (playbutton) — workshop scenario: the actual sequence of the activity, it describes what will happen step-by-step.
-  (speech bubble) — debriefing and conclusions: a moment to reflect on the outcomes of the activity, discuss lessons learned, and summarize the experience.
-  (question mark) — questions to reflect on: thought-provoking questions that help participants reflect on the activity or learning outcomes.
-  (key) — emphasizing conclusions: important takeaways or insights that should be highlighted at the end of the session.



📌 (pin) — useful comments to facilitator: notes or suggestions directed at the facilitator to improve or adjust the activity.

ℹ️ (information symbol) — useful comments to participants: additional information or instructions for the participants to understand or follow during the session.



💡 (light bulb) — tips for facilitators: general advice or guidance on how to conduct the activity effectively, including key themes and symbols.



📖 (open book) — handouts: materials or documents provided to participants for reference or as part of the activity.

Labour market dynamics

■ Theoretical introduction

The term Labour Market refers to shifts in the structures of employment, unemployment and workforce composition in a local, regional or national economy. The shifts are caused by factors like the condition of the economy, access to technology, policies change in industry supply and demand. Understanding the labour market dynamics is essential for all those entering the workforce or planning a career change, as well as those who want to stay ahead of the upcoming changes of the work environment. With the changes of both global and local labour markets happening faster than ever before, having an informed outlook can greatly help youth to make future-proof decisions regarding their careers and upcoming job opportunities.

Key components

Understanding labour market dynamics requires you to understand how the current events will impact your chances to find a satisfying and well-paid job in the future, as well as one that will stay relevant for many years to come to give you a return on the investment of time and money. How will economic growth (or lack thereof) today affect the labour market tomorrow? How factors such as demographic structure or certain laws passed on national or European level impact your chances of finding employment in a particular sector?

Why it matters

Career planning. Understanding labour market dynamics allows young people to plan their education and career choices based on future demand.

Economic development. A well-adapted and strong labour force is a driver for innovation and competitiveness of the regional or national economy.

Society benefits. An employee who answers to the needs of the labour market does not risk facing unemployment and demand for his services can lead to rapid increases of salary and further career advancements. This in turn can increase the overall quality of life and help build a resilient society with a strong middle class.

Policies. Governments of countries with a workforce that is adapted to the needs of the global market can set policies addressing education, migration and economic growth.

The fundamentals of understanding labour market dynamics

Impact of technology. Trends like the developments of AI or automation can lead to some jobs becoming obsolete or significantly scaled down. Examples include translators, copywriters, graphics designers, drivers, assembly workers. At the same time new jobs can emerge.

Adaptability and lifelong learning. Reacting to the labour market dynamics is crucial in remaining an attractive employee. Workers expressing willingness to upskill and reskill retain the advantage over those unwilling to do so.

Following economic indicators. Understanding key indicators like GDP unemployment, industry forecasts allow us to read the data as it is released, providing early prognosis in which direction the labour market is heading, resulting in shifts of demand for particular jobs.

Sustainability. Understanding how industries affect areas of the economy related to climate change, sustainability or responsible business practices show which jobs can open new career paths and lead to rewarding business opportunities.

Networking. Building business relationships, both in person and online, can give young people a better understanding and overview of the labour market and particularly the career they are interested in. It allows to confront expectations with reality and give easier access to the dream job.

Applying labour market strategies

Staying informed. Following macroeconomic and industry indicators, reading news on market trends and new technologies and how they will affect the labour market. Attending workshops, seminars and online conferences related to particular industries.

Improving skills. Learning which skills are relevant for a career path and improving them through both specialised courses and free online resources. Focusing on tech skills that are required in industries and sought after by employers and headhunters¹. Finding opportunities to work on leadership, communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills particularly for roles that cannot be replaced by technology in the short term. Exploring courses that broaden the competencies related to sustainability, digital tools, renewable energy and responsible business practices.

¹ A person who is hired by a company to find someone who has the qualifications for an important job and is willing to leave their present job.

Embracing AI in a smart, responsible way. Understanding how AI can impact a particular industry and careers within it, especially in the short term. Finding out how AI can be used at a particular workplace and position to support one's work. Using AI tools to make job searching easier for young people, help them improve the quality of their CV or cover letter, and train for a job interview. Utilising AI tools in a way that it supports work, not replaces it, using experience and critical thinking to evaluate outputs as well as performing fact-checking.

Networking. Joining online forums and attending industry related events in person. Looking for opportunities to collaborate and interact with professionals and experts, seeking mentorship and training opportunities with them.

Being flexible. In case employment opportunities in a sector are scarce, looking for short-term “gigs” might provide missing experience or additional supporting skills required by the employers. Young people should also consider remote work offers, expanding the geographic scope as well as leveraging advantages over countries with more expensive labour costs.

Entrepreneurship. New technologies create new opportunities and identifying market gaps quickly can lead to a success without the need of huge investments. Young entrepreneurs can apply to start-up programmes that will help kick start their career and provide both support and seed capital.


Understanding labour market dynamics is crucial for career planning, economic development, and societal stability. Rapid technological advancements, economic shifts, and policy changes continuously reshape job opportunities. Staying informed, developing relevant skills, embracing AI responsibly, networking, and being adaptable are key strategies for securing a sustainable career. By proactively responding to these changes, youth can enhance their employability, while businesses and governments can foster innovation and economic growth.


Objectives:


- To familiarize participants with the dynamics of the labour market and the changes taking place there.
- To develop the ability to adapt to the changing labour market.
- To introduce participants to methods of monitoring market trends and career planning.
- To implement practical use of theory in interactive exercises.

Competencies:

- Better understanding the dynamics of the labour market and the factors influencing changes.
- Being able to actively monitor changing trends in the labour market and adapt to them.
- Applying the theory learned to practical tasks during workshops and everyday life.
- Being more aware of changes in the labour market and more open to them.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop is based on group and individual work so that participants can learn how the labor market works. Through future scenarios, discussions and individual reflections, participants have the opportunity to analyze changes and adaptation strategies based on flexibility.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitator, optimally 12 participants (to easily divide them into group exercises)

 **Needed resources:** flipchart; markers, white sheets of paper; printed scenarios and guiding questions

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

Workshop scenario

Step 1. Introduction – Labour market dynamics.

Firstly, facilitator introduces the topic, main goals of the workshop and welcomes participants. This should take no longer than 5 minutes. Secondly, facilitator opens a short discussion (up to 15 minutes) based on the following question, he or she writes on flipchart: “What do you think affects the labour market?” As participants discuss the topic, facilitator writes down key words in a form of mind map on flipchart. After the discussion is over, facilitator summarizes the mind map – discussion of the basics of labour market dynamics:

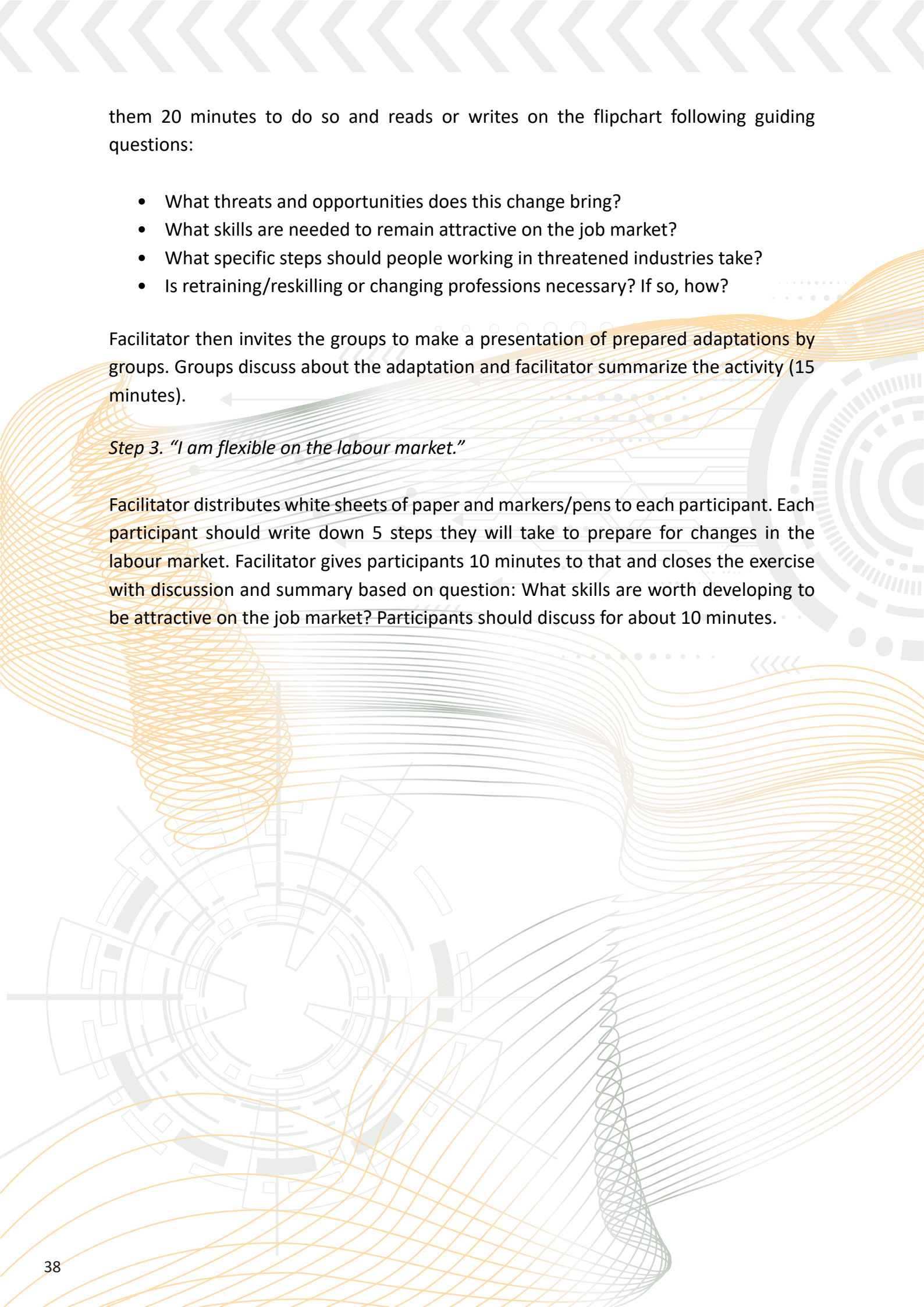
- Factors influencing changes: technology (including AI), economy, politics, demography etc.
- Adaptation to changes: lifelong learning, networking, professional flexibility

Facilitator summarizes and gives top tips for participants, such as understanding the labour market dynamics is essential for all those entering the workforce or planning a career change, as well as those who want to stay ahead of the upcoming changes of the work environment. With the changes of both global and local labour markets happening faster than ever before, having an informed outlook can greatly help youth to make future-proof decisions regarding their careers and upcoming job opportunities.

Step 2. Future worker.

This step takes 40 minutes. Facilitator makes theory introduction (up to 5 minutes) about the modern labour “market, changing faster than ever – the development of technology, artificial intelligence, globalization and climate change are influencing which professions are disappearing and which are gaining importance. In this dynamic reality, adaptation becomes crucial, i.e. the ability to flexibly respond to new challenges, learn throughout life and adapt your skills to current market needs. Employees who are able to develop, retrain and use new tools not only increase their chances of stable employment, but also become more resistant to crises and economic changes. Today's exercise will help you check how to cope with situations that require a quick response and openness to new opportunities.”

Then the facilitator divides the participants into 3 groups of 4 participants. Facilitator distributes the scenarios (you can find it in category Handouts) to each group. Each group must develop an adaptation strategy for the presented scenario. He or she gives



them 20 minutes to do so and reads or writes on the flipchart following guiding questions:

- What threats and opportunities does this change bring?
- What skills are needed to remain attractive on the job market?
- What specific steps should people working in threatened industries take?
- Is retraining/reskilling or changing professions necessary? If so, how?

Facilitator then invites the groups to make a presentation of prepared adaptations by groups. Groups discuss about the adaptation and facilitator summarize the activity (15 minutes).

Step 3. "I am flexible on the labour market."

Facilitator distributes white sheets of paper and markers/pens to each participant. Each participant should write down 5 steps they will take to prepare for changes in the labour market. Facilitator gives participants 10 minutes to that and closes the exercise with discussion and summary based on question: What skills are worth developing to be attractive on the job market? Participants should discuss for about 10 minutes.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- What do you think will be the biggest challenges in adapting to the changes presented?
- What strategies will prove to be most effective in maintaining employability?
- How do you see your own professional future in light of today's discussion?
- Can you – and if so, how – prepare today for what the future holds in the context of the dynamics of the labour market?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- The importance of adaptability and continuous learning in a changing labour market.
- The need to monitor trends and proactively develop skills for future job opportunities.
- How flexibility and openness to change increase career resilience.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Encourage participants to think critically about how labour market trends affect their career choices and to seek solutions and make plans for the future. Make sure that all groups contribute to the discussion and have a chance to present their insights. You can provide real-world examples of successful career adaptations to inspire participants – it's worth seeking out “real-life” stories.

Useful comments to the participants

Today's labour market is extremely dynamic and requires us to be flexible and ready for continuous development. AI and automation are causing some professions to disappear, but at the same time they are creating new jobs that require digital and analytical skills. Demographic changes, such as an aging population or migration, are influencing which sectors will have the greatest demand for employees. In turn, the growing importance of sustainable development means the development of new industries, such as renewable energy, green construction or the circular economy.

To keep up with these changes, it is crucial to monitor trends in the labour market, consciously plan your career and develop your skills. Upskilling – i.e. expanding your skills in a given field – and reskilling – i.e. acquiring new skills and retraining – allow for better adaptation to changing conditions. Flexibility and the desire to learn are our

greatest assets in the world of work of the future. Following trends, developing new skills and being open to change are the keys to success.

Tips for facilitators

Facilitators should keep discussions focused and time-efficient to cover all key topics. It is worth using mainly open-ended questions to encourage deeper reflection and engagement, as well as developing the skills of flexibility, which is crucial in the context of adapting to a dynamic labour market. Where necessary simplify complex labour market concepts with related examples – preferably “real life” ones – linking theory with practice.

Handouts

In the theoretical part of the workshop, it is important to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the labor market and the key drivers of change, such as technology, globalization, and economic change. Materials should include an overview of adaptation strategies, emphasizing lifelong learning, professional flexibility, and networking as key tools for career stability. Practical “real-life” examples can help illustrate how individuals successfully adapt to changing job demands. The inclusion of interactive elements, such as discussion prompts or self-assessment exercises, can reinforce key concepts and encourage active engagement with the material.

Scenarios

Group 1: “AI is taking over your job”

Description: You are a team of computer graphics designers who learn that artificial intelligence creates graphics faster and cheaper. What are you doing to stay in business?

Group 2: “Green transformation”

Description: You work for a company that produces plastic packaging, but new regulations restrict its use. How will you adapt to the changes?

Group 3: “Work without borders”

Description: You are marketing specialists, but your company is moving to a fully remote work system. What challenges and opportunities does this entail?

Career readiness

■ Theoretical introduction

Career readiness is defined as the ability to manage career development tasks that individuals face. Career development is a lifelong process, occurring in various stages categorized by Donald Super as Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Decline.

Super's Development Theory is based on developing a sense of self and realisation that we change over time and develop through experience – so, career development is de facto lifelong, we only go through different stages, which the author Super categorised: **Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Decline**. Understanding these stages helps create realistic career goals as one's priorities shift.

Super also attempted to identify possible dimensions of career readiness based on his theory. These dimensions are:

- *Individual orientation towards career choice*. A mature individual approaches career choice as a challenge, striving to resolve it with the help of available resources. On the other hand, an immature individual postpones and delays the decision.
- *Knowledge and planning of career development and decisions*. A career-ready individual explores career opportunities, has more information in this area, and plans actions in alignment with career development.
- *Consistency of career preferences*. This includes indicators such as consistency within career fields, within levels, and within career families.
- *Crystallization of personal traits*. A career-mature individual adapts their personality traits to resemble those of successful professionals in the field and abandons traits inconsistent with the professional role. Conversely, an immature individual maintains differences between their traits and those of successful professionals, even causing conflict between them.
- *Wisdom of career preferences*. This involves indicators of alignment between abilities and preferences, measured interests and preferences, and the educational level of interests and preferences.

According to Super, an individual's career readiness depends on:

- the level of intellectual and cultural stimulation and their responses to it;
- aspirations to achieve higher socio-economic levels;
- the ability to succeed in various activities.

An interesting taxonomy of individual paths for young people, based on Danish practices, has also been developed. Career readiness was integrated into this by the Youth in Transition project partners, addressing the progression of youth along individual career paths:

- readiness for engagement;
- readiness for counseling;
- readiness for decision-making;
- readiness for education;
- career readiness.

Although a young person's progression may seem linear, the process is highly unique, non-linear, and difficult to categorize within specific stages of the cycle. The pace of transitions between stages varies greatly among individuals, with frequent sudden changes and leaps.¹

Readiness does not only imply decision-making but also the skills required for the labor market in today's rapidly changing world. In the document *Future of Education and Skills 2030*, issued by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Directorate for Education and Skills, the chapter **Skills for 2030** outlines key findings:

1. Creativity and critical thinking are essential for solving complex problems;
2. Metacognition, lifelong learning, and understanding other cultures are needed to adapt to a changing environment;
3. Students' digital skills must evolve alongside technological developments;
4. Workers in jobs requiring social and emotional skills are less likely to be replaced by technology;
5. Demographic and societal changes demand more social and emotional skills;
6. Social and emotional skills improve both academic and labor market prospects;
7. Practical and physical skills support the development of other types of skills;
8. Developing physical skills through music and arts can promote cognitive and metacognitive skills;
9. Physical and practical skills are essential for students' overall functioning and well-being.

Practical advice: focus on education and continuous training in your field of interest making sure you acquire skills and knowledge. Identify areas where you want to improve, whether it's a new skill, knowledge area, or habit. Treat challenges as opportunities to learn rather than obstacles.

¹ Špiclin, Anja: *Dejavniki poklicne odločitve (Factors of Career Decision)*, diploma thesis, Ljubljana, 2005.

Practical advice: as a young person, you can always get to know and participate in various Erasmus+ (vocational training, study exchange, youth exchanges ...) and European Solidarity Corps programs where you can broaden your knowledge, expertise, work experiences, and personal development and nonetheless – developing intercultural competencies. If you don't know where to start, ask a school counselor or contact the nearest youth organization. The first step can also be applying to the European Youth Portal, where you can explore the options online.

Practical advice: identify what organizations/countries are at the top of the field that interests you and what languages are needed in your career field. You can even learn a new language using apps like Duolingo. Speaking another language not only builds communication skills but also deepens cultural understanding.

Practical advice: focus on self-awareness, and explore what traits you already possess, and are wanted in the labour market and define weaknesses. You can also practice and develop your soft skills and socio-emotional learning, the activities you can find in the Program.

Practical advice: stay updated with the latest software, technology, and apps in your preferred vocational field. If you don't yet have a preferred field, challenge yourself by trying tools like Canva for design, ActionBound for creating digital and fun treasure hunts, or designing Kahoot quizzes (great for both, fun and learning). If you have a project in mind, explore using Slack for collaboration.


Practical advice: don't forget the classics like Word and Excel – they are still useful, and knowledge of these tools is highly appreciated by employers.

Objectives:


- To navigate various job search platforms, understand the application process and demands in job offers to improve employability.
- To explore options and opportunities in programs like Erasmus+ in order to improve their skills.
- To gain knowledge on essential digital tools and technologies, ensuring they are prepared for modern workplace demands.

Competencies:

- Analyzing job posting and their demands to evaluate information critically and anticipate application success.
- Familiarizing themselves with various digital tools and platforms, boosting their confidence and competence in navigating modern technological environments.
- Understanding benefits of international opportunities in long-term career planning.
- Identifying their shortcomings in career readiness and anticipating what steps to take to improve career readiness.

 **Methodological approach:** Methodological approach is centered to experiential learning, key aspects being active participation, peer-to-peer learning and self-reflection, most important learning through debriefing. Approach is learner centered.

 **Participants:** 2 facilitators, 15–20 participants

 **Needed resources:** flipcharts, markers, handout Digital tools, handout Career (un)readiness scenarios, paper, pens, times, smart-phones, computers, Mentimeter, digital access, agree/disagree statements, Erasmus+ info packs (optional), stations, chairs

 **Duration:** 120 minutes

Workshop scenario:

Step 1. Readiness poll.

Participants sit in a circle, which creates an inclusive and open discussion space. Facilitator welcomes participants and introduces the workshop in the area of career readiness.

Facilitator invites participants to evaluate their career readiness through Mentimeter on scale of 1 to 5, where 1 stands for *Not ready at all* and 5 for *Fully confident and ready*. After everybody is done, the facilitator sums up the outcomes and explains that the rest of the workshop will provide practical tools and strategies to address these concerns, boost confidence, and increase their readiness for the job market.

Step 2: Reality check.

Facilitator divides the participants into pairs. He/she asks to find comfortable space and to open a discussion based on guidelines below. Facilitators should write them on flipchart and make it visible to every participant.

- What is your biggest concern about entering the job market?
- What do you feel least prepared for in the job market?
- What would help you feel more confident about entering the job market?

Facilitator gives participants 5 minutes to share their thoughts with each other and regularly checks the flow of conversation, while at the same time ensuring privacy. After time is up, facilitators bring the group back together and ask pairs to share their key concerns—write them on a flipchart under “COMMON JOB MARKET CHALLENGES.” After discussion, the facilitator acknowledges shared and normal common concerns.

Step 3. Job hunt.

The facilitator asks participants to take their phones. This task is individual: each participant should find three job offers they find attractive, interesting and fitting them. Participants can do research on online job platforms, company websites or other career resources. Participants should identify elements on one job offer.

Facilitators refer to the handouts given to each participant. Facilitators give participants 30 minutes to complete their research. The facilitator should circulate, provide guidance, and keep track of time.

Step 4. Get ready for the job market.

Facilitators arrange three distinct stations in the room and the necessary materials for each, ensuring enough space for small groups to work comfortably. The corners are global corner, digital corner and solutions corner.

Firstly, divide participants into three groups and assign each group to one of the stations. Participants rotate every 20 minutes between stations. The facilitator has a timer to signal the switch. In corners participants can work individually, in pairs or discuss as a group, depending on the challenge. Facilitator explains what are the challenges and tasks in each corner.

Global corner

For global corner facilitator prepares flipchart, written challenges, papers, pens or pencils, various materials on Erasmus+ (optional) and asks participants to use their phones for research. If there are any participants without the phone, he/she should ensure 1–2 computers.

Challenge 1: Research an Erasmus+ opportunity (internship, study exchange, volunteer work).

Challenge 2: Research three foreign companies working in the same field as your desired job offer from the previous task.

Challenge 3: Write a short scenario on how your selected job offer can include global elements and what you need to learn, develop because of this potential scenario (study visit, tourist comes etc).

Digital corner challenges

This corner has its own facilitator (one of two). Facilitators should prepare handouts on digital tools. First and second challenges include individual work, based on handout Digital tools.

After participants are done with the first two challenges, the facilitator continues with the challenge on digital literacy and reads out loud the sentences below. After he/she asks participants to go on the left side if they agree or on the right if they disagree and asks them to explain as a group why they made that decision.

Challenge 1: Digital tools reality check

Challenge 2 Pick one of the tools on handout you don't know at all and research what it is used for.

Challenge 3: Agree/disagree statements

- Everyone should be required to learn digital literacy skills in school.
- Social media is more harmful than beneficial to society.
- Online misinformation is a bigger problem than censorship.
- People have no real control over their data online.
- AI will take more jobs than it will create, and it will make society more efficient and productive.

Solution challenges corner

For this corner facilitator prepares handout Career (un)readiness scenarios on A3 format. Each group is asked to find one possible and relevant solutions to each of three particular scenarios, but the solutions shouldn't be the same as solutions by other groups – each group needs to find new solutions.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- How did you feel acknowledging your feelings about entering the job market?
- What did you learn in research on job offers? How prepared do you feel, would you be able to write a motivation letter?
- Which challenge imprinted on you the most and why?
- After today's discussions, what is one concrete step you will take to increase your job market readiness?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- Many people share and have shared similar fears, which is completely normal when entering the job market.
- Many concerns can be managed with preparation, such as gaining volunteer experience, improving soft skills, and practicing interview techniques.
- Engaging in job market search activities fosters a proactive approach to career development.

Useful comments to the facilitator

During step 1 and 2, reassure participants that it's normal to have concerns and that job readiness is a process multiple times if necessary. Encourage honest sharing but remind participants to focus on solutions, not just fears. If some concerns are mentioned multiple times, mark them with a star to highlight common themes.

If by any chance participants were stuck in conversation or are not willing to share, facilitators guide the discussion by listing typical fears (such as lack of experience, high competition, fear of job interviews, uncertainty about career path, lack of confidence in skills, not knowing how to write a good CV or cover letter, fear of rejection or failure) and encourages open discussion.

Useful comments to the participants

By sharing, we'll realize that many of us face similar challenges—and we'll explore ways to overcome them. Common concerns and sharing help reduce feelings of isolation and self-doubt.

💡 Tips for facilitators

- Be adaptable – if an activity isn't resonating with participants, modify it on the spot to keep engagement levels up.
- Summarize key trends – highlight the most common ratings and reassure participants that the workshop will address their concerns.
- Synthesize key challenges – write clear, concise statements on the flipchart to ensure participants see common concerns.
- Provide guidance on job platforms – suggest reliable job search platforms if participants are unsure where to look.

📄 Handouts

Job offer research

Job title:

Required skills:

Educational background needed:

Salary range – if available:

Hiring company:

Their mission and/or core values:

Key professional skill:

Three other significant skills:

Career field trend:

Networking opportunity:

Mentorship or training course program:

Role model in this field:

Digital tools

Check with:

✓ (checkmark) – if you know particular digital tool and use it

● (circle) – if you heard of it, but you don't use it.

X (x) – if you don't know it and don't use it.

- _____ Google Drive
- _____ OneDrive
- _____ Slack
- _____ Microsoft Teams
- _____ Zoom
- _____ Google Meet
- _____ Discord
- _____ Trello
- _____ Monday.com
- _____ Word
- _____ Excel
- _____ PowerPoint
- _____ Outlook
- _____ Evernote
- _____ Grammarly
- _____ Chat GPT
- _____ Hootsuite
- _____ Canva
- _____ LastPass
- _____ Whatsapp
- _____ Signal
- _____ Mega
- _____ ActionBound
- _____ WeTransfer
- _____ Doodle

Write number of tools you checked:

- ✓ _____
- _____
- X _____

Career (un)readiness scenarios

Challenge 1

I am not prepared for the job market, because I just graduated from university but have never had an internship, part-time job, or volunteer experience. I feel unsure and have been rejected multiple times.

Group 1 – possible solution:

Group 2 – possible solution:

Group 3 – possible solution:

Challenge 2

I avoid applying for jobs because I panic at the thought of answering interview questions and struggle with confidence in professional settings.

Group 1 – possible solution:

Group 2 – possible solution:

Group 3 – possible solution:

Challenge 3

I meet all the job requirements but constantly doubt my abilities. I hesitate to apply for jobs, because I fear I am not qualified enough.

Group 1 – possible solution:

Group 2 – possible solution:

Group – possible solution:

Self-knowledge: Who am I?

■ Theoretical introduction

Understanding oneself involves exploring who we are. We answer questions about ourselves through self-reflection, experimentation, and interactions with others. In the past, career paths were clearer, more defined, and predictable. Today, however, career trajectories are more unpredictable and offer numerous possibilities. Boundaries between professions are blurring, and the focus has shifted to competencies and their combinations. There is an increasing trend toward creating one's job.

To find our place in the labour market, we must first understand our interests and what we can offer the market as solutions to identified opportunities. When exploring and becoming aware of ourselves, we must focus on five key building blocks that help us discover who we are. Understanding ourselves allows us to gravitate toward situations where we can thrive and fully utilize our potential while avoiding situations that might suppress us. The key building blocks are:

- **Values** are the driving force and guiding principles of our lives, directing our thoughts, emotions, and actions. They are reflected in our beliefs about ourselves, guide our decision-making, and motivate us to achieve our goals. Values also change with life stages.
- **Interests** are our passions and hobbies, which attract our attention and reflect our values. When we are interested in something, we are more persistent. Without interest, we lose energy and motivation, leading to less satisfaction.
- **Personality traits** are relatively stable characteristics that define our experiences and behaviors.
- **Life mission and goals** refer to the purpose of our actions. We set goals to realize our vision, which is closely tied to our values as they guide them. A life vision focuses and directs our decisions and actions, ensuring alignment with our values.
- **Strengths** include abilities, skills, talents, and qualities. Knowing our strengths and weaknesses helps us focus on areas where we can fully utilize our potential while reducing or eliminating shortcomings.

What attracts you to a specific job or career? Some people seek security at work, while others are drawn to greater responsibility. All the key building blocks also influence factors that make a career appealing. The model of attractiveness factors identifies ten key elements:

- **Security:** financial and physical security, job stability, and position reliability.
- **Location:** proximity to home, family, children, schools, shops, social networks, and commute time.
- **Relationships:** interpersonal connections with colleagues, supervisors, and clients.
- **Recognition:** appreciation and acknowledgment, both direct and indirect, such as working for a reputable company.
- **Contribution to the community:** meaningful, ethical work that contributes to societal well-being.
- **Alignment:** work that matches an individual's skills, values, and interests.
- **Flexibility:** work-life balance, adaptable schedules, opportunities for professional development, and other customized benefits.
- **Learning:** intellectual stimulation and skill development.
- **Responsibility:** autonomy, independent decision-making, and minimal direction from others, often tied to fear of the responsibility.
- **Innovation:** building something new, solving complex problems, and engaging in creative work.

It takes courage to follow your interests, seek fulfillment, and pursue meaning, even when the outcome is uncertain. It's important to remember that choosing a profession is not a lifelong, unchangeable decision. As noted earlier, career paths today are unpredictable but also flexible, making career transitions increasingly common, but also harder to achieve career alignment.


Career alignment occurs when students' educational plans match the qualifications needed for their intended occupations, while misalignment reflects a disconnect between the two, signaling confusion about labor market requirements. Misalignment can take the form of under-alignment, where planned education is insufficient, or over-alignment, where it exceeds job requirements. Studies consistently show that aligned ambitions lead to better employment outcomes, such as higher earnings, career satisfaction, and skill-job matches. These benefits, observed from adolescence to mid-career, highlight the importance of realistic and informed career planning for long-term success.

Objectives:


- To visually and physically identify core emotions, values, interests, and strengths to understand how these elements shape their career choices through the creation of their personalized “I-land” as a way to deepen self-understanding.
- To evaluate how well their own personality, passions and values align with potential career paths to promote informed decision-making.
- To introduce key career attractiveness factors and help them analyze and prioritize what matters most in their career journey.


Competencies:

- Understanding personal values, emotions, interests, and strengths.
- Deepening self-understanding and making well-informed career choices.
- Evaluating career opportunities based on alignment with personal values, strengths, and career attractiveness factors.
- Understanding career attractiveness factor and articulating personal insights and career goals effectively.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop is based on guided self-reflection. Participants engage in reflecting exercises, based on popular movies on understanding the inner world. Methods are chosen to be artistic as crafty as the goal is to visualize and materialize participants' inner worlds. Included methods are also group presentation, discussion and study cases.

 **Participants:** 2 facilitators, 15 participants

 **Needed resources:** large sheets of paper or poster boards, newspapers and paper towels (for surface protection), paint, brushes, and water cups, colored pencils, markers, crayons, glue, scissors, tape, clay, wire, other 3D crafting materials, Values handout, Emotions handout, Study cases handout, flipchart, markers, timer, music playlist, speakers, chairs

 **Duration:** 120 minutes

▶ Workshop scenario

Step 1. Introduction.

Facilitator introduces the workshop. Theme of the workshop is the animated movie *Inside Out*. In *Inside Out*, Riley's journey is about understanding and balancing her emotions, recognizing their value, and using them to navigate life.

Similarly, in career planning, understanding and balancing our values, interests, strengths, and goals enables us to make informed decisions that lead to more fulfilling and aligned career paths. Just as Riley learns that all her emotions are necessary for her growth, participants can learn that all aspects of themselves—values, interests, strengths, personality, and mission—are crucial in shaping a meaningful career.

Step 2. Making I-land. Core emotions and values.

Each participant should find their own corner in the room. They will create I-lands, so they will need a bit more space. Facilitator first asks participants to protect the surfaces with newspapers and paper-towels. Timing will depend on the number of participants and room.

Facilitator prepares in the center of the room materials like paper, paint, pencils, glue, colors, brushes, clay, wires etc. The goal is participants find their core emotions and values. Facilitator gives to each participant handouts on values and emotions and asks participants to pick five emotions they feel most or feel they drive them and draw them. It can be done in silence or the facilitator can put on some music in order to create a creative and relaxed atmosphere, however participants feel most comfortable.

In category Handouts you can find pictures of emotions in *Inside out*, which can be helpful to the participants, but they should make their own pictures on emotions. It is not important how beautifully it is drawn; it is important participants are true to themselves. Facilitator should note they have 20 minutes for this step.

Step 3. Making I-land. Islands of Personality.

Facilitator then moves onto identifying the next element, interests and passions. Beforehand he/she should prepare different materials that can create 3D Personality Island. In *Inside Out*, Riley's interests and passions are reflected in her Islands of Personality, which are shaped by core memories of significant events in her life (Family

Island, Friendship Island, Hockey Island). These islands represent different facets of who Riley is, and they guide her actions and motivations, just as interests fuel persistence and satisfaction in a career.

Facilitator asks participants to design 3D Islands of their personality by defining core interests—things that excite and energize them. Facilitator should limit them to 45 min.

Facilitator should write on flipchart paper questions for supporting participants:

- What Islands of personality exist in your life?
- How do your core interests and passions help shape your career choices?
- What career choices do you feel are based on your core interests and passions?
- Are you feeling motivated to pursue a career that aligns with these interests?

After everybody has finished, the facilitator asks participants to share their I-lands and their thoughts about questions, discoveries, AHA moments.

Step 4. Making I-land. Career attractiveness – study cases.


Facilitator invites everybody to a circle and presents 10 key career attractiveness factors and checks if everything is understood or if participants need more explanation on career attractiveness factors.

Facilitator separates participants into three groups. Each group gets a study case. Participants should read the case slowly. Based on the scenario, each group should rank the attractiveness factors in the context of this job opportunity and discuss what they value most in the decision-making process and answer to themselves in the group whether they would accept the job in this scenario and why or why not. They have 15 minutes to make a decision.

After considering all factors, participants decide if they would accept the job, modify expectations, or seek other options about what factors were non-negotiable or negotiable. Once each group has discussed the study cases and come to a conclusion, each group presents their thoughts to the rest of the participants.

Step 5. Making I-land. Career attractiveness – self-reflection.

Then each participant gets an Individual reflection handout, one can find it in category Handouts. Facilitator asks participants to go back to their I-lands and try to rank career



attractiveness factors for themselves. Participants should rank their career attractiveness factor from 1 (least important) to 10 (most important).

If participants need additional support from the facilitator, he/she should provide it and support participants especially connecting values, interests and career attractiveness factors, for example – I value freedom, but what does that mean for my future job? Do I see freedom as financial security or do I connect freedom more with flexibility or innovation? They have 5 minutes to do that.

After participants have finished, invite everybody to a circle and invite them to share their lists from least to most important.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- What was the most surprising or insightful discovery you made during this workshop about yourself?
- What did you learn about your interests and passions through creating your Islands of Personality?
- How did the career attractiveness study cases challenge your thinking about what matters most in a job?
- Were there any moments where you realized a potential misalignment between your career aspirations and your personality?
- How will the insights from this workshop influence your future career decisions?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- Being true to yourself leads to greater fulfillment and long-term career satisfaction. A career that aligns with personality, interests, and values increases motivation, engagement, and happiness.
- Different people prioritize different factors (security, flexibility, innovation, contribution, etc.) and every individual has unique passions and priorities, and career success is defined differently for everyone.
- Interests and values may evolve, and career choices should be revisited as personal growth occurs. Career decisions are not set in stone—flexibility and self-awareness are key to adapting to changes and new opportunities.

Useful comments to the facilitator

It is very important that participants feel safe and supported to share their inner-world insights. When young people explore and express their emotions, values, interests, and career aspirations, they may encounter vulnerability or deep personal realizations. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers—every individual’s journey is unique. Self-discovery can sometimes bring up unexpected emotions, and that this is a natural part of the process, and it is recommended to let participants know that.

It is also very important to highlight career alignment with our values and interests in all stages of the workshop. Misalignment between values, interests, and career can lead to stress, dissatisfaction, and burnout over time. Individuals may struggle to meet expectations because their natural strengths are not being utilized effectively. Employees may feel disengaged or disconnected from their work, leading to dissatisfaction and a lack of fulfillment. A mismatch often leads to constant job changes

as individuals search for a better fit. A misaligned career can make a person feel disconnected from their goals and values, reducing overall life satisfaction. Understanding one's personality, values, and strengths is key to choosing a career that provides both success and personal happiness. Self-awareness is crucial in career decision-making, as it helps individuals choose paths that align with their unique traits and motivations.

Useful comments to the participants

What may seem like an ideal career choice at one stage of life might not align with your priorities or passions later on. This is why it is essential to periodically reassess career paths to ensure they continue to reflect one's evolving sense of purpose, fulfillment, and goals. Major life changes, starting a family, relocating, or experiencing personal challenges, can impact what one values in a career.


Tips for facilitators

- For better understanding of this workshop, it is recommended to watch the animated movie *Inside Out* and *Inside Out 2*, there are also many articles on the topic of personality and both movies, such as this [one](#).

Handouts

Emotions

joy
love
gratitude
hope
excitement
pride
contentment
relief
amusement
awe
happiness
empathy
compassion
trust
peace



fulfillment
anger
sadness
fear
disappointment
frustration
guilt
shame
loneliness
regret
anxiety
jealousy
embarrassment
grief
hopelessness
confusion
doubt
surprise
indifference
resentment
vulnerability
nostalgia
boredom
helplessness
contempt

Values

self-respect
self-improvement
courage
creativity
curiosity
knowledge
accountability
confidence
success
hard work
innovation
ambition



challenge
leadership
recognition
family
friendship
trust
collaboration
respect
loyalty
empathy
generosity
justice
security & stability
financial security
job stability
safety
consistency
integrity
honesty
fairness
accountability
respect for others
compassion
work-life balance
freedom
leisure
adventure
travel
health
service
environmental responsibility
social justice
altruism
peace
mindfulness
selflessness
independence
autonomy
privacy

self-sufficiency
diversity
tolerance
inclusivity
equality
open-mindedness
philanthropy
community
faith
purpose
gratitude



Individual reflection handout

Which of these factors do you find most important in your career choices?

Security _____
Location _____
Relationships _____
Recognition _____
Contribution to the community _____
Alignment _____
Flexibility _____
Learning _____
Responsibility _____
Innovation _____

Factors – Study cases

The secure corporate job

A large, well-established corporation with an excellent reputation is offering a well-paid position with great benefits, offering long-term security and a stable career track. It is a job with high security, solid location (close to home), recognition as part of a reputable company, and flexibility (standard hours, limited remote work), has limited room for innovation or learning; little autonomy or responsibility, and minimal opportunities for rapid career advancement.

The dynamic startup role

A young, rapidly growing tech startup with a lot of potential is offering a job of a mid-level role with the chance to make a significant impact and build something new from the ground up, it is a job with factors like high innovation, opportunities for learning, and a chance to make a big contribution to the community (ethical tech, sustainability), uncertain security, irregular hours, and less financial stability; demands significant responsibility from day one, including independent decision-making with little direction.

The balanced public service job

A government position or a nonprofit organization with a strong social mission is offering a stable position with generous work-life balance, decent pay, and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the community, low pay, less autonomy in decision-making, slow career advancement; some compromises on innovation and responsibility.

Career and personality

■ Theoretical introduction

Selecting a career or vocation is a significant process that begins at a very young age. Career choices are influenced by factors such as family expectations, money, status, friends, teachers, geography, the internet, the media, more broadly, politicians, sporting stars and many other factors. Thoughtfully assessing one's traits and skills can assist in choosing a career path aligned with their personality. There are five significant career theories.

Holland's Theory of Vocational Types, widely known for **RIASEC classification** of vocational types: Realistic type (examples: mechanic, engineer, electrician); Investigative type (examples: scientists, medical and health occupations); Artistic type (examples: photographer, designer, actor, reporter); Social type (examples: teachers, counsellors, social workers, salesperson, waiter); Enterprising type (examples: lawyer, politician, entrepreneurs); Conventional type (examples: accountants, administrators, bank clerk). According to this theory, people are a combination of these types, usually with one or two being dominant, and there are six basic types of work environment relating to personality types: if you work in the environment most related to your personality type, the result should be success and satisfaction. This theory is a core part of career assessment.

Ginsberg's Developmental Theory is the theory of career choice, describing it as a function of human development over time. He considered career development through three stages, early stages which support later stages: The Fantasy stage; the Tentative stage, and the Realistic stage, divided into three subcategories – Exploration, Crystallization and Specification. However, the theory had one bottleneck: career decisions and development continue past the age of 24, the end of Ginzberg's Realistic stage.

Super's Developmental Theory is derived from Ginsberg. It is based on developing a sense of self and realisation that we change over time and develop through experience – so, career development is de facto lifelong, we only go through different stages, which the author Super categorised: Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Decline. Understanding these stages helps create realistic career goals as one's priorities shift.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory is an action-oriented, problem-solving approach, but above all, it is a learning theory based on people learning by watching others and that human thinking processes are central to understanding personality. This theory provides a framework for understanding human behaviour (Attention: paying attention to learn something new; Retention: the ability to remember and retain what one has paid attention to; Reproduction: translation of the images or description into behaviour; Motivation: without motivation, one will not imitate the model).

Parson's Trait and Factor Theory's idea is about matching unique qualities with the demands of different jobs. Strengths, interests, abilities and personality should align with job factors – specific requirements. This theory's tool aptitude test is widely used in career counselling.

People differ due to various circumstances, and the world is changing rapidly. With Gen Z, a shifting job market, NEETs¹, and young people facing obstacles, career counselling may require new approaches and additional theories to support diverse needs. Chaos Theory, which is not about a linear career path, but sees uncertainty as a natural consequence of the complexity of our lives, encourages preparation over planning and adaptability over decision-making; it focuses on personal branding, self-knowledge, and transferable skills. There are also some other theories for further reading and application, such as John Krumboltz's Planned Happenstance Theory, Mark Savickas's Career Construction Theory, Roe's Personality Theory and lastly Te Whara Tapa Whō.

One's personality plays a key role in career satisfaction. Identifying strengths and aligning personality with career enhances fulfilment and satisfaction. Research shows personality traits can evolve. A positive job fit fosters connections, boosts productivity, and encourages commitment. Don't dismiss the opportunity of changing careers if you feel like you've hit a wall professionally. Ensuring your personality corresponds with the job leads to more positive results, such as good work relationships, motivation, performance, and overall workplace happiness.


¹ A person who is Not in Education, Employment, or Training.

Objectives:


- To introduce, understand, and explore the RIASEC model and its benefits.
- To connect dominant personality traits and possible career decisions.
- To assess participants' personality traits and their current career aspirations.

Competencies:

- Understanding the six personality types in the RIASEC model (realistic, artistic, investigative, social, enterprising, conventional) and how these types relate to careers.
- Identifying their own personality traits.
- Establishing the connection between their personality traits, various career fields and potential choices, leading to informed career decisions.

 **Methodological approach:** Methodological approach is learner-centered and based on active participation. It begins with a constructivist approach, since participants construct their understanding of the RIASEC types. An important part of the workshop is individual work on tests as self-assessment and reflection. Through teamwork and group discussions, the workshop implements collaborative learning as well as learning through debriefing.

 **Participants:** 15–20 participants, 2 facilitators

 **Needed resources:** handout RIASEC typology summary, handout RIASEC test, handout Historical figures descriptions, RIASEC poster puzzles on each type, paper, pencils, flipchart, markers, timer

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

Workshop scenario

Step 1. Introduction in puzzles.

Participants sit in a circle, which creates an inclusive and open discussion space. Facilitator welcomes participants and introduces the workshop in the area of career readiness. He/she begins with a brief overview of Holland's RIASEC model with help from participants. Facilitator divides participants into six groups and asks them to find space.

Each group gets a poster on one RIASEC type, explaining the six personality types and their general characteristics, but cut to puzzles. Participants need to put the puzzle together in 3 minutes. Then the facilitator asks them to read what is on the poster-puzzle and present it to other groups. Each group presents one RIASEC type to the other group and the facilitator completes presentations with his/her deeper understanding.

RIASEC typology can be found in Useful comments to the facilitator.

Step 2. RIASEC guess who.

Facilitator divides participants into three groups and distributes the selected public figures with descriptions including interests, professions, notable achievements. Each group gets a RIASEC type description (not the puzzles from introduction, but description of all types together), three public figures description that belong to different and not the same types, paper and pencils.

Facilitator asks participants to review each type in RIASEC model with a short justification on their choice based on description (which aspects align with the selected type) and gives them 10 minutes to read the material and then 30 minutes to choose the type and write brief justifications. If participants feel they need to apply more than one RIASEC type, the facilitator can encourage them to do so, again with brief explanation of this decision. Historical figures description and summary of RIASEC types can be found in category Handouts.

After groups are done, they share their historical figures and RIASEC type they connected it to as well as their brief justification. Facilitators should encourage group discussions by asking if anyone disagrees with the decisions made by the group and why.

The most proper solutions would be:

- Realistic type – doers: Bear Grylls
- Artistic type – creators: Maya Angelou, Salvador Dali
- Investigative type – thinkers: Marie Curie
- Social type – helpers: Malala Yousafzai, Florence Nightingale
- Enterprising type – persuaders: Walt Disney
- Conventional type – organizers: Angela Merkel

However, we are not reduced only to one type, but to a combination of types and if participants have an opinion of other solutions, they are appreciated.

Step 3. RIASEC me.

Facilitator presents individual work in this step and invites participants back to the circle. Each participant gets their test, one example of the RIASEC test can be found in category Handouts. Facilitator gives them 10 minutes for the test.

Participants should fill the circle, if they agree with the statement. When they are finished, they add up the number of filled in circles in each column and then add the two columns together for a total and transfer the scores for each letter into the column. Three letters with the highest scores are “My interest code”.

The facilitator then asks participants to think about current jobs and career fields and write down three possible (new) career future positions based on their interest code. Facilitator invites participants to share their results with the group.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- How did your group decide which RIASEC type best fits the historical figures?
- How can you apply the RIASEC model to help you make decisions about your future career or educational path?
- Which three possible (new) career future positions based on interest code did you pick?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- How personality influences career choices and work preferences.
- There are many personality tests, if participants want to deepen their understanding of their personality traits, such as Myers & Briggs' 16 personality types.
- We are not only one type, but a combination of types.

Useful comments to the facilitator

- [RIASEC types](#).

Useful comments to the participants

The personality refers to the combination of characteristics or qualities that form an individual's distinctive character. Understanding our personality traits is crucial in making informed career decisions, achieving job satisfaction, and excelling professionally. Both individuals and employers benefit from considering personality in career development and workplace dynamics. Extroverted types will perform better in career fields involving large amounts of interpersonal interaction, while introverted people will be more satisfied in career fields with less social interaction. Aligning career choice with personality traits can enhance fulfillment and reduce workplace stress. Personality traits also affect our performance, our progression, and work relationships.

Taking different personality tests can be beneficial. In this workshop, we aligned RIASEC types, historical figures and ourselves. However, we are not reduced to one type, but to a combination of types – the most dominant ones. If we choose a career aligned with dominant types, we are more likely to be satisfied and successful.

💡 Tips for facilitators

- If the group is advanced, you can adapt the workshop to Myers & Briggs' 16 Personality Types.
- RIASEC test: you can always use one in category Handouts, however, more complex and accurate ones can be found online.

📖 Handouts

RIASEC Types

Which Career Pathway is right for you?

RESULTS OF THE RIASEC TEST

R = Realistic

These people are often good at mechanical or athletic jobs. Good college majors for Realistic people are...

- Agriculture
- Health Assistant
- Computers
- Construction
- Mechanic/Machinist
- Engineering
- Food and Hospitality

Related Pathways

Natural Resources
Health Services
Industrial and Engineering Technology
Arts and Communication

S = Social

These people like to work with other people, rather than things. Good college majors for Social people are...

- Counseling
- Nursing
- Physical Therapy
- Travel
- Advertising
- Public Relations
- Education

Related Pathways

Health Services
Public and Human Services

I = Investigative

These people like to watch, learn, analyze and solve problems. Good college majors for Investigative people are...

- Marine Biology
- Engineering
- Chemistry
- Zoology
- Medicine/Surgery
- Consumer Economics
- Psychology

Related Pathways

Health Services
Business
Public and Human Services
Industrial and Engineering Technology

E = Enterprising

These people like to work with others and enjoy persuading and performing. Good college majors for Enterprising people are:

- Fashion Merchandising
- Real Estate
- Marketing/Sales
- Law
- Political Science
- International Trade
- Banking/Finance

Related Pathways

Business
Public and Human Services
Arts and Communication

A = Artistic

These people like to work in unstructured situations where they can use their creativity. Good majors for Artistic people are...

- Communications
- Cosmetology
- Fine and Performing Arts
- Photography
- Radio and TV
- Interior Design
- Architecture

Related Pathways

Public and Human Services
Arts and Communication

C = Conventional

These people are very detail oriented, organized and like to work with data. Good college majors for Conventional people are...

- Accounting
- Court Reporting
- Insurance
- Administration
- Medical Records
- Banking
- Data Processing

Related Pathways

Health Services
Business
Industrial and Engineering Technology

Historical figures (source: Wikipedia)

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani female education activist, film and television producer, and the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize laureate at the age of 17. She is the youngest Nobel Prize laureate in history, the second Pakistani and the only Pashtun to receive a Nobel Prize. Yousafzai is a human rights advocate for the education of women and children in her native homeland, Swat, where the Pakistani Taliban had at times banned girls from attending school. Her advocacy has grown into an international movement, and according to former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, she has become Pakistan's "most prominent citizen."

Interesting fact: Potential career paths

In an interview, she once said that she aspired to become a doctor, though later her father encouraged her to become a politician instead. Ziauddin referred to his daughter as something entirely special, allowing her to stay up at night and talk about politics after her two brothers had been sent to bed.

Edward Michael "Bear" Grylls is a British adventurer, writer, television presenter and former SAS trooper who is also a survival expert. He first drew attention after embarking on several notable adventures, including several world records in hostile environments, and then became widely known for his television series *Man vs. Wild* (2006–2011). He is also involved in several wilderness survival television series in the UK and US, such as *Running Wild with Bear Grylls* and *The Island with Bear Grylls*. In July 2009, Grylls was appointed as The Scout Association's youngest-ever Chief Scout of the United Kingdom and Overseas Territories at the age of 35.

Interesting fact: Dinner party at altitude

In 2005, alongside the balloonist and mountaineer David Hempleman-Adams and Lieutenant Commander Alan Veal, leader of the Royal Navy Freefall Parachute Display Team, Grylls created a world record for the highest open-air formal dinner party, which they did under a hot-air balloon at 7,600 metres (25,000 ft), dressed in full mess dress and oxygen masks. To train for the event, he made over 200 parachute jumps.

Marie Curie was a Polish and naturalised-French physicist and chemist who conducted pioneering research on radioactivity. She was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, the first person to win a Nobel Prize twice, and the only person to win a Nobel Prize in two scientific fields. Her husband, Pierre Curie, was a co-winner of her first Nobel Prize, making them the first married couple to win the Nobel Prize and launching the Curie

family legacy of five Nobel Prizes. She was, in 1906, the first woman to become a professor at the University of Paris.

Interesting fact: Investigating uranium rays

Curie decided to look into uranium rays as a possible field of research for a thesis. She used an innovative technique to investigate samples. Fifteen years earlier, her husband and his brother had developed a version of the electrometer, a sensitive device for measuring electric charge. Using her husband's electrometer, she discovered that uranium rays caused the air around a sample to conduct electricity. Using this technique, her first result was the finding that the activity of the uranium compounds depended only on the quantity of uranium present.

Maya Angelou was an American memoirist, poet, and civil rights activist. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, several books of poetry, and is credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows spanning over 50 years. She received dozens of awards and more than 50 honorary degrees. Angelou's series of seven autobiographies focuses on her childhood and early adult experiences. The first, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), tells of her life up to the age of 17 and brought her international recognition and acclaim.

Interesting fact: Singing

During 1954 and 1955, Angelou toured Europe with a production of the opera *Porgy and Bess*. She began her practice of learning the language of every country she visited, and in a few years she gained proficiency in several languages. In 1957, riding on the popularity of *Calypso*, Angelou recorded her first album, *Miss Calypso*, which was reissued as a CD in 1996. She appeared in an off-Broadway review that inspired the 1957 film *Calypso Heat Wave*, in which Angelou sang and performed her compositions.

Salvador Dalí was a Spanish surrealist artist renowned for his technical skill, precise draftsmanship, and the striking and bizarre images in his work. Born in Figueres in Catalonia, Dalí received his formal education in fine arts in Madrid. Influenced by Impressionism and the Renaissance masters from a young age, he became increasingly attracted to Cubism and avant-garde movements. Dalí's artistic repertoire included painting, sculpture, film, graphic arts, animation, fashion, and photography, at times in collaboration with other artists. He also wrote fiction, poetry, autobiography, essays, and criticism. Major themes in his work include dreams, the subconscious, sexuality, religion, science and his closest personal relationships.

Interesting fact: Influence

In April 1926, Dalí made his first trip to Paris where he met Pablo Picasso, whom he revered. Picasso had already heard favorable reports about Dalí from Joan Miró, a fellow Catalan who later introduced him to many Surrealist friends. As he developed his style over the next few years, Dalí made some works strongly influenced by Picasso and Miró.

Walter Elias Disney was an American animator, film producer, voice actor, and entrepreneur. A pioneer of the American animation industry, he introduced several developments in the production of cartoons. As a film producer, he holds the record for most Academy Awards earned (22) and nominations (59) by an individual. He was presented with two Golden Globe Special Achievement Awards and an Emmy Award, among other honors. Several of his films are included in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress and have also been named as some of the greatest films ever by the American Film Institute.

Interesting fact: Resourcing

In the 1950s, Disney expanded into the theme park industry, and in July 1955, he opened Disneyland in California. To fund the project, he diversified into television programs, such as Walt Disney's Disneyland and The Mickey Mouse Club. He was also involved in planning the 1959 Moscow Fair, the 1960 Winter Olympics, and the 1964 New York World's Fair. In 1965, he began development of another theme park, Disney World, the heart of which was to be a new type of city, the "Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow".

Angela Dorothea Merkel is a German retired politician who served as Chancellor of Germany from 2005 to 2021. She is the only woman to have held the office. Merkel previously served as Leader of the Opposition from 2002 to 2005 and as Leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) from 2000 to 2018. During her chancellorship, Merkel was frequently referred to as the de facto leader of the European Union (EU) and the most powerful woman in the world. Despite having led the CDU for more than two decades, her political stance is considered to have moved to the left since the 2010s.

Interesting fact: Comparison

As a woman who is a politician from a centre-right party and also a scientist, Merkel has been compared by many in the English-language press to 20th century British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher also had a science degree from Oxford University

in chemistry. Some have referred to her as “Iron Lady”, “Iron Girl”, and even “The Iron Frau”, alluding to Thatcher, whose nickname was “The Iron Lady”.

Florence Nightingale was an English social reformer, statistician and the founder of modern nursing. Nightingale came to prominence while serving as a manager and trainer of nurses during the Crimean War, in which she organised care for wounded soldiers at Constantinople. She significantly reduced death rates by improving hygiene and living standards. Nightingale gave nursing a favourable reputation and became an icon of Victorian culture, especially in the persona of “The Lady with the Lamp” making rounds of wounded soldiers at night.

Interesting fact: Statistics

Nightingale was an innovator in statistics; she represented her analysis in graphical forms to ease drawing conclusions and actionables from data. She is famous for usage of the polar area diagram, also called the Nightingale rose diagram, which is equivalent to a modern circular histogram. This diagram is still regularly used in data visualisation.

Career fields exploration

■ Theoretical introduction

Career fields or clusters organize professions into categories based on shared skills, knowledge, and work environments. These fields simplify the exploration of career options by highlighting similarities across jobs within specific sectors. In the European Union (EU), systems like the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications, and Occupations (ESCO) framework classify jobs and skills to promote workforce mobility and meet labor market demands.

Examples of key career fields include:

- **Green economy and sustainability.** Careers in renewable energy, the circular economy, and environmental protection are gaining prominence, driven by the European Green Deal's focus on achieving climate neutrality.
- **Digital and Technology fields.** Roles such as data analysts, artificial intelligence specialists, and cybersecurity experts align with the EU's Digital Strategy, which emphasizes digital transformation across sectors.
- **Healthcare and Social assistance.** With Europe's aging population, jobs in nursing, elderly care, and mental health are critical for addressing growing social needs.
- **Creative and Cultural industries.** Professions in media, arts, and design contribute significantly to Europe's cultural identity and economy, offering dynamic and creative career pathways.

Understanding these career clusters enables young people to focus on high-growth sectors with long-term potential. By 2030, digital and green careers are expected to dominate the labor market, reflecting the EU's priorities of digital transformation and ecological sustainability. For a complete classification youth can check the ESCO classification: https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/classification/occupation_main.

Other aspects that youth should consider in choosing a career path, besides the skills and talents, are the labour market tendencies concerning the jobs of the future (e.g. AI machine learners, Robotics engineer, Renewable energy, Personal financial advisor etc) that are emerging and will replace soon traditional jobs like Telemarketer, Data Entry Clerk, Factory Assembly Line Worker, Retail Cashiers, Travel Agents etc.

After identifying a career field of interest, researching specific roles and their requirements is essential to make informed choices about the future. Consulting

resources like the EU Skills Panorama, EURES (European Employment Services), and Eurostat will provide valuable labor market insights in Europe.

Key areas to research include:

- **Job descriptions.** Explore various roles such as project manager, renewable energy technician, or digital content creator to understand daily tasks, required skills, and work environments.
- **Education and training pathways.** Most careers require qualifications aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which standardizes degrees and certifications across Europe. For example:
 - IT careers often require certifications in programming or cybersecurity.
 - Healthcare roles typically demand vocational training or university degrees in specialized fields.
- **Market trends.** The EU labor market is undergoing rapid change due to digitalization, automation, and efforts to address skills mismatches. With 77% of EU companies reporting difficulties in finding skilled employees, there is significant demand for training in high-growth areas.

Using platforms like LinkedIn, ESCO, or sector-specific reports, youth can identify clear pathways into their chosen career fields while staying informed about market trends across Europe.

Choosing the right career

Choosing the right career involves assessing how well personal skills, interests, and values align with labor market opportunities. Several tools can assist in this process:

- **Self-assessment resources:** EU platforms like Europass offer tools for building CVs, assessing skills, and identifying potential career paths.
- **Career exploration Apps and Tests:** tools such as Holland's Career Codes or self-assessment quizzes from the European Commission help identify careers that align with individual personalities and interests.
- **Work-based learning opportunities:** initiatives like volunteering opportunities, apprenticeships and internships provide hands-on experience in specific industries, offering a practical way to explore career options.


European labor markets are increasingly prioritizing values such as sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation. Careers in green technologies, digital transformation, and social care are expanding rapidly, providing opportunities that align with these values. By recognizing these trends, young people can align their personal goals with societal needs, ensuring their career paths are both meaningful and future-oriented.

Objectives:


- To familiarize young people with various professions based on the European Skills/ Competences, Qualifications and Occupations Classification (ESCO).
- To enhance self-awareness by reflecting on personal skills, interests, and values in the context of career exploration.
- To develop decision-making and problem-solving skills through experiential learning activities related to various professions.

Competencies:

- Identifying the key characteristics, skills, and requirements of different professions.
- Analyzing career paths and evaluating professional opportunities based on individual strengths and aspirations.
- Comparing and contrasting different career options.
- Enhancing communication, collaboration, and creative thinking.
- Strengthening decision-making and problem-solving abilities in real-life professional scenarios.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop is based on experiential learning, allowing participants to engage in role-playing, simulations, and interactive tasks that mirror real-life work environments. Through practical experiences, discussions, and reflections, participants will explore different career fields and assess their own compatibility with specific roles.

 **Participants:** 2 facilitators, 16–20 participants (ideally groups of 3–5 young people)

 **Needed resources:** job description sheets (with information about tasks, responsibilities, required skills), materials for practical activities (e.g., props for role-playing, building materials, laptops/tablets for IT-related tasks, etc.), flipchart/whiteboard and markers.

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

▶ Workshop scenario

The workshop starts with a short icebreaker game. Then the facilitators present the objectives, rules, and structure of the activity. Participants are introduced to ESCO job classification, then to the five career centers that will be simulated, each representing a different professional category based on ESCO. They select the center that aligns with their interests and form small groups of 3–5 participants.

The professions are part of the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations Classification (ESCO):

- **Center 1** – 0 Armed Forces (02 Army Non-Commissioned Officers);
- **Center 2** – 1 Members of the legislative body, of the executive, senior leaders of public administration, senior managers and officials – (111 Legislators, members of the executive and senior leaders of public administration – mayor);
- **Center 3** – 2 Specialists in various fields of activity (2.3. Specialists in education – 233 Secondary education teacher);
- **Center 4** – 2 Specialists in various fields of activity (2.5 Specialists in information and communication technology);
- **Center 5** – 5 Workers in the service sector, 541 Protective service workers (5412 Policeman, 5411 firefighter, 5413 prison officer).

Participants choose the center that interests them the most and participate in the activities specific to that center. All centers function simultaneously, and one of the facilitators observes the activity of participants in each center and the other may offer help if necessary. The facilitators have to set the centers before beginning the workshop.

Activity breakdown by career center:

Center 1: Armed Forces

Activity 1: Building a shelter

- Participants receive materials (e.g., sticks, rope, cloth) to construct a makeshift shelter, simulating a field scenario.
- A time limit of 20 minutes is set.
- Participants must collaborate, divide tasks, and efficiently use resources.
- Evaluation criteria: shelter stability, creativity, and effectiveness in providing protection.

Activity 2: Obstacle course

- Participants navigate a course featuring jumps, crawling, and balance exercises.
- They take turns completing the route, with timing recorded.
- Emphasis is placed on physical coordination, endurance, and teamwork.

Center 2: Legislative & Public Administration

Activity: Debating a public project

- Participants are divided into “pro” and “con” groups, representing local council members.
- Each group analyzes and presents arguments for or against a proposed project (e.g., building a park or sports field).
- A simulated council meeting is conducted, moderated by the facilitator.
- The session concludes with a final vote on the project.
- Evaluation criteria: argumentation skills, communication, negotiation, and civic engagement.

Center 3: Education

Activity: Teaching a school lesson

- Participants select a topic from their favorite subject and prepare a 10–15 minute interactive lesson.
- They use various teaching methods (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, educational games, debates).
- Participants take the role as a teacher and students.
- Evaluation criteria: interaction with students, clarity of presentation, engagement level, creativity in teaching methods.

Center 4: Information and Communication Technology

Activity: Web page development using Canva

- Participants receive an introduction to Canva’s interface and key functions.
- They choose a theme (e.g., hobby, event) and define a target audience.
- Using Canva, they design a web page interface that includes a title, menu, images, text, and buttons.
- Participants present their page and receive feedback from peers and the facilitator.

Center 5: Protective Services

Activity: Firefighting simulation

- A simulated building environment is set up with objects representing fire. Participants are divided into fire response teams (4–5 members), with assigned roles: team leader who coordinates the action, communicates with the control center and firefighters who operate hoses, locate victims, and ensure safety.
- The facilitator provides real-time instructions based on the scenario. The intervention is timed, and additional challenges may be introduced: obstacles on the access route, presence of a simulated victim, fire spreading mid-simulation, requiring strategy adjustments.
- Creativity and resourcefulness are encouraged, especially if equipment is limited.

Regarding the props needed to carry out the activity, it is recommended to ensure these as far as possible. If available resources are limited, participants are encouraged to use creativity and imagination to make up for the lack of certain props.

To enhance participants' understanding of the chosen professions, the facilitators should provide handouts with detailed job descriptions (recommended after the presentation of the work centers). These handouts should include information about the tasks, responsibilities, required skills, and typical work environments associated with each profession. The facilitators can either create these handouts or source them from reputable websites or organizations. After the group work is ready, facilitators assess the tasks completion according to set criteria and let groups to share their experience and briefly present the group work.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- What did you learn about the professions explored?
- Which profession attracted you the most and why?
- What skills did you develop during the activity?
- What would you change about this activity if you organized it?

Useful comments to the facilitator

Professions can be adapted to participants' interests and current labor market trends. The workshop can be expanded to include additional professional categories according to the number of participants. Job description handouts are mandatory for each profession, outlining key tasks, responsibilities, and required skills. These handouts can be self-created or sourced from authorized institutions. In case of limited resources for the simulation part, use creativity of participants.

Useful comments to the participants

Research the skills and qualifications required for their chosen profession. Explore job descriptions to gain a deeper understanding of workplace expectations and responsibilities.

Tips for facilitator

This activity can be multiplied by addressing several professional categories, depending on the interests, number of the participants and available time. For a better understanding of what a job entails, provide participants with a job description for each job and urge them to read carefully.

Handouts

European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations Classification (ESCO)

https://esco.ec.europa.eu/ro/classification/occupation_main#overlayspin

Careers of the future

■ Theoretical introduction

In the rapidly changing world, factors like technological breakthroughs, climate change, pandemics, and demography lead to huge changes in the labour market. New jobs emerge, others undergo huge changes and some become obsolete. Careers of the future refers to those jobs that will drive economic growth and societal changes for the coming decades. A huge demand for workers in those sectors will result in low unemployment, high salaries, and ample opportunities for career advancement, providing stability of employment and financial satisfaction, both of which are becoming rare commodities, especially for the generation currently entering the labour market. Identifying which are the careers of the future and what steps young people should take to get a job in a future-proof profession are more important than ever in the rapidly changing labour market landscape.

Key components

Knowing which are the careers of the future helps make informed decisions and create a plan for getting a dream job that will not become obsolete and force a young person to reskill and look for opportunities in a totally different sector than the one they often spend years to get into. A list of “future-proof” careers combined with job descriptions, required competences and suggestions on which steps to take to reach the goal can be helpful in the already rapidly shifting labour market with overwhelming choices and little to no useful assistance that is provided to youth at schools. At this stage, young people should also have the opportunity to discuss those careers that are potentially a dead end or simply very difficult or unrealistic with notable mentions like influencers, sports superstars, fashion models etc. Maybe the dream job of becoming, for example, a truck driver, while quite lucrative in the short term, might not be the best future-proof career considering the rise of self-driving vehicles especially in the logistics industry.

Examples of careers of the future

Within the labour market, we can identify several major sectors that are commonly agreed by experts as careers of the future.

Automation. While automation has been present for many years and affected and shaped the labour market in a significant way recently it has appeared in many new sectors. Assisted by Artificial Intelligence we see the emergence of self-driving cars and

courier drones delivering parcels, both of which affect a significant portion of the workforce involved in logistics. Robots are performing cleaning duties and waiting tables and in the next few years will be able to take on much more complex jobs. Skilled professionals that can build, program or service them are sure to have a job for years to come.

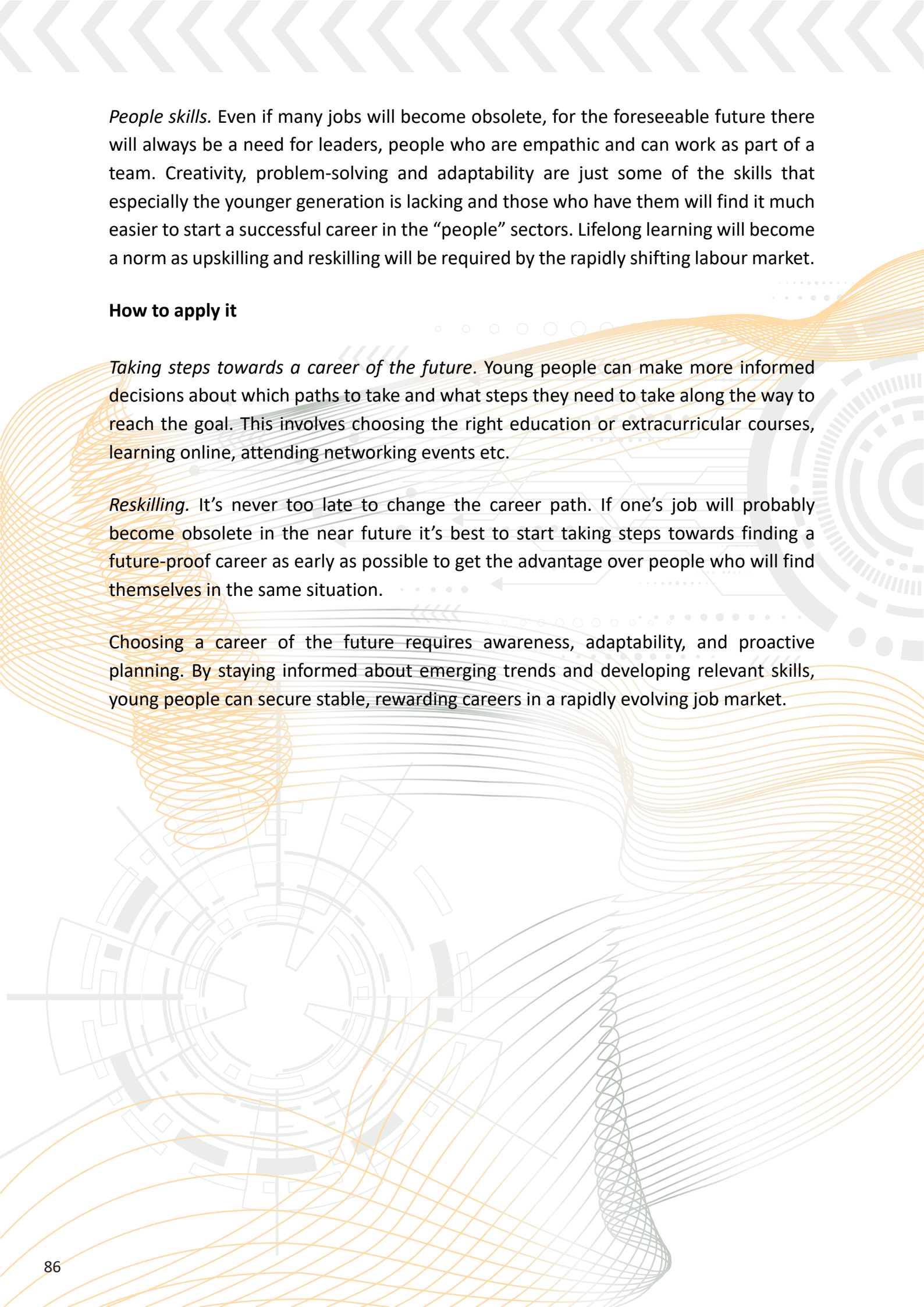
Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is here to stay and will likely have a bigger effect on the labour market than any other recent technological advancement. It will cause many careers to become obsolete, while at the same time people who will understand the opportunities it provides and the needs it can satisfy will achieve huge professional success.

Data-driven decision making. Those who can interpret big data and harness its potential for just about any sector will become essential employees over which companies will compete with high salaries and other perks.

Augmented Reality (AR), VR Virtual Reality (VR) and new global connectivity and remote working tools. While we can communicate online, and many jobs can be performed remotely the potential is still untapped and those who will be able to facilitate remote work will easily find employment and start successful careers. Augmented and virtual reality, combined with automation can open remote work to sectors where physical presence is currently still required. This will open opportunities for creators of VR and AR environments as well as skilled professionals who will be able to perform their tasks remotely instead of migrating.

Sustainability and green economy. Innovations in ecology, both in terms of new technologies as well as consultancy and data analysis, will require a new workforce that will keep up with the growing demand. Recycling, waste reduction, renewable energies, water conservation and purification are just some areas where young people with the right competences will have little trouble finding rewarding jobs.

Healthcare. Advancements in medicine, bioengineering and technology result in a growing need for a competent labour force in healthcare. Aging societies will require a workforce with basic skills like assistants and nurses as well as highly skilled and specialised designers and programmers of wearable tech and developers of digital health platforms. Another area where a competent workforce is scarce is mental health services. Coaches, therapists and psychologists can help address the increased demand for mental well-being.



People skills. Even if many jobs will become obsolete, for the foreseeable future there will always be a need for leaders, people who are empathic and can work as part of a team. Creativity, problem-solving and adaptability are just some of the skills that especially the younger generation is lacking and those who have them will find it much easier to start a successful career in the “people” sectors. Lifelong learning will become a norm as upskilling and reskilling will be required by the rapidly shifting labour market.

How to apply it

Taking steps towards a career of the future. Young people can make more informed decisions about which paths to take and what steps they need to take along the way to reach the goal. This involves choosing the right education or extracurricular courses, learning online, attending networking events etc.

Reskilling. It's never too late to change the career path. If one's job will probably become obsolete in the near future it's best to start taking steps towards finding a future-proof career as early as possible to get the advantage over people who will find themselves in the same situation.


Choosing a career of the future requires awareness, adaptability, and proactive planning. By staying informed about emerging trends and developing relevant skills, young people can secure stable, rewarding careers in a rapidly evolving job market.

Objectives:


- To learn and analyze future careers and the paths to achieve them.
- To analyze key labor market trends and forecast new career paths.
- To understand the need for continuous development, flexibility and willingness to learn in a dynamically changing world of work.
- To develop career planning skills.

Competencies:

- Ability to identify key changes in the labor market and predict which professions and skills will be most sought after in the future.
- Ability to plan their career taking into account future industries and necessary competences.
- Developing teamwork skills, creative thinking and effective communication.
- Gaining knowledge and skills on how to cope with dynamic changes in the world of work and how to adapt their competences to new challenges through continuous improvement and acquisition of new skills.

 **Methodological approach:** This workshop focuses on using creative methods to explore and analyse future careers and potential paths to them. Participants will take part in stimulating exercises such as poster creation, group discussions and individual reflections, allowing them to actively engage with future trends in the labour market, develop strategic career planning skills and increase their ability to adapt to changing professional requirements.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitator, optimally 12 participants

 **Needed resources:** flipchart, markers, white sheets of paper, large sheets of paper for posters, markers in different colors, “post it” papers, printed handouts

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

▶ Workshop scenario

Step 1. "Future careers" poster.

Step 1 will take about 50 minutes. The facilitator divides participants into 4 groups – assigning each one of the following areas: Automation and AI, Big Data and remote work, Sustainable development and ecology, Health care and soft skills. Those can be found in category Handouts. The facilitator asks participants to analyze their areas according to the questions:

- What new professions can be created in this sector?
- What skills will be key for future employees?
- What changes in the labor market are already taking place?

Based on the conclusions, each group creates a poster about the area and the answers to the questions. The poster can also include, for example, drawings or diagrams presenting new professions; a list of skills of the future; a short slogan advertising this sector. Let them work on this for 25 minutes.

Facilitator asks participants to make a presentation and participate in a discussion. Each group presents their poster having around 5 minutes for this. During and after the presentation the facilitator leads a short discussion asking the following questions:

- Are these forecasts realistic?
- What skills are worth developing now?
- What are the risks and opportunities associated with these changes?

Step 2. Skilling, reskilling, upskilling.

The aim of the exercise is to show how the dynamic development of technology affects the needs of the labor market and how you can adapt to them. It should take about 25 minutes. The facilitator introduces the concepts below - the theoretical introduction: Skilling, reskilling and upskilling are key concepts in competence management in the dynamically changing world of work.

- **Skilling** refers to acquiring new skills, often by people entering the labor market.
- **Reskilling** is retraining, i.e. learning completely new competences to be able to perform a different profession.
- **Upskilling** means developing already possessed skills to meet new requirements or to advance.

In the era of automation and artificial intelligence, investing in professional development is essential to remain competitive. Employers increasingly support these processes, seeing them as a way to increase innovation and efficiency.

Then facilitator divides participants into 3 groups distributing white sheets of paper and markers. Each group should choose one of the industries of the future – these can be those discussed earlier. Each participant should consider what new skills (skilling), reskilling and upskilling) will be key in it. The facilitator asks them to describe in groups how a person working in this industry could go through these three stages. After about 15 minutes, each group presents the results of their work. Here are following questions for the summary discussion:

- What do you think will be most important in the work of the future – skilling, upskilling or reskilling? Why?
- What can you do now to prepare for the challenges of the future?

Step 3. Future-proof career.

Each participant receives a white sheet of paper and a marker and tries to answer the questions below, on future-proofing their careers. Facilitator gives them about 15 minutes to do so.

- 1. My current skills and interests** – What can I already do? What interests me?
- 2. Future trends** – Which industries and professions will develop in the future? (Participants can be reminded of examples, e.g. AI, green economy, cybersecurity, digital health, etc.)
- 3. My action plan** – What steps can I take now to prepare for the profession of the future? (e.g. courses, internships, language learning, networking)

After writing down the answers, the facilitator divides participants into pairs – letting each participant in the pair answer the questions for feedback:

- What seems most promising in his plan?
- What additional steps could he take?
- Does he see any potential threats to this career?

Facilitator then opens a summary discussion in the forum of the whole group:

- What competencies were repeated in different plans?
- What steps appeared most often in the action plans?

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- What universal skills are worth developing to be resilient to changes in the labour market?
- How can skilling, reskilling and upskilling help adapt to future professional challenges?
- What actions can enhance your flexibility and adaptability in the job market of the future?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- The importance of continuous learning and adaptation in a rapidly changing job market – the ability to update and develop new skills will be crucial for long-term career success.
- The value of strategic career planning, based on current and future job market trends - informed career choices, flexibility and readiness to accept new opportunities will help participants remain competitive.
- Investing in skills, acquiring new skills and adapting to changing trends will allow to maintain good prospects in the future job market.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Use interactive activities to make the session more engaging and practical, but also provide structured discussions. Help participants see that traditional career paths may soon be outdated and that it is important for them to constantly develop and follow trends. Remind participants that career development is an ongoing process that requires dedication, flexibility, and continuous improvement – especially in an era of rapidly changing job markets and new technologies.

Useful comments to the participants

During this workshop, we explored future careers and how the labour market is evolving due to technological advancements, sustainability, and healthcare trends. Through group discussions, creative exercises, and career planning activities, you identified key skills and professions of the future and reflected on how to stay adaptable. We also focused on the importance of skilling, reskilling and upskilling. The key takeaway is that continuous learning, adaptability, and strategic career planning are essential for building a future-proof career. Use the insights gained today to take proactive steps toward your career goals and stay prepared for the challenges of the evolving workforce.

Tips for facilitators

The facilitator should create an engaging and interactive atmosphere by encouraging participants to actively participate in discussions, brainstorming sessions and creative activities such as poster making. It is important to emphasize future-oriented thinking, directing participants to analyze long-term career trends and the evolving labour market, rather than focusing solely on current opportunities. Participants should be encouraged to think critically about how industries will change and which skills will be most valuable in the future. The facilitator should also emphasize the importance of adaptability, lifelong learning and flexibility as key factors for professional success in the dynamic world of work. By supporting analytical thinking and market awareness, participants will gain a deeper understanding of how to strategically plan their careers and develop the necessary competencies to remain competitive.

Handouts

From the theory the most important concepts are skilling, reskilling and upskilling, which should be explained to the participants. It is also important to familiarize them with current trends in the labor market (such as AI), as well as the concept of lifelong learning, flexibility and adaptation, which are key to careers of the future.

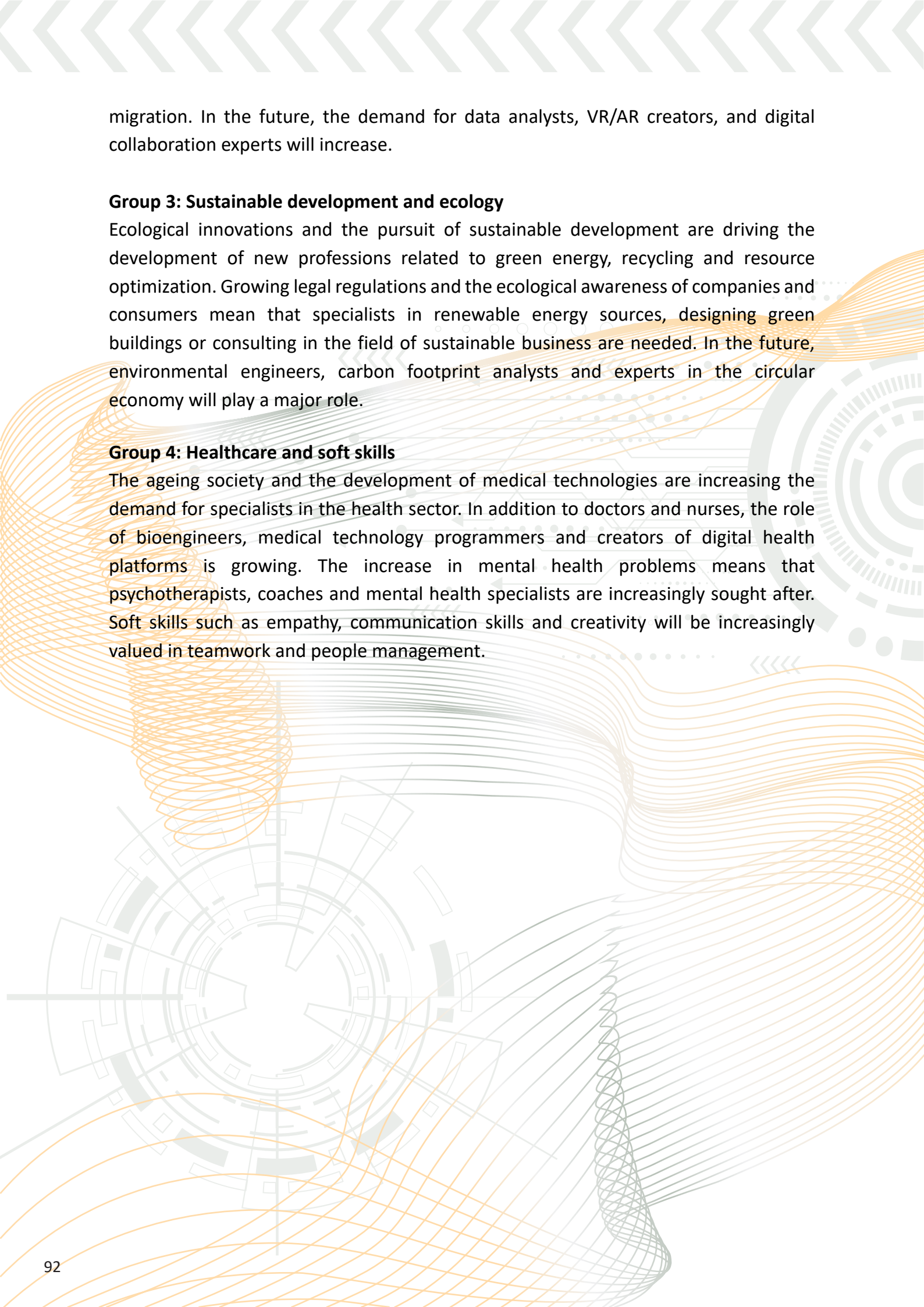
Future career areas

Group 1: Automation and AI

Automation and artificial intelligence (AI) are dynamically changing the job market, eliminating repetitive tasks and creating a need for new skills. Self-driving vehicles, robots performing physical work, and AI systems supporting decision-making are driving a growing demand for specialists in programming, maintenance, and development of these technologies. In the future, competences related to machine learning, data analysis, and AI ethics will be important, as well as the ability for people to cooperate with intelligent systems.

Group 2: Big Data and remote work (AR, VR, global connectivity)

The increasing amount of data generated by companies and users means that specialists in their analysis are becoming key employees. Processing big data allows for making better business decisions and predicting trends. At the same time, the development of AR and VR technologies is changing the way remote work is done, allowing for more realistic experiences, e.g. in training or medicine. New technologies will enable work to be performed from anywhere in the world, eliminating the need for



migration. In the future, the demand for data analysts, VR/AR creators, and digital collaboration experts will increase.

Group 3: Sustainable development and ecology

Ecological innovations and the pursuit of sustainable development are driving the development of new professions related to green energy, recycling and resource optimization. Growing legal regulations and the ecological awareness of companies and consumers mean that specialists in renewable energy sources, designing green buildings or consulting in the field of sustainable business are needed. In the future, environmental engineers, carbon footprint analysts and experts in the circular economy will play a major role.

Group 4: Healthcare and soft skills

The ageing society and the development of medical technologies are increasing the demand for specialists in the health sector. In addition to doctors and nurses, the role of bioengineers, medical technology programmers and creators of digital health platforms is growing. The increase in mental health problems means that psychotherapists, coaches and mental health specialists are increasingly sought after. Soft skills such as empathy, communication skills and creativity will be increasingly valued in teamwork and people management.

Soft skills exploration

■ Theoretical introduction

“Soft skills can be defined as a set of behavioral skills, attitudes, and values that shape an individual's relationships with others and society, and contribute to the development of self-confidence. These skills are key to maintaining personal balance, well-being, and success.”¹

Most research and papers identify the following as key soft skills of employability: communication, teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving skills, and leadership. This is an overview of the soft skills that appear most often as the ones employers desire in an employee, although others can also be used, such as conflict resolution, positive attitude towards work, work ethics, creativity, time management, and others, but the previously mentioned common denominator of research and contributions.

Communication

Communication is a broad term, defined as “a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior,” by Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Both written and verbal communication is important regarding how people will perceive you. Appropriate language, and essential information on who, why, and how goes without saying. Non-verbal communication, elaborated in detail in the expertise of public speaking is also essential. However, two terms are occurring more often related to communication: **assertive communication and active listening**.

Assertiveness is defined as “a communication style”. It is being able to express your feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and opinions in an open manner that doesn't violate the rights of others. Other communication styles you may have heard of include being aggressive, which is a style that violates the rights of others, and being passive, where we violate our rights.

The most common techniques are²:

- “*broken record*”, which consists of simply repeating your requests or your refusals every time you are met with resistance;

¹ Sipii, Volodymyr; Deshchenko, Oleksandr; Honcharova, Nataliia; Hrytsenko, Andrii; Hrytsiuk, Olena: *Prospects for the Development of Soft Skills in Future Education: Trends and Risks*, Conhecimento & Diversidade, 2024.

² *Assertiveness Skills*: available on <https://www.revolutionlearning.co.uk/topic/assertiveness-skills-articles/>.

- *the negative assertion* is an agreement with criticism without letting up demand;
- *I-statements* can be used to voice one's feelings and wishes from a personal position without expressing judgment about the other person or blaming one's feelings on them;
- *fogging* is a useful technique for people to use when people are behaving in a manipulative or aggressive way. Rather than arguing back, fogging aims to give a minimal, calm response using terms that are placating but not defensive, while at the same time not agreeing to meet the demands of the other person, saying no in a great manner.

There are six types of **listening**:

- *syllabic listening* – listening to understand and remember information;
- *critical listening* – when the listener evaluates received information;
- *selective listening* – listener picks some words to remember, else is added by the listener;
- *adaptable listening* – listener accepts what was heard and includes it in their knowledge;
- *egocentric listening* – listener listens and starts immediately referring to one's problem and
- *active listening*: empathic and effective listening.

The listener's activity is highly important and the goal is to understand the speaker's emotions, needs, and wishes. With active listening, we are building a relationship through four ears: the first ear is directed towards the speaker's personality, the second towards the content of the speaker's messages, the third towards the speaker's attitude towards us, the listener, fourth towards the message's impact. Active listening can be referred to as somatic listening as well due to the idea of listening non-verbally with the whole body.¹

Soft skills contribute to and ensure open communication, reduce misunderstandings, and foster a sense of inclusivity and respect. They also facilitate smoother work processes, better teamwork, and effective challenge handling. This skill also enhances personal development, which aligns with career goals.

¹ Summarized by Belc, Sabina; Cepin, Matej [et al.]: *Kaj pa, če bi mi ... kako spodbujati pobudništvo mladih?* (What if we ... How to encourage youth initiative), Socialna akademija, Ljubljana, 2021.

Teamwork and leadership

Teamwork and leadership are considered to be two of the most important soft skills. There are very few professions where you will be working entirely on your own, so teamwork skills are extremely important. Regarding team and teamwork, which – simplified – connecting with people to achieve a certain goal, there are two most relevant theories: The Belbin Team Roles and Tuckman's Model.

Tuckman's model's idea is of team development:

- *forming* (getting to know each other, time for expectations, guidelines);
- *storming* (brainstorming, process design, setting the roles);
- *norming* (independent work, responsibility for the tasks to each other);
- *performing* (working well on several projects, synergy, systems for smooth and efficient work);
- *adjourning* (going different ways, emotional – dealing with a sense of loss, capturing the knowledge).

The **Belbin Team Roles'** idea is to understand the balance of behaviors and skills within your team. There are nine roles in three areas:

- **Social roles.** Focus on building relationships and communication. This includes the Resource Investigator (explores opportunities and networks), the Teamworker (diplomatic and promotes harmony), and the Co-ordinator (clarifies goals and delegates effectively).
- **Thinking roles.** These focus on problem-solving and decision-making. They include the Plant (creative and innovative), the Monitor Evaluator (analytical and objective), and the Specialist (provides in-depth knowledge).
- **Action roles.** These focus on task completion and implementation. They include the Shaper (who drives progress and challenges the team), the Implementer (who is practical and efficient), and the Completer Finisher (who ensures accuracy and attention to detail).

There are advantages and disadvantages to each role, however, this can be a great opportunity to see how well the organization uses the individual's talents, and whether there is any role missing from the team.

These two are some of the leading theories in the field of teams and teamwork, each with its focus, which also contains others that combine these two fields (development and roles) more intensively: **DISC Model, Dragon Dreaming, Richard Beckhard's GRPI model, Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Model, Lencioni Model.**

The definitions of leadership are various – from extremely complex to extremely simple. Leadership is influence, but we can agree effective leadership is key to a successful organization. We know **Situational Theories, Contingency Theories, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Authentic Leadership, and Servant Leadership**, but these are theories on helping become a leader and leadership style.

But there is a more appealing and useful idea, a narrative, changed perspective: It's no longer solely defined by the title an employee holds but by the actions they demonstrate, such as adaptability, perseverance, and analytical thinking, as well as the principles they uphold. In other words, they may play a central role in meetings, projects, and strategic initiatives and use leadership skills. Individuals with leadership skills, even though not in a position, are more focused on the contribution (influencing development, initiatives, projects) than the position itself. It means somebody can make a decision, manage different situations, and direct others. They can find themselves in different specific expertise, but also areas such as thought leader, solution leader, etc. do not need a managerial role to be the best version of themselves and progress in their careers. These skills in employees contribute to cross-sectoral collaboration, performing better, understanding challenges, and sharing best practices.

Adaptability

In the last few years, the world changed even faster and more drastically than before. Rapid changes in workstyle such as transfer from paper and live meetings, events to the digital world, unstable and unpredictable jobs, and corporate restructuring made us see that adaptability, the ability to adjust to new conditions concerning the environment, is a very much appreciated skill.

Regarding the workplace, we can familiarize ourselves with three types of adaptability:

- *cognitive adaptability* (experiential learning),
- *emotional adaptability* (managing emotions while facing a change or transition and supporting coworkers);
- *dispositional ability* (seeing change as an opportunity to grow).

Adaptability is most beneficial, especially concerning personal and organizational growth, improves the workplace (by optimizing procedures, technologies, etc) and it grows a flexible and resilient work environment, especially in times of crisis, that stays relevant and competitive. The main shift is that adaptability is not a desired skill, but a necessity. As individuals as well as organizations we can implement it through

continuous learning, stepping out of our comfort zones, promoting an environment where ideas are freely exchanged, and reflecting on the experience.

Opening another area: **career adaptability**, a concept that was developed by Mark Savickas, he defines this term as “readiness to cope with predictable tasks in preparing and participating in work roles and with appropriate adjustments” and sees it through four dimensions:

- *care* (individuals caring about their career show a future-oriented attitude towards work);
- *control* (responsibility one feels for building and managing their career);
- *curiosity* (exploring and gathering information about requirements, routines, and benefits), and
- *self-confidence* (believing in their ability to implement wise and realistic career decisions).

Problem-solving

Companies depend on people who know how to solve problems - these are their best employees. Get to your employer with a solution, not with a problem. **Problem solving** is the process of identifying a problem, developing possible solution paths, and taking the appropriate course of action in complex and unexpected situations.

A popular one that is easy to remember is **IDEAL**¹, which stands for:

- **I**dentify the problem.
- **D**efine the context of the problem.
- **E**xplore possible strategies.
- **A**ct on the best solution.
- **L**ook back and learn.

IDEAL is just one problem-solving strategy and we have to mention one of the most popular – **Root Cause Analysis**². Core principles are:

1. focus on correcting and remedying root causes rather than just symptoms;
2. don't ignore the importance of treating symptoms for short-term relief;
3. realize there can be, and often are, multiple root causes;
4. focus on HOW and WHY something happened, not WHO was responsible;
5. be methodical and find concrete cause-effect evidence to back up root cause claims;

¹ Bransford, John; Stein, Barry: *The Ideal Problem Solver*, W. H. Freeman & Co Ltd, San Francisco, 1993.

² *Root Cause Analysis Explained: Definition, Examples, and Methods*, available on: <https://www.tableau.com/analytics/what-is-root-cause-analysis>.

6. provide enough information to inform a corrective course of action;
7. consider how a root cause can be prevented (or replicated) in the future.

There are a few techniques for performing a root cause analysis:

- **The 5 whys approach** is also described as the “toddler” approach. For every “why”, follow it with another, additional, deeper “why”. There may be written five, but sometimes we will need only two or up to fifty. This technique is used to avoid assumptions.
- The second technique is used to analyze the changes leading up to the event, especially where there is a possibility to look at a large number of potential causes (longer periods, historical context – **listing out every potential cause**: categorizing each cause/event and categorize it as Internal/External, Owned/Unowned; go through every event and decide on its relevance; replication or remedying the root cause).
- The cause and effect **Fishbone diagram**, also called the Ishikawa diagram, is more visual but similar to 5 Whys. The spine of the Fisk skeleton is in the middle and it is the problem. Branches from the main line and the rib bones of the fish skeleton are several probable causes. Those can be very broad, but we can break them into subcategories, usually, we start with equipment, process, mind power, purpose, expectation, marketing, performance, surroundings, skills, and personnel.

It's okay to ask for help if you're unsure how to solve a problem – that's part of learning. Problem-solving is a skill you build with practice, and everyone makes mistakes along the way. Nobody has all the answers, and that's why teamwork is so important. Collaborating with others helps you find solutions faster and improves communication skills. By working together, you're better prepared to handle similar challenges in the future.


Soft skills exploration: Communication

Objectives:


- To develop assertive communication skills, young people learn how to set boundaries, express thoughts, feelings and needs clearly.
- To equip young people to listen attentively and empathetically, ensuring they understand not only the words but also the emotions and underlying motivations behind the messages being communicated.
- To provide young people with tools for participants to address workplace conflicts, inappropriate behavior, and challenging conversations in a constructive and respectful way.

Competencies:

- Managing and de-escalating conflicts, addressing misunderstandings, managing difficult situations by using assertive communication and active listening.
- Enhancing interpersonal communication that will serve them well in the workplace, helping them build better and more resilient relationships with colleagues.
- Improving mental health by setting boundaries in the workplace environment, which leads to reducing stress, work overload and better managing high-pressure situations.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop relies on experiential learning through discussion and debriefing, helping young people to learn from peers and through real-life examples. Through real-life examples of work-related scenarios and assertive communication they will get the insight of common issues as well as common responses. Learning methods are: peer learning, presentation, discussion, comparison.

 **Participants:** 2 facilitators, 15–20 participants

 **Needed resources:** flipchart, markers, chairs, pencils, handouts – work scenarios, handouts – first response/assertive response

 **Duration:** 60 minutes

Workshop scenario

The aim of the activity is to provide tools on developing and practicing assertive communication and active listening in the workplace (and personal) environment, especially in workplace situations that can raise conflict, inappropriate behavior (such as insults, blaming). Participants will get practical experiences on both subtopics, which allow them not only to be professional in the work environment, but in the long-term will also help their personal development and mental health.

Step 1. First response.

In the first setting participants sit in a circle. Facilitator will divide them into groups of three. Once they're in your groups, they should find a comfortable space in the room where they can sit and discuss privately. Each group will receive a handout that contains a work-related issue, a speech or sentence, and a worksheet that focuses on crafting responses. The issue and speech/sentence are scenarios that are relevant to the work environment.

Participants first task is to read through the work-related issue, speech, or sentence provided on the handout. They should take a few moments to understand the scenario. Once they have done that, the facilitator asks each participant to write down their first response to the situation on the worksheet.

First response is immediate, gut reaction to the issue or statement. Participants shouldn't overthink it or analyze it in depth—just write what comes naturally as their first response. Facilitator limits this writing phase to no longer than 5 minutes. This helps keep participants' reactions fresh and authentic. It can be anything they feel about the situation, but their first responses can be anything you feel, but they should remain within the context of the issue or statement they are given. The goal of this exercise is to capture your initial, unfiltered thoughts. This first response will help guide a later discussion on how to approach the issue in a more assertive manner.

Step 2. Concept of assertive communication and active listening.

Facilitator should start by setting up a flipchart at the front of the room, where all participants can see it clearly and write the words “Assertive Communication” in large, bold letters at the top of the flipchart. Facilitator can begin by explaining the focus of the workshop, which is learning about assertive communication and active listening, two skills are closely connected and both are essential for effective communication in

both personal and professional settings. Assertive communication helps express thoughts, feelings, and needs confidently and clearly. Active listening, on the other hand, helps understand and respond thoughtfully to others. Both are critical in creating open, honest, and respectful dialogues.

Then the facilitator asks the group to reflect on their understanding of the term and invites them to hear their thoughts on what assertive communication means, whether they have heard of this term before and invites them to share what they think it involves. As participants share their ideas, facilitators write their suggestions on the flipchart. For example, words like “confidence”, “directness”, or “clear communication”. Facilitator acknowledges each suggestion, but if the responses don’t fully capture the essence of assertive communication, gently guide the group toward a more complete understanding with more exact questions and in relation to key words. If the group seems reluctant to engage or is having difficulty contributing ideas, encourage participation.

With the flipchart filled with ideas and everyone on the same page about assertive communication, you can then transition to the next part of the workshop, where you’ll dive deeper into applying these concepts through exercises or discussions.

Step 3. Active listening.

Once you’ve clarified the concept of assertive communication, introduce active listening as the complementary skill. Active listening is the first key step in assertive communication. It involves truly hearing and understanding the speaker's message, without judgment or interruption. The facilitator briefly explains that the goal is to listen attentively, focusing on both verbal and non-verbal cues, and not rush to respond immediately.

The facilitator divides the participants into groups of three. Each group chooses one participant to share a work-related issue or problem (this issue should be explained in as much detail as possible) in the scenario, but it can also touch on personal challenges that might impact the workplace. The time limit for the speaker is 3 minutes. The other two participants in the group will practice active listening. They must follow the rules outlined below.

- We make eye contact.
- We can nod to encourage participants for further communication.

- We are slightly leaning toward the speaker (remaining at an appropriate distance).
- We are focusing on what has been told.
- We can check, if we understand, if the speaker is not clear, we can ask for an explanation.
- Any questions are open and about content.

We don't:

- We don't respond with our own story, opinion or counsel.
- We don't interrupt.
- We don't prepare an answer with solving content.

After 3 minutes, the speaker finishes their story. The group then selects one of the active listeners to share the issue with the rest of the groups. The selected listener should summarize the issue in detail, making sure to include any important elements. They can ask the other listener in the group for help in filling in gaps or clarifying certain points. After hearing the summary, the facilitator asks each group to reflect on what they heard from the speaker. They should pay attention to the emotional context, motivations, and any underlying issues they noticed in the story.

Step 4. Assertive responses.

Facilitator then introduces rules and tips for assertive communication (he/she should write them on the flipchart beforehand).

- Use "I" statements.
- Say "no" cushioned with a compliment.
- Have one consistent message.
- Consider the feelings and opinions of others.
- Be factual about what you don't like.
- List behavior, results, and feelings.

Facilitator asks participants to fill the handout they received earlier in the workshop with an assertive response or possible dialogue in max 10 replicas. Once everyone has prepared their assertive response, the groups come back together. Each group shares their assertive responses with the rest of the group. This allows everyone to hear different approaches and learn from each other.

Debriefing and conclusions

After the activity, the facilitator encourages reflection and feedback from participants, using open-ended questions. In reflecting questions there are separate questions regarding active listening (1 for listeners and 1 for speakers).

Questions to reflect on:

- For speakers: How did you feel when you were listened to?
- For listeners: How did you feel while listening?
- What specific techniques from today's session do you think will be most useful in your workplace or in your personal life?
- Which answer do you feel is more professional: first or assertive and can you think of a recent situation where assertive communication could have helped you?
- What do you think of assertive communication?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- Expressing your needs, thoughts, and feelings in a clear and respectful way without blaming or attacking others. Assertiveness involves standing up for yourself while also respecting others' rights.
- Inactive listening, often people prepare their response while someone is talking, leading to misunderstandings and missed emotional cues.
- Assertive communication and active listening are a big part of personal development as well as professional development.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Make sure to set a clear tone at the beginning of the workshop by emphasizing the importance of both assertive communication and active listening in a way that feels relatable to the participants. It might help to give specific examples of common workplace issues (similar to the ones in the handouts) to make the concepts feel more tangible. Also, while guiding, encourage participants to reflect not only on the actions but also on how those actions make them feel, so they can better understand the emotional impact of their communication. Supporting them during this activity is very important.

Useful comments to the participants

We listen to answer, listen without truly hearing, but listen to share our own opinions and experiences. Usually, when someone speaks, we are already preparing an answer. Key components to listening are space and focus. It is necessary that the facilitator explains that inattentive and ineffective listening are key reasons for many misunderstandings in communication and therefore conflicts. The aim of active listening is not only to understand the message, but understanding the motivation, agenda and other underneath. Assertive communication and active listening are not characteristics, but something we can learn by practicing it over and over again, either in school, at home or work environment.

Tips for facilitators

- Prepare flipcharts beforehand.
- Be very exact in examples you use.

Handouts

Work scenarios

Scenario 1

A colleague repeatedly asks you to cover for them or take on extra work. It is true you are more of an expert than them, but those tasks were not assigned to you isn't your responsibility. It has been going on for a while now and this colleague takes a lot of credit for your work in your weekly meeting (manager often assumes you made an error without checking the facts).

Scenario 2

During a team meeting, your manager criticizes your work in front of colleagues, saying: "This report is full of mistakes. You need to be more careful." The comment catches you off guard and makes you feel embarrassed. The tone is harsh, and your manager doesn't provide specific feedback on what was wrong or how to improve. To make matters worse, they had previously handed the report over to a more experienced colleague for review but never asked you to make any corrections. Now, you feel belittled, frustrated, and confused. You don't know if your work was genuinely flawed or if there was a miscommunication. You also worry that your colleagues now see you as incompetent.

Scenario 3

Your colleague regularly assumes you'll stay late to complete tasks, even though your official work hours are over. While you're willing to be flexible, when necessary, this expectation has become the norm rather than an exception. You feel pressured to stay longer, but you also want to maintain a healthy work-life balance without seeming uncommitted. A teammate often asks for last-minute help right before you're about to leave: "I'm swamped, and this needs to be done today. Can you stay a little longer to help out?" You don't want to let your colleague down, but this has become a habit, and you feel taken advantage of.

Scenario 4

You and your colleague are both responsible for preparing a presentation. Due to workload distribution, you haven't yet contributed as much as they expected. Instead of directly addressing the issue, they send an email like this: Subject: Presentation Prep "I guess I'll have to do it myself since no one else seems to have time. Hopefully, it turns out okay without everyone's input." Now, you feel put on the spot. The email implies that you aren't contributing, but instead of asking directly for help, your colleague uses sarcasm to express frustration. You might feel defensive, frustrated, or even tempted to ignore it.

Scenario 5

Your team frequently invites you to after-work gatherings, such as happy hours, team dinners, or weekend outings. While you appreciate their efforts to build team camaraderie, you prefer to keep your work and personal life separate. However, when you decline, they respond with surprise, disappointment, or even mild criticism, making you feel guilty or excluded.

Scenario 6

You receive a new task from your manager, but their instructions are vague, leaving you unsure of what is expected. You're unsure what "detailed" means. When you approach your manager later to ask for specifics, they respond with frustration. "You've done reports before—just do what you usually do! I don't have time to explain everything." Now, you feel stuck. If you proceed without clarification, you might not meet their expectations. But if you press further, you worry about annoying them.

First response – assertive response

Work issue	First response/reaction: what would you do?	Assertive response/reaction: what would be best to do in long-term?
<p>A colleague repeatedly asks you to cover for them or take on extra work. It is true you are more of an expert than them, but those tasks were not assigned to you isn't your responsibility. It has been going on for a while now and this colleague takes a lot of credit for your work in your weekly meeting (manager often assumes you made an error without checking the facts).</p>		
<p>During a team meeting, your manager criticizes your work in front of colleagues, saying: "This report is full of mistakes. You need to be more careful." The comment catches you off guard and makes you feel embarrassed. The tone is harsh, and your manager doesn't provide specific feedback on what was wrong or how to improve. To make matters worse, they had previously handed the report over to a more experienced colleague for review but never asked you</p>		

to make any corrections. Now, you feel belittled, frustrated, and confused. You don't know if your work was genuinely flawed or if there was a miscommunication. You also worry that your colleagues now see you as incompetent.

Your colleague regularly assumes you'll stay late to complete tasks, even though your official work hours are over. While you're willing to be flexible, when necessary, this expectation has become the norm rather than an exception. You feel pressured to stay longer, but you also want to maintain a healthy work-life balance without seeming uncommitted. A teammate often asks for last-minute help right before you're about to leave: "I'm swamped, and this needs to be done today. Can you stay a little longer to help out?"

You and your colleague are both responsible for preparing a presentation. Due to workload distribution, you haven't yet contributed as much as they expected. Instead of directly addressing the issue, they

send an email like this:
Subject: Presentation Prep “I guess I’ll have to do it myself since no one else seems to have time. Hopefully, it turns out okay without everyone’s input.” Now, you feel put on the spot. The email implies that you aren’t contributing, but instead of asking directly for help, your colleague uses sarcasm to express frustration. You might feel defensive, frustrated, or even tempted to ignore it.

Your team frequently invites you to after-work gatherings, such as happy hours, team dinners, or weekend outings. While you appreciate their efforts to build team camaraderie, you prefer to keep your work and personal life separate. However, when you decline, they respond with surprise, disappointment, or even mild criticism, making you feel guilty or excluded.

You receive a new task from your manager, but their instructions are vague, leaving you unsure of what is expected. You're unsure what “detailed” means. When you approach your manager later to ask for

send an email like this:
Subject: Presentation Prep “I guess I’ll have to do it myself since no one else seems to have time. Hopefully, it turns out okay without everyone’s input.” Now, you feel put on the spot. The email implies that you aren’t contributing, but instead of asking directly for help, your colleague uses sarcasm to express frustration. You might feel defensive, frustrated, or even tempted to ignore it.

Your team frequently invites you to after-work gatherings, such as happy hours, team dinners, or weekend outings. While you appreciate their efforts to build team camaraderie, you prefer to keep your work and personal life separate. However, when you decline, they respond with surprise, disappointment, or even mild criticism, making you feel guilty or excluded.

You receive a new task from your manager, but their instructions are vague, leaving you unsure of what is expected. You're unsure what “detailed” means. When you approach your manager later to ask for

specifics, they respond with frustration.

“You’ve done reports before—just do what you usually do! I don’t have time to explain everything.” Now, you feel stuck. If you proceed without clarification, you might not meet their expectations. But if you press further, you worry about annoying them.


Soft skills exploration: Teamwork and leadership

Objectives:

- To prepare participants for real-world professional settings by immersing them in a structured yet flexible problem-solving exercise.
- To understand the impact of different roles in decision-making and developing strategies to solve problems collaboratively under pressure.
- To provide a safe space for young people to engage in professional discussion and allow them to experience the responsibilities of workplace roles in a risk-free setting.

Competencies:

- Understanding different roles within a team and their responsibilities, while balancing personal opinions with group consensus.
- Expressing ideas clearly and persuasively under stress, and pressure while engaging in constructive debates and professional discussions.
- Evaluating risks and consequences before making decisions that affect others, and understanding teamwork as a professional community with organizational hierarchy and role responsibilities.
- Gaining confidence in public speaking and formal discussions.
- Recognizing how different leadership styles impact team dynamics and understanding your values within.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop relies on experiential learning as the central approach, helping young people experience real-life situations through simulation and role play; this way, participants would have the chance to go through the experience of a work meeting having to anticipate and adapt to the unexpected. The most important teaching methods engaged in this workshop are: collaborative learning, peer teaching, discussion, differentiation, and questioning – all included in a learner-centered approach.

 **Participants:** 2 facilitators, 10 participants

 **Needed resources:** room, table, 10 chairs, paper, pencils, role cards, role description cards, clock, simulation handout, simulation support questions handout

 **Duration:** 60 minutes

▶ Workshop scenario

The activity aims to experience real-world professional settings, a professional community with people who may be different from oneself. The question that will arise is, how to work with someone when we have different goals, and what is the role of leadership within teamwork?

Step 1. Preparation and introduction.

Prepare two tables with five seats. There can be papers for additional notes and pencils if participants want to write anything down. In front of each seat, roles written on the cards (only roles), which the facilitator prepares beforehand. The participants are then divided into groups of five. If there are not even participants, facilitators can divide them into smaller groups (just watch out for several cards and handouts). The facilitator divides participants into teams in an interactive way or his/her choosing in a maximum length of 10 min. The facilitator invites each team to take a seat and assign roles randomly to team members.

The roles are:

- CEO of the company
- chef manager
- delivery manager
- design manager and
- finances manager

The facilitator then explains the situation they have found themselves in. The situation is a wedding cake business, which has an order for a wedding cake with 10 floors with strawberries and bananas. But the provider of the fruit has not delivered the strawberries on time, so they don't have them available. The team is meeting to discuss how to solve this issue, it is an urgent situation because the cake needs to be delivered in 2 days. Important note: everybody in that meeting has an excellent salary, but maybe people working in the departments do not.

There is room for further inquiries by participants, i.e. open space for participants' questions. Facilitator explains they can question him/her about anything, regarding the situation, but the facilitator can answer only with "yes", "no", "not relevant" and "will not tell".

Step 2. Design your role.

Facilitator hands to each participant a description card of participants' roles, their contexts (below). Facilitator gives participants 2–3 minutes to read it very thoroughly. Participants are informed after the reading, informed about their roles/responsibilities as well as their skills/characteristics for the simulations. Facilitator then asks to hand one's description card to the person on their right, who can read it (they can also note with pencil, if something is interesting). This can take 2–3 min. Facilitator asks participants to return the card to their neighbor.

Afterwards, the facilitator asks participants to stand in two circles, close their eyes for 10 minutes and ask them to imagine their role. Facilitator should support them with questions.

- What type of a leader are you in your role?
- How does he/she walk? What kind of gesture do they use? (Participants can try it out.)
- How is he/she dressed? Is there anything special about him/her?
- What are the words he/she uses a lot?
- What is his/her attitude towards superiors and inferiors? Is he/she maybe a rebel?

Facilitator can add relevant questions if necessary. When participants have finished, the facilitator asks them to outline a few key thoughts about their roles and make notes on paper.

Step 3. Simulation.

Each facilitator then sits at one table. Facilitators present that the goal of the activity is to find possible solutions through simulation. The solution doesn't need to be satisfactory for each included role and it is okay, if they don't find any solution at all as well. Facilitator asks participants to make notes of one to three possible solutions to the situation that would be acceptable from their role's point of view. He/she gives them a maximum 10 minutes to brainstorm the solutions.

Facilitator presents 2 simulation rules:

1. CEO is in charge of the meeting.
2. Everybody should present their idea.

Facilitator gives to the person in the role of CEO the handout below to make notes. Participants have 20 min for simulation. If necessary, it can be shortened or prolonged.

Debriefing and conclusions

Young people are not used to the context of a job meeting, it normally feels like an unsafe space where they can feel insecure due to a lack of preparation in the skill of public speaking and being part of a formal setting. To help them overcome the blockages which may arise, the workshop is designed to improve self-confidence and to bring to them a real-life situation that will help them prepare for their professional career. Therefore, the facilitator should conclude the activity with a short debriefing and conclusions.

The facilitator asks all the participants to go back to the circle and put them in pairs, each from one group with the same role. If the number is uneven, left participants should evaluate with a facilitator. Participants compare the experience with their “doppelganger” in 10–15 min. After finishing the comparison, the facilitator later asks to share their findings.

Questions to reflect on:

- How did you feel playing your role, was it challenging?
- How did the CEO handle their leadership role, was he/she influenced, what was the leadership style?
- What leadership qualities were most useful in this situation?
- How well did your team collaborate and how did different roles’ perspectives influence the discussion?
- What are the important elements of teamwork and leadership for you?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- The preparation for a job meeting, which is a context where different ideas and people take part (a clear agenda, outcome, type of meeting, and respectful atmosphere).
- Every team member plays a vital role in the decision-making process, and teamwork relies on recognizing and respecting different responsibilities. Teams function best when each role understands its responsibilities while also being open to collaboration.
- Mistakes and challenges in the simulation are learning opportunities. The best professionals continuously improve through experience and reflection. Teams often need to make trade-offs to reach a workable solution, and disagreements are part of the process.

✦ Useful comments to the facilitator

If the group is advanced, the facilitator can use it for debriefing and conclusion graphic facilitation on Tuckman's group development.

i Useful comments to the participants

Job meetings are team experiences. They depend on the personality of the team members, their "chemistry", and the mood they are in at that time. All along, remember that nobody is perfect, and strong preparation for a meeting can significantly increase the success rate.

💡 Tips for facilitators

This workshop is thought to be developed in the most organic way possible. For this reason, the facilitator should not interrupt the simulation, even if some tension between the participants appears, so they should be the only ones in charge of the results. The facilitator should be very attentive to participants, especially in step 3 during the simulation. There are 2 potential risks: 1) participants are not involved enough; 2) participants can get personal and therefore emotional.

If participants are not involved enough, there are some possible meeting questions to start the simulation below. If participants are getting personal, emotional, and overstepping boundaries, stop the simulation. During the debriefing address overstepping the boundaries and emotions that led towards that. It is recommended to address it as a learning moment.

📖 Handouts

Role descriptions

ROLE	DESCRIPTION	SKILLS/CHARACTERISTICS
CEO of company (leader)	He/she tries to achieve consensus and looks for the best solution for the company. He/she will take the final decision.	Intimate friend of the bride that ordered the cake, which adds extra pressure to him/her. Bride loves strawberries. Changes his/her opinion easily.

<p>Chef manager</p>	<p>He/she is in charge of the cooks; he/she has to make another cake he/she is the person that speaks directly with the employees.</p>	<p>Gets defensive when someone tries to change his/her ideas.</p> <p>Worries a lot about his/her workers, especially since he/she knows this is the department that gets quickly exploited.</p>
<p>Delivery manager</p>	<p>He/she will do extra hours to pick up whatever the team needs as he/she knows the suppliers well.</p>	<p>Speaks very loudly.</p> <p>Earns less money than the other departments, so he/she doesn't think that his department should do extra hours.</p> <p>He/she has a lot overhours as is oblivious to the fact his team of deliverers is exploiting him/her.</p>
<p>Design manager</p>	<p>He/she will need to redesign the cake quickly and this will take him/her 4 hours after his/her 7-hour working day.</p>	<p>Creative, interrupts his teammates.</p> <p>He/she had already redesign the cake 2 times this last month because of the "misunderstandings" (as he/she refers to) chef manager and the clients.</p> <p>His/her team has privileges as they are the creative ones, but they don't see it as privilege, but as basics.</p>
<p>Finances manager</p>	<p>He/she will need to adapt the monthly budget to overcome this obstacle. He/she already prepared the budget for the month so he/she will need to reschedule.</p>	<p>Think he/she is always right.</p> <p>Last month he/she had to already change the budget because of a problem with the design manager and delivery manager.</p> <p>There is a pickle with a bank card limit, it is not possible to make an online purchase.</p>

CEO's solution list

Possible solution	Suggested by	-	+	Possible consequences and for who	Agreed by

Simulation support questions

- What are our alternative options for replacing strawberries?
- How will this issue impact our reputation with the bride and future clients?
- Can we redesign the cake without strawberries while keeping the bride happy?
- What are the risks of delaying the delivery?
- Can we compensate the client in another way if we can't get strawberries?
- How do we ensure this doesn't happen again?
- Do we have any other fruit in stock that we can use instead?
- Can we prepare the cake with frozen strawberries?
- Will this require extra work hours for the kitchen staff?
- What happens if the bride is unhappy with a substitution?
- Can we make two smaller cakes instead of one big 10-floor cake?
- Can we guarantee the quality of an alternative cake?
- Are there any other pending orders that will be affected?
- What support do I have from other departments to solve this issue?
- What happens if we delay the delivery?
- Can we arrange a split delivery (cake first, strawberries later)?
- How does this impact your teams?
- What transport resources do I need for a last-minute order?
- Who will be responsible for negotiating with a new supplier?
- Will the client approve a new design without strawberries?
- What fruit alternatives look visually appealing?
- If we use another fruit, will it match the cake's overall taste?
- How will this affect the timeline of production?
- How will this impact our brand reputation?
- If we make a change, should we notify the client first?
- What backup designs do we have that we can use?
- What are the financial risks of offering the client a discount?
- How will this affect our monthly budget?

- What are the costs of redesigning the cake?
- Can we increase the price of the cake due to the extra effort?
- If we delay delivery, will there be a financial penalty?
- Will the cost of overtime work affect our overall profitability?


Soft skills exploration: Adaptability

Objectives:


- To help participants recognize their responses to change.
- To enable participants to identify their weakest and strongest adaptability dimensions.
- To create a personalized adaptability strategy by participants for themselves.

Competencies:

- Developing a growth mindset.
- Navigating career change while adjusting to new situations, therefore remaining flexible in career planning.
- Understanding personal strengths and areas for growth in career adaptability, leading to more informed decision-making.
- Developing action plans to enhance weaker adaptability dimensions and setting clear, achievable career improvement steps in adaptability.

 **Methodological approach:** The methodological approach in this workshop is experiential and participatory. Participants engage in guided personal reflection and self-assessment. Methodological approach also includes peer-to-peer help, sharing and learning as well as group discussion and structured conversation.

 **Participants:** 2 facilitators, 15–20 participants

 **Needed resources:** flipchart, markers, handouts Career adapt-abilities scale, Scoring key, pens, pencils, Action steps handout, chairs, timer

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

Workshop scenario

Step 1. Introduction – change.

Participants sit in the circle, creating an open and inclusive environment where everyone can see and engage with each other. The facilitator stands at the front, writes the word “CHANGE” in large, bold letters on a flipchart or whiteboard, ensuring that it is visible to all participants. The facilitator then invites participants to take a moment to reflect on the word and asks, what is their first thought or feeling, does it bring excitement or something else.

Facilitator should write down everything participants articulate, and it may vary from enthusiasm and optimism to hesitation or discomfort. As responses are written, the facilitator summarizes common themes on the flipchart, categorizing emotions into positive, neutral, or challenging perceptions of change and connects to soft skill – adaptability. You can find more on the connection in Useful comments to participants.

Step 2. My career adaptability assessment.

Firstly, the facilitator presents the four C’s regarding adaptability. You can find the material in the theoretical introduction to this workshop and in section Useful comments to the facilitator. Graphic facilitation is recommended and not a presentation. Each participant gets their own worksheet, the Career adapt-abilities scale, which includes four career adaptability dimensions and its twenty-four elements within those four dimensions, six for each of the dimensions.

- Concern = Items 1–6
- Control = Items 7–12
- Curiosity = Items 13–18
- Confidence = Items 19–24
- Career Adaptability = Items 1–24

The facilitator asks participants to assess their strengths and weaknesses in each area by checking whether a particular element is very strong (5) or not strong at all (1) on Career adapt-abilities scale questionnaire. The facilitator gives them 20 minutes to do that. After the participants are done, the facilitator presents a handout Scoring key. He/she asks participants now to evaluate those four dimensions through their answers by counting scoring numbers. Facilitator leads them through the process with an example.

In area concern there are items from one to six.

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	Strongest 5	Very Strong 4	Strong 3	Somewhat Strong 2	Not Strong 1
1. Thinking about what my future will be like				✓	
2. Realizing that today's choices shape my future			✓		
3. Preparing for the future				✓	
4. Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make		✓			
5. Planning how to achieve my goals			✓		
6. Concerned about my career	✓				

Each participant has completed the Career adapt-abilities scale by rating themselves on a scale from 1 (not strong at all) to 5 (very strong) for each of the twenty-four items. These items are divided into four key dimensions of career adaptability:

- Concern (Items 1–6)
- Control (Items 7–12)
- Curiosity (Items 13–18)
- Confidence (Items 19–24)

Each dimension contains six items, and the highest possible score for each dimension is thirty (since 6 items × 5 points = 30). After completing the questionnaire, participants now calculate their scores for each dimension by adding up their ratings for the six items in that category. The facilitator provides guidance by demonstrating an example:

For instance, let's say a participant has the following scores in the Concern dimension (Items 1–6):

- Item 1: 3
- Item 2: 4
- Item 3: 2
- Item 4: 5
- Item 5: 2
- Item 6: 3

Adding these together:

$$3 + 4 + 2 + 5 + 2 + 3 = 19$$

Since the highest possible score in the Concern dimension is 30, this participant has a Concern score of 19. The participants then repeat this process for the other three dimensions (control, curiosity, and confidence) by summing up their responses for the corresponding items. Once participants have their total scores for all four dimensions, they compare them to determine, which dimension is their strongest – highest score, and which dimension needs the most improvement – lowest score?

For example, a participant's results might look like this:

- Concern: 19
- Control: 12
- Curiosity: 22
- Confidence: 29

In this case, confidence (29) is their strongest area and control (12) is their weakest area and could be a focus for improvement.

This self-assessment helps participants identify their strengths and weaknesses in adaptability, which will guide them in setting specific action steps to improve their adaptability in the next part of the workshop.

Step 3. My career adaptability plan.

Facilitator asks participants to hold on to the filled-out handout Career adapt-abilities scale. Facilitator divides participants into small groups of three or into pairs and asks participants:

- to share their adaptability results for each of the four dimensions, dimensions they are strong in and ones needing improvement.
- to set the first three steps to improve the adaptability dimension they need to improve.
- to make a career adaptability mantra, a sentence that reminds them to stay flexible.
- to set a time frame for self-reassessment.

Facilitators limit their time to 30 minutes, but check if participants need more time. He/she can help and support participants with examples in category Handouts Action steps handout.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- What emotions or thoughts came up when you first reflected on the word “CHANGE” and did your perspective shift throughout the session?
- How do you think improving your adaptability is going to impact your career and personal growth?
- What commitments are you making to yourself to reassess and track your progress over time?
- If you could summarize your biggest learning from this workshop in one sentence, what would it be?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- Change is constant, unpredictable and sometimes immediate – adaptability is a key skill for growth and success, but also healthier lifestyle.
- Identifying your strengths and areas for growth in career adaptability allows you to take intentional steps toward personal and professional development.
- Lifelong learning and growth of mindset are essential.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Some participants associate change with growth and opportunity, while others may link it to uncertainty and stress. The facilitator ensures that all feelings are acknowledged, emphasizing that there are no right or wrong answers, just personal experiences and perspectives. Facilitators need to keep in mind this sensitive topic, since many young people face troubles with self-criticizing overly, and create a safe space and environment. Focus on the growth mindset in yourself as well.

Useful comments to the participants

Change can be challenging because it interrupts our routines and we challenge the unknown. We often seek stability, so when experiencing unexpected shifts, it's natural to feel troubled. Change is an opportunity rather than a setback – set yourself to a growth mindset: solutions, and remain open to learning.

In the workplace, adaptability is a highly valued skill. We have all faced the unexpected change during the epidemic of Covid-19 and we all needed to adjust in a very short time. But industries constantly evolve, job roles shift, and technological advancements redefine work as well as work processes. Organizations that support adaptability create

resilient teams, encourage innovation, and remain competitive in a changing market. Personal life is unpredictable as well: relationships evolve, unexpected challenges arise, and plans don't always result as expected. Those who adapt well manage stress more effectively, maintain a positive outlook, and find new opportunities even in difficult situations.

Adaptability is the ability to adjust to new situations, challenges, and environments. In today's rapidly changing world, both in our personal and professional lives, the ability to embrace change is essential. Effective adaptation results in success, fulfillment and resilience. This soft skill isn't just about responding to change—it's about actively preparing for it. It requires self-awareness, emotional resilience, and a willingness to step outside of one's comfort zone.

Tips for facilitators

- Encourage participants to be honest about their emotional reactions. This will help them build self-awareness of their emotional triggers in unexpected work situations.
- Encourage groups to be open-minded during the discussion and to consider various perspectives.
- If participants seem stuck, the facilitator can provide some prompts or examples of adaptability strategies, such as re-framing challenges as learning opportunities, practicing emotional regulation techniques, or collaborating with others for support.

Career adapt-abilities scale

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale

Name _____

Age _____ Circle one: Male or Female

DIRECTIONS

Different people use different strengths to build their careers. No one is good at everything, each of us emphasizes some strengths more than others. Please rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities using the scale below.

STRENGTHS	Strongest	Very Strong	Strong	Somewhat Strong	Not Strong
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Thinking about what my future will be like	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Realizing that today's choices shape my future	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Preparing for the future	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Planning how to achieve my goals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Concerned about my career	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Keeping upbeat	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Making decisions by myself	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Taking responsibility for my actions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Sticking up for my beliefs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Counting on myself	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Doing what's right for me	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities using the scale below.

STRENGTHS

Strongest 5 Very Strong 4 Strong 3 Somewhat Strong 2 Not Strong 1

- 13. Exploring my surroundings
- 14. Looking for opportunities to grow
- 15. Investigating options before making a choice
- 16. Observing different ways of doing things
- 17. Probing deeply into questions that I have
- 18. Becoming curious about new opportunities
- 19. Performing tasks efficiently
- 20. Taking care to do things well
- 21. Learning new skills
- 22. Working up to my ability
- 23. Overcoming obstacles
- 24. Solving problems

© 2011 Mark L. Savickas & Erik J. Porfeli

Scoring key

Scoring Key

Concern = Items 1-6
Control = Items 7-12
Curiosity = Items 13-18
Confidence = Items 19-24
Career Adaptability = Items 1-24

© 2011 Mark L. Savickas & Erik J. Porfeli

Action steps

- Set a 5-year career vision and write down what you want to achieve.
- Research industry trends to understand where your field is headed.
- Create a goal-setting plan with daily and weekly career development tasks.
- Seek mentorship from experienced professionals to guide your decisions.
- Update your resume and LinkedIn profile every six months.
- Take at least one career-relevant course per year.
- Attend career fairs and workshops to explore different career paths.
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals in fields of interest.
- Break long-term career goals into short-term milestones.
- Use a career planner or digital tool to track progress.
- Schedule quarterly career self-reflections to assess progress.
- Subscribe to industry newsletters and reports for ongoing learning.
- Practice positive affirmations to maintain motivation.
- Join professional communities that inspire career growth.
- Use a decision-making framework (e.g., pros/cons list) for career choices.
- Trust personal instincts and past experiences when choosing opportunities.
- Keep a career journal to reflect on successes and mistakes.
- Develop an accountability partnership with a colleague or mentor.
- Communicate personal values clearly in professional settings.
- Engage in ethical decision-making discussions in the workplace.
- Build self-reliance by taking on projects independently.
- Develop a self-improvement plan with personal and career skills.
- Learn to say no to job opportunities that don't align with values.
- Prioritize work-life balance and well-being in career choices.
- Take on-site visits to companies in different industries.
- Engage in job shadowing for a day to see different roles in action.
- Set a goal to attend 3 networking events annually.
- Volunteer for cross-functional team projects to gain experience.
- Research job market trends before making career moves.
- Compare potential career paths based on growth potential and job satisfaction.
- Ask colleagues about their work strategies and best practices.
- Read books and case studies on successful professionals in your field.
- Join professional groups and ask industry experts questions.
- Create a list of career questions and seek answers through mentors or research.
- Sign up for job alerts in diverse industries to stay informed.
- Experiment with side projects or freelancing in a new area.


Soft skills exploration: Problem-solving

Objectives:


- To analyze complex, real-world workplace scenarios, identify key issues, and think critically to develop effective solutions.
- To promote teamwork by requiring participants to collaborate and leverage each other's strengths in solving problems under time constraints.
- To introduce participants to structured problem-solving methods, such as the “5 Whys” technique, to identify root causes and develop targeted solutions.


Competencies:

- Developing the ability to think critically, identify problems, and come up with practical solutions, even when faced with unexpected challenges.
- Learning different problem-solving techniques.
- Developing resilience: to recover and stay motivated after setbacks or challenges. Resilient individuals can cope with failure, adapt to changes, and maintain focus on long-term goals despite obstacles or disappointments.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop is based on experiential learning. Escape room is a method that is based by itself on problem solving skills and its development. It simulates real-world problems that require creative thinking, critical analysis, and quick decision-making, similar to workplace scenarios.

 **Participants:** 3 facilitators, 15–20 participants (4–6 participants per team)

 **Needed resources:** timer, chairs (arranged in a circle), markers, pens, sticky notes, paper (to be available to participants as a support during escape room), handouts, inbox (physical or printed) and if possible additional materials for escape room set up

 **Duration:** 90–120 minutes

Workshop scenario

Step 1. Introduction.

Facilitator invites participants to take a seat in the circle. He/she explains the importance of problem-solving skills in the workplace and introduces the escape room challenge: they must solve a workplace crisis by finding clues, decoding puzzles, and making decisions before time runs out. Clues will simulate real workplace problems, such as client issues, internal conflicts, or system failures. The goal is to solve the problem efficiently and collaboratively to “escape” the crisis.

Step 2. Client emergency.

A key client emails at 6 PM with a request that changes the entire project scope. You can find the right e-mail in category Handouts. A printed “inbox” with multiple emails is hidden in the room. Participants must find the correct email (one that mentions urgent changes). Inside the email is a cryptic word puzzle that reveals what needs to be changed (request details). The deadline is tomorrow morning. The team must act fast to adjust priorities without overloading resources. Instructions for participants can be found in category Handouts.

Teams receive a task list that includes all current assignments. You can find it in category Handouts – Assignments. Teams should prioritize the task list using a sorting challenge to decide what can be done in time. The list contains both necessary and unnecessary tasks, some are distractions. Using a sorting grid, teams must categorize tasks by urgency/importance. When they arrange them correctly, they receive a code for the next lockbox. The four requests from the email changes are the key tasks that must be prioritized. The code is written in category Handouts and it is a key to the next step.

Teams get key information about available resources. You can find it in category Handouts – Available resources. Teams must decide how to redistribute tasks to accommodate the last-minute request. After submitting their plan to the facilitator, they receive the final approval from the “client”, signaling that they successfully solved the crisis. The attachments direct them toward specific team resources they need. The “confirm receipt ASAP” line encourages teamwork – teams should discuss the best approach before responding.

Once the team submits their resource allocation plan to the facilitator, they receive the final “client approval” email, confirming that the crisis is resolved successfully! You can find client approval email in category Handouts.

Step 3. The underperforming employee – the bottleneck.

Each team gets an introduction to the issue they are upon. Alex is the underperforming employee. Team is working on a high-stakes project, but one team member, Alex, has been consistently missing deadlines. This is causing delays for the entire team. Leadership is concerned, and the team must determine why Alex is struggling. The description of the issue can be found in category Handouts.

Then teams should find an employee feedback form from Alex’s latest performance review. The document contains key clues about Alex’s struggles. The feedback form is hidden somewhere in the room (inside a folder labeled Performance reports for example).

Once teams find it, they must analyze the responses to extract useful information. Teams must apply the 5 Whys method by answering “why?” repeatedly until they uncover the root cause. They receive a worksheet with the first “Why?” already answered, the basic problem statement is: Alex keeps missing deadlines (worksheet can be found in category Handouts). Teams should fill in the missing answers to complete the 5 Whys process. Once they reach the root cause (lack of confidence and training), they receive a clue leading them. This clue cannot be found in category Handouts, since it is dependent on space facilitator or organization choice.

Teams then receive a logic puzzle with different motivation strategies. The puzzle is set up like a deduction game. Once teams determine the correct motivational strategy, they receive the final clue (again clue cannot be found in category Handouts, since it is dependent on facilitator or the organization chooses). Code unlocks a box containing Alex’s improvement plan, confirming the problem is solved. Alex’s improvement plan can be found in category Handouts.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- What feelings did you have during escape room and in which phase, at what part?
- How did you approach diagnosing the root cause of Alex's issues using the 5 Whys method?
- How did you manage working under pressure to solve the workplace crisis?
- How did you ensure effective collaboration and communication?
- Did you make any mistakes? What did you learn from them in the problem-solving process, and how can this be applied to future challenges?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- The importance of problem-solving skills and its elements (quick situation analysis, prioritizing tasks, collaborative work, digging deep to problem's roots, clear communication and reflection on improvement).
- Frustration is a part of problem-solving, but also learning. When we get through the frustration phase, we get a reward – solved problems and new knowledge.
- There are many different techniques to problem-solving (like 5 Why's) and introduces the other, such as the Fishbone diagram (you can use the theoretical part for that). In this way, more participants are supported.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Facilitator can use boxes and connect clues to the space organization or he/she picked, however, there is always this possibility: one of the facilitators holds all the next materials and clues. He/she checks whether the solutions are right and then gives them the next task. The facilitator can be the central figure who manages the progression of the escape room challenge by holding onto materials, clues, and next tasks. This role is vital for maintaining control over the game and ensuring that the teams are progressing correctly while allowing the facilitator to check for accuracy in the teams' problem-solving process before handing over the next task or clue. But if there is an option it would be great to do a real escape room experience.

Useful comments to the participants

Frustration is a natural part of problem-solving and learning. It occurs when there's a gap between where we are and where we want to be. While it feels uncomfortable, it pushes us to engage deeply with the challenge. Frustration encourages us to look at the

problem from new perspectives and try different approaches. Though it can be tough, it helps our brains work harder, leading to creative solutions. Once we push through the frustration, we experience the reward—solving the problem. This success not only resolves the immediate issue but also builds our problem-solving skills for future challenges. The process teaches us patience, persistence, and adaptability. Every problem solved increases our confidence and readiness for the next one. Ultimately, frustration is a sign of growth, making us better at handling difficult situations in the future.

Tips for facilitators

- Before coming to space you are having this workshop in, get photos or go there, ask about availability beforehand. Based on that you can make an informed decision, whether this will be a proper escape room or facilitator-centered.
- Carefully prepare the materials and other needed resources.
- Ask your co-facilitator to check after you.
- Be aware of possible complications and be attentive to participants.

Handouts

Client emergency – instructions

It's 6 PM, and you've just received a critical email from a key client. The client is requesting a last-minute change that will completely alter the scope of your current project. This change needs to be addressed immediately, as the deadline is tomorrow morning!

You and your team must work swiftly and strategically to understand the client's request, adjust your priorities, and ensure that no crucial tasks are overlooked or missed. You must redistribute resources effectively to accommodate the new request without overloading your team members or missing any essential deadlines.

Your first task is to locate the right email from a stack of printed emails hidden around the room. One email contains the urgent change request from the client, while the others are irrelevant. Look carefully for clues that may point to the right email.

Client emergency – Right email

Dear team,

I hope this email finds you well. I just got off a call with our executive board, and there have been some major last-minute changes to tomorrow's presentation. We must incorporate these adjustments before the 9:00 AM meeting:

- New market data – The board wants us to replace Slide 6 and 7 with updated sales projections for Q2. The latest figures are attached.
- Infographic overhaul – Slide 10's customer retention graph isn't clear enough. We need a more engaging and visual representation.
- Budget adjustment – The estimated implementation costs need to be adjusted based on the revised supplier pricing (attached).
- Software Demo Confirmation – We promised a live demo of the new feature. Please ensure everything is tested and ready to go.

I understand this is very last-minute, but this is a high-priority client, and we cannot afford to go in unprepared. Please confirm receipt of this email ASAP and let me know if you anticipate any roadblocks.

I appreciate your hard work — looking forward to a smooth presentation tomorrow.

Best,
John Johnson

Client emergency – Assignments instructions

Using the provided sorting grid, your team will categorize each task by its urgency and importance. Remember, tasks can be: high, medium and low urgency. As you categorize, ask yourselves: Which tasks are essential to the client's request? and Which tasks can be delayed or eliminated?

Once your team has categorized the tasks in the sorting grid, arrange them from highest to lowest priority. Focus on the key tasks linked to the client's urgent request.

After correctly categorizing and prioritizing the tasks, you'll receive a code based on the numbered tasks in the grid. This code will allow you to unlock the next lockbox and move forward in the challenge.

Client emergency – Assignments (for teams)

Tasks	Description	Urgency	Order or doing tasks
1. Finalize presentation slides	Update slides with the latest client feedback.		
2. Proofread report	Ensure accuracy and professional language in the final report.		
3. Design new infographics	Create updated visuals based on the client's new request.		
4. Update budget forecast	Adjust budget numbers according to new changes.		
5. Reply to non-urgent emails	Answer general inquiries from internal teams.		
6. Prepare client meeting agenda	Set discussion points for tomorrow's client meeting.		
7. Test software feature	Ensure new software update functions properly.		
8. Organize files	Sort and archive project documents.		
9. Contact vendor for approval	Confirm vendor availability for a new service.		

Now see which are the first 4 tasks in order of doing and rewrite corresponding numbers from column Tasks: _____.

Client emergency – Assignments (for facilitators)

Task	Description	Urgency	Order or doing tasks
1. Finalize presentation slides	Update slides with the latest client feedback.	High	4
2. Proofread report	Ensure accuracy and professional language in the final report.	Medium	
3. Design new infographics	Create updated visuals based on the client's new request.	High	3
4. Update budget forecast	Adjust budget numbers according to new changes.	High	1
5. Reply to non-urgent emails	Answer general inquiries from internal teams.	Low	
6. Prepare client meeting agenda	Set discussion points for tomorrow's client meeting.	Medium	
7. Test software feature	Ensure new software update functions properly.	High	2
8. Organize files	Sort and archive project documents.	Low	
9. Contact vendor for approval	Confirm vendor availability for a new service.	Medium	

Now see which are the first 4 tasks in order of doing and rewrite corresponding numbers from column Tasks: **4 7 3 1**.

Client emergency – Resources (for participants)

Resource	Strength	Availability
Sarah (Project Manager)	Organizing & Delegation	Available 50% of time
Mark (Designer)	Infographics & Branding	Fully available
Lisa (Analyst)	Budgeting & Data Analysis	Available 30% of time
Kevin (Developer)	Software & Testing	Fully available
Emily (Writer)	Report Writing & Proofreading	Available 40% of time

Task	Assigned To	Reason
Finalize presentation Slides		
Prepare client meeting agenda		
Test software feature		
Proofread report		
Update budget forecast		
Design new infographics		
Contact vendor for approval		
Reply to non-urgent Emails		
Organize files		

Client emergency – Resources (for facilitator)

Task	Assigned To	Reason
Finalize presentation Slides	Sarah & Emily	Sarah oversees content, Emily polishes language
Prepare client meeting agenda	Sarah	Ensures strategic alignment with client priorities
Test software feature	Kevin	Only developer on the team, fully available
Proofread report	Emily	Writing expert, ensures professionalism
Update budget forecast	Lisa	Specialized in financial analysis
Design new infographics	Mark	Graphics specialist, fully available
Contact vendor for approval	Sarah (Delegates to Assistant)	Less urgent, Sarah can offload this
Reply to non-urgent emails	Automated Email Responder	Not critical for immediate priorities
Organize files	No one (Deferred)	Not urgent, can be done later

Client emergency – Client approval email

Subject: Approval: Presentation Updates Confirmed

Dear team,

I just reviewed the updated presentation, and everything looks fantastic! Thank you for your hard work under such tight deadlines. The new Q2 sales projections are clear and well-integrated, the infographic redesign is much more engaging, and the budget adjustments reflect the latest supplier pricing accurately. I also appreciate the extra effort in making sure the software demo is fully functional—our executive team will be impressed.

Final approval granted—we are good to go for tomorrow’s meeting at 9:00 AM. I’ll see you all there!

Once again, great job handling this last-minute change under pressure. This is exactly the kind of problem-solving and teamwork that makes a difference!

Best,
John Johnson

The underperforming employee – the bottleneck – introduction

Your team is working on a high-stakes project, but one team member, Alex, has been consistently missing deadlines. This is causing delays for the entire team. Leadership is concerned, and your team must determine why Alex is struggling, how to redistribute tasks effectively, and find a way to motivate Alex so the project gets back on track. Somewhere in this room there is an employee feedback form from Alex's latest performance review ...

The underperforming employee – the bottleneck – Employee feedback form from Alex's latest performance review

Employee name: Alex Carter
Position: Marketing Analyst

Work performance (productivity)

I try to meet deadlines, but I often feel overwhelmed with the workload. Some tasks take me longer than expected, especially when they involve complex data analysis. I feel like I'm constantly playing catch-up.

Communication and collaboration

I hesitate to ask for help because I don't want to slow the team down. I also find it difficult to communicate when I don't fully understand a task. I feel stuck, but I don't know how to ask for help.

Role and task preferences

I enjoy creative problem-solving and research-based tasks. However, I struggle with advanced data analysis and technical reporting. I'd feel more confident if I had more training in these areas.

The underperforming employee – the bottleneck – worksheet – 5 whys (for participants)

Problem statement: Alex keeps missing deadlines.

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

The underperforming employee – the bottleneck – worksheet – 5 whys (for facilitator)

Problem statement: Alex keeps missing deadlines.

Why? Alex takes longer than expected to complete tasks.





Why? Alex is struggling with technical tasks.

Why? Alex wasn't fully trained on the software.

Why? Alex didn't ask for help because they were afraid of looking incompetent.

Why? Alex lacks confidence in their role.

The underperforming employee – the bottleneck – Four motivation strategies (for participants)

- | Symbol | Motivation strategy |
|---|---------------------------------|
| •  | Additional training, mentorship |
| •  | Structured deadlines |
| •  | Public recognition |
| •  | Task reassignment |

Logic statements:

- The strategy that involves training is either the first or second key, but never the last.
- Public recognition is not an important motivation for Alex.
- Task reassignment comes immediately after structured deadlines.
- The last key is NOT structured deadlines.

1 2 3 4

The underperforming employee – the bottleneck – Four motivation strategies (for facilitator)

Deduction steps:

- From clue 2, eliminate 🔒 (public recognition) from being assigned at all.
- From clue 3, Task reassignment (↔) must follow structured deadlines (🔒).
- From clue 4, the last position CANNOT be structured deadlines (🔒).
- From clue 1, training (🔑) is either in the first or second position.

Solution: 🔑 - 🔒 - ↔ - 🔒 <<<<<

The underperforming employee – the bottleneck – Alex's improvement plan

- Begin the training program and task reassignment immediately.
- Schedule the first check-in meeting with Alex to review the action plan and set expectations.
- Monthly review meetings to track progress and adjust the plan as necessary.
- Schedule bi-weekly training sessions focusing on areas where Alex lacks proficiency.
- Set weekly clear goals with specific deadlines to ensure Alex stays on track. Use project management software to visualize tasks and deadlines.
- Provide Alex with private feedback after completing key tasks.
- Celebrate small wins and progress.
- Focus on positive reinforcement to boost morale and self-esteem.
- Avoid public recognition unless Alex is comfortable with it.
- Reassign Alex to projects that involve more creative and research-based tasks, which align with their strengths.
- Gradually increase the complexity of tasks as Alex builds confidence and technical skills.
- Quick check-ins to monitor Alex's confidence levels and task completion. Adjust workload and goals as necessary.
- Access to additional training materials (e.g., courses, workshops).
- Continued support from a designated mentor to guide Alex through technical tasks.
- Provide consistent feedback, both positive and constructive, to ensure Alex feels supported.

Personal branding

■ Theoretical introduction

Personal branding is about showcasing who you are, what you stand for, and what makes you unique. It's how you communicate your strengths, passions, and goals to the world. Whether you're applying for a job, starting a business, or building your reputation in a community, a strong personal brand sets you apart from the crowd. In today's competitive world, understanding and crafting your personal brand is more important than ever.

Key components

Personal branding is your reputation and how others perceive you. Think of yourself as a “brand”, much like a favorite company or product. Just as successful brands are known for their consistency and value, a personal brand highlights your skills, values, and vision.

Why it matters

A strong personal brand is essential in today's competitive world, helping individuals stand out in crowded spaces like job markets and social media. It not only makes you more memorable but also increases the chances of being noticed and trusted by employers, mentors, and collaborators. When you clearly define and communicate your strengths, you open doors to new opportunities and build valuable connections. Additionally, a well-crafted personal brand boosts confidence, allowing you to present yourself with authenticity and assurance in any professional setting.

A strong personal brand is built on the following pillars:

Skills. These are your abilities, expertise, and the unique talents you bring to the table. Highlight what makes you exceptional in your field or interests.

Values. Your personal values shape your brand. They define what you stand for and attract like-minded people and opportunities.

Online presence. Today, much of personal branding happens online. A polished LinkedIn profile, professional social media, or even a personal website can showcase your expertise and personality.

Authenticity. Stay true to yourself. A personal brand should reflect who you are, not who you think others want you to be.

Consistency. Whether in your resume, social media, or conversations, your messaging and image should align across platforms.

Strategies for crafting and maintaining a personal brand

Self-reflection. Start by identifying your passions, skills, and goals. Ask yourself: *What am I good at? What do I love to do? What do I want to achieve?*

Define your Brand Statement. Summarize your unique value in one or two sentences. For example, “I am a creative problem-solver passionate about helping businesses grow through innovative marketing strategies.”

Create an online presence. Use platforms like LinkedIn or Instagram to showcase your skills and share meaningful content. Keep your profiles updated and professional.

Network strategically. Connect with people who align with your goals. Attend events, join online groups, or participate in forums related to your interests.

Seek feedback. Ask trusted friends, mentors, or colleagues how they perceive you. Use their insights to refine your brand.

Evolve as you grow. Your brand isn't static. As you gain new experiences, develop new skills, and refine your goals, your personal brand should reflect these changes. Regularly updating it ensures that it remains relevant, authentic, and aligned with the opportunities you seek.

How to apply it

Personal branding isn't just for job seekers—it's useful in all areas of life. Here's where personal branding can make an impact:

Job/University applications. Tailor your resume and cover letter to reflect your personal brand. Use your brand statement to make a strong first impression.

Interviews. Speak confidently about your skills and values, using examples that align with your brand or skills.

Social media. Share content that showcases your expertise, like writing articles, creating videos, or commenting on industry trends.

Networking events. Introduce yourself using your elevator pitch—one or two sentences that summarize who you are and what you aim to achieve.

Everyday life. Even in casual settings, your brand is visible in how you communicate and carry yourself. Be authentic, professional, and approachable.


Personal branding is an ongoing process that can be adapted to future career choices. Building a strong personal brand is not just a one-time effort but a continuous process of growth and refinement. By staying authentic, consistent, and adaptable, you can create a lasting impression that opens doors to new opportunities and helps you navigate your career and personal life with confidence.

Objectives:

- To guide participants in developing a personalized brand by helping them uncover their unique strengths, values, and goals.
- To create actionable brand statements, improve their online presence, and practice communicating their brand effectively through networking and elevator pitches.
- To improve self-awareness, digital proficiency, and strategic communication, with a focus on professional success.


Competencies

- Understanding their unique value and how to articulate it.
- Developing a personalized brand statement that reflects their strengths, values, and goals.
- Learning how to enhance their online presence through professional platforms.
- Gaining confidence in networking and presenting themselves effectively.
- Creating an adaptable strategy for updating their personal brand as they grow.

 **Methodological approach:** Workshops methodological approach incorporates reflective self-assessment exercises to encourage personal insight, interactive group discussions with feedback to enhance learning through peer engagement, and hands-on practice in crafting online profiles and brand statements. Additionally, role-playing activities simulate networking scenarios and elevator pitches, providing practical experience in professional communication.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitator, 15–20 participants

 **Needed resources:** room with chairs and tables, projector (for short presentations), handouts (Self-assessment Guide, Brand statement template), computers/smartphones for online activities

 **Duration:** 120 minutes

Workshop scenario

Step 1. Introduction – Why personal branding matters.

The purpose is to set the stage for the workshop by explaining the importance of personal branding.

During the mini presentation (about 5 minutes) the facilitator presents the personal brand concept: “It’s how you communicate your unique value to the world.” Facilitator highlights the importance of a strong personal brand in job applications and networking. Next step is a group discussion (5 minutes). Facilitator initiates group discussion: “Think of a person or professional whose personal brand stands out to you. What makes them memorable?” Once the participants know why personal branding is important, let’s explore what makes you unique.

Step 2. Self-reflection – Discovering strengths and values.

The purpose is to help participants uncover the foundation of their personal brand through self-assessment. The activity is 30 minutes long. Firstly, facilitator distributes the Self-Assessment Guide – it can be found in category Handouts. Participants reflect on and fill it. The second part is discussion. Facilitator divides participants in pairs and they share their reflections and receive feedback.

Step 3: Crafting a personal brand statement.

Once the participant have identified your key strengths and values, facilitator helps to transform them into a powerful personal brand statement. The purpose is to guide participants in creating a concise statement that captures their personal brand. The whole activity is about 30 minutes long.

In the first part, facilitator explains and introduces key elements of brand statements (5 minutes) – facilitator can also write them down on flipchart:

- who you are (strengths/skills);
- what you do (field or expertise);
- the value you bring (impact on others).

Then he or she shares a few examples of concise brand statements as practical examples on how statements should be structured.

Facilitator then hand the Brand Statement Template to each participant and give them 15 minutes to draft their own statements. When they finish, facilitator divides them in pairs for peer review and gives them 10 minutes. Participants in pairs read their brand statements aloud and provide feedback on clarity and impact. Later they switch and the first participant gives the review.

Step 4. Aligning your online presence.

Now that participants have a personal brand statement, let's ensure their online presence reflects it. The purpose is to show participants how to update their online profiles to match their brand.

In 10 minutes facilitator presents key tips for creating a strong LinkedIn or professional online presence:

- professional headline;
- consistent messaging;
- highlighting accomplishments that reflect the brand statement.

Facilitator then invites participants to use their smartphones or laptops to review and update their LinkedIn or other professional profiles. He or she gives them 20 minutes and provides guidance as needed. Facilitator provides guidance as needed.

Step 5. Wrap-up and reflection.

Now that participants' brand is reflected online, it is time for reflecting on next step. The purpose is to reflect on key takeaways and encourage participants to continue building their brand. This step takes 20 minutes.

First is group reflection. Participants sit in circle and reflect based on following questions:

- What part of today's workshop was most valuable to you?
- What will be your next step in strengthening your personal brand?

Facilitator makes final remarks and recaps key points: self-awareness, clarity, and consistency. He or she also emphasizes the ongoing nature of personal branding. Then he or she invites participants to define action plan: participants identify 1 action they will take in the next week to enhance their personal brand.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- How did identifying your strengths and values help you develop your brand?
- What was the most challenging part of the brand statement exercise?
- How confident do you feel about presenting your brand in professional settings?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- Personal branding is an ongoing process.
- Keep refining your brand and adapting it to new opportunities.
- Online consistency will help your brand gain visibility and credibility.

Useful comments to the facilitator

- Encourage participants to view personal branding as flexible and adaptable.
- Be supportive when providing feedback on participants' brand statements and pitches.
- Highlight the importance of practice, particularly in elevator pitches.

Emphasize creating a space for open dialogue, self-reflection, and peer feedback. Encourage participants to explore and refine their statements through trial and error and to reflect on their experiences during exercises to boost their confidence and adaptability. The workshop should focus on helping participants learn from each other through discussions, shared observations, and mutual support.

Useful comments to the participants

- Don't aim for perfection—focus on being authentic and improving over time.
- Seek feedback from peers, mentors, and online networks to refine your brand.
- Remember that your personal brand evolves as you gain new experiences.

Personal branding is a deeply individual journey, much like job interviews. How you present yourself can depend on your personal experiences, communication style, and the situations you encounter. Keep in mind that the process of defining your brand is flexible – there's no one-size-fits-all approach. Be authentic and adaptable to the context you're in, whether it's an interview, networking event, or online setting. Don't be afraid to test and refine your approach as you grow. Remember, nobody gets it right on the first try, and your personal brand will continue to evolve with new experiences and accomplishments.

 **Tips for facilitators****Encourage peer support:**

When participants are reviewing each other's brand statements or online profiles, guide them to provide constructive and supportive feedback. Avoid overly critical reviews that may discourage participants.

Highlight real-life applications:

Show how the personal branding skills they develop can be applied in various contexts, such as job interviews, networking events, or personal projects. This makes the workshop's content more practical and relevant.

Flexible approaches:

Adapt the workshop to the needs of your participants. If they're more advanced, focus on refining their communication skills and online profiles. If they're beginners, focus more on the basics of self-reflection and brand development.

Provide follow-up resources:

Share additional resources like online personal branding guides, articles, or templates participants can use after the session to continue refining their brand.

 **Handouts**

[Self-Assessment Guide](#)

[Brand Statement Template](#)

Socio-emotional learning

■ Theoretical introduction

Socio-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing self-awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills that are crucial for success in both personal and professional life. SEL helps individuals manage emotions, build strong relationships, and make thoughtful decisions. In a world where communication and collaboration are key, mastering these skills empowers young people to thrive in diverse settings.

Key components

The first step in SEL is recognizing and understanding emotions in yourself and others. Emotions influence how we think, act, and interact with others. Being able to identify emotions helps you respond appropriately in different situations, avoid misunderstandings, and connect with others. Physical cues (like increased heart rate or a smile) and contextual clues (such as tone of voice or body language) can reveal [emotions](#).

Managing emotions involves staying calm under pressure, expressing feelings constructively, and finding healthy ways to cope with stress.

Techniques for regulation:

Mindfulness. Practice deep breathing, meditation, or journaling to stay present and grounded.

Pause before reacting: Take a moment to assess a situation before responding impulsively.

Reframing. Shift your perspective to view challenges as opportunities for growth.

Conflict resolution: Learn to address disagreements calmly, listen actively, and seek win-win solutions.

Emotional trigger and symptom awareness. The process of identifying emotional triggers, tracking physical symptoms, and naming the emotion.

Understanding emotions and their influence on decision-making and relationships.

Emotions shape how we make decisions, form relationships, and perceive the world. Recognizing these influences allows us to make choices that align with our values and goals.

In decision-making. Awareness of emotional biases (like fear or excitement) can lead to more balanced and thoughtful decisions.

In relationships. Emotions guide how we interact with others, whether building trust or navigating conflicts.

Building empathy and interpersonal skills

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. It is essential for forming meaningful connections and working effectively in teams.



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) helps shape future careers by building key skills like self-awareness, communication, and empathy. These abilities support career decisions, foster strong workplace relationships, and enhance leadership and adaptability, all of which are crucial for long-term success.

Developing empathy

Practice active listening. Give others your full attention and acknowledge their feelings. Imagine yourself in someone else's situation to better understand their perspective.


Interpersonal skills. Communicate clearly and respectfully. Collaborate by recognizing the strengths and needs of others. Practice kindness and patience in all interactions.

Intrapersonal skills. The abilities to understand, manage, and reflect on your own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to achieve self-awareness and personal growth.

How to apply it

Socio-emotional learning can be practiced and applied in every aspect of life:

In personal relationships. Use active listening to strengthen friendships and resolve conflicts more effectively. Being open about your emotions fosters trust and deepens connections.



In school or work settings. Emotion management helps you stay focused during stressful exams or deadlines, while empathy and teamwork skills enhance collaboration with peers or colleagues.

In community or leadership roles. SEL allows you to handle disagreements with tact, motivate others, and create inclusive spaces where everyone feels valued.

Through reflection. Regularly think about your emotions and how they influence your actions. Journaling or discussing your experiences with a trusted mentor can deepen your understanding of yourself.


Socio-emotional learning helps people handle challenges, build strong relationships, and make better decisions. By practicing SEL, individuals grow, become more resilient, and succeed in both personal and work life.


Objectives:


- To help participants develop socio-emotional skills by focusing on recognizing and managing emotions and building empathy.
- To learn through reflection and practical exercises emotion regulation techniques.
- To learn how to create positive interactions through empathy and active listening.

Competencies:

- Recognizing and understanding their own emotions and how they influence behavior.
- Applying emotion regulation techniques to manage stress and conflict.
- Building empathy and active listening skills to enhance interpersonal relationships.
- Developing strategies for applying socio-emotional learning in personal and professional contexts.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop combines reflective exercises, interactive discussions, role-playing, and practical applications. Activities focus on experiential learning, peer feedback, and collaborative problem-solving.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitator, 15–20 participants.

 **Needed resources:** room with chairs arranged in a circle or small groups, whiteboard or flipchart and markers, handouts (Emotion Awareness Checklist, Empathy and Active Listening Guide), sticky notes and pens

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

Workshop scenario

Step 1. Introduction – understanding emotions and SEL.

Facilitator sets the stage by introducing the concept of socio-emotional learning and its importance. First part is icebreaker activity (about 5 minutes). Opening questions is: “What emotion have you felt most frequently today, and why?” Participants take turns sharing briefly. Facilitator encourages them to speak. Sharing should last about 10 minutes.

Facilitator then implements a mini presentation (about 10 minutes). He or she explains socio-emotional learning: “SEL involves recognizing and managing emotions, building empathy, and improving interpersonal skills,” and emphasizes its relevance in personal and professional life: decision-making, relationships, and conflict resolution. Theoretical introduction of this workshop can be of help. Once the participants are acquainted with the importance of emotions, facilitator moves to next step.

Step 2. Self-Reflection – Recognizing emotions and triggers.

The purpose of this step (it should last about 30 minutes) is to recognize how emotions influence our behaviors and decision help participants identify emotional triggers and understand how emotions manifest physically and behaviorally.

Facilitator distributes the Emotion Awareness Checklist, which can be found in category Handouts. Participants reflect on recent emotional experiences, answering the questions from the checklist. This is the part they should take their time, so give them about 20 minutes to really think about their emotions.

After participants are finished, facilitator divides them in pairs to discuss their emotional triggers and share ways they currently manage these situations. Facilitator gives them 10 minutes for sharing and discussion in pairs.

Step 3. Emotion regulation techniques.

Once participants 've identified your triggers, let's explore techniques for managing emotions constructively. In this part the goal is to teach participants how to regulate emotions using practical, simple strategies. In total, activity is 20 minutes long.

Facilitator sets a stage for presentation, which should last about 5 min. He or she introduces three emotion regulation techniques:

- **Deep breathing:** Practice slow, controlled breathing to calm down.
- **Reframing:** Shift perspective to view challenges as opportunities.
- **Pause before reacting:** Give yourself time to process before responding impulsively.

Facilitator then leads participants through guided practice, guided breathing exercise (about 15 min). Facilitator follows this with a short scenario exercise where they practice reframing negative thoughts (e.g., “I failed the test” → “This is a chance to identify my weaknesses and improve”).

Step 4. The Tower Challenge.

In this part of the workshop facilitator wants to foster teamwork, empathy, and collaborative decision-making by simulating a high-pressure group task. Managing emotions is important, but equally essential is understanding others’ emotions and perspectives through empathy. In total, the challenge lasts about 40 minutes.

Facilitator sets the group and explain the instructions, this should take about 5 minutes. Facilitator divides participants into groups of 4 or 5, depending on the group. He or she gives each group the materials needed to build a tower out of paper and tape. The goal is build the tallest freestanding tower in 15 minutes. However, participants can only communicate non-verbally for the first 5 minutes of the activity. For next 15 minutes, teams work on constructing their towers and can discuss the process openly.

Debrief discussion (about 10 minutes) is the following step. Facilitator asks each group the following questions:

- How did you feel when you couldn’t talk for the first 5 minutes?
- How did emotions like frustration, excitement, or stress affect your collaboration?
- What strategies did your team use to overcome challenges?

Facilitator closes this activity with an input (about 5 minutes). He or she emphasizes the role of empathy and emotional regulation in effective teamwork and highlights that recognizing team members’ emotions and adapting responses helps foster positive group outcomes.

Step 5. Wrap-up and reflection.

The purpose is to reflect on key takeaways and create an action plan for applying socio-emotional learning techniques (about 10 minutes in total), therefore group reflection follows, based on questions below:

- Which activity helped you the most in understanding your emotions or others' perspectives?
- What is one strategy you will start using to improve your emotional regulation or empathy?

Facilitator's final remarks (about 5 min) should apply to recapping key points: emotional awareness, regulation, empathy, and collaboration, but also encouraging participants to apply SEL skills in real-life situations and reflect on their progress.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- What did you learn about how emotions influence collaboration and decision-making?
- How did empathy and active listening help you resolve conflicts during the activities?
- What challenges do you anticipate in applying SEL techniques, and how can you overcome them?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- SEL is a skill set that grows with consistent practice.
- Small improvements, like pausing before reacting or listening more actively, can significantly improve relationships and outcomes.
- Encourage participants to seek feedback and reflect regularly on their emotional growth.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Focus on creating an open and supportive environment where participants feel comfortable sharing personal experiences. Emphasize experiential learning by letting participants practice techniques rather than focusing too much on theory. Be flexible and provide guidance when participants face challenges, especially during role-play exercises.

Useful comments to the participants

Developing socio-emotional skills takes time, and it's okay to feel uncomfortable at first. Focus on gradual improvements. Mistakes are learning opportunities. Be patient with yourself as you practice managing your emotions and connecting with others. Reflect on your progress and seek feedback to continuously improve.

Tips for facilitators

Encourage sharing: Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate in discussions and share their experiences.

Monitor emotions: Be aware of participants who might feel overwhelmed during emotionally sensitive discussions and provide support as needed.

Use real-life examples: Relate the concepts of SEL to situations participants encounter in their personal or professional lives to make the material more practical.

Provide follow-up resources: Offer journaling prompts, mindfulness exercises, or online resources for continued practice.

Introduce alternative formats for activities: Role-playing, scenario-based learning, or artistic expression (like drawing emotions) to keep sessions dynamic and accessible across different contexts.

Handouts

Emotional awareness checklist

Your emotional awareness checklist

- What words best describe how I'm feeling?
- What thoughts am I having about or in response to this emotion?
- What physical sensations am I feeling in response to this emotion?
- How intense is this emotion and how long does it last for?
- What actions do I tend to take when I experience this emotion? How drastic are these actions?

PositivePsychology.com

Managing failure and success

■ Theoretical introduction

Managing failure and success is about handling life's highs and lows with balance and perspective. Success can boost confidence, while failure often feels discouraging. Both, however, are opportunities for growth. By understanding the psychological impacts of these experiences and adopting strategies like resilience and a growth mindset, young people can navigate challenges and achievements effectively, paving the way for personal and professional success.

Key components

Failure. Experiencing failure can trigger emotions like frustration, disappointment, or self-doubt. However, it also provides valuable lessons and opportunities for self-improvement.

Success. While success can bring joy and validation, it may also create pressure to maintain high performance. Staying grounded and humble is essential to sustaining long-term success.

The common thread. Both failure and success affect our self-perception and motivation. Recognizing these influences helps maintain emotional balance.

Resilience-building strategies and the growth mindset

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from setbacks is a critical skill. Resilient individuals view challenges as temporary and surmountable, rather than as insurmountable barriers.

Strategies include:

Positive self-talk. Replace negative thoughts with empowering ones like, "I can learn from this."

Support systems: Surround yourself with friends, family, or mentors who provide encouragement and guidance.

Stress management: Use mindfulness techniques or physical activity to reduce stress and stay focused.

Growth mindset: Coined by psychologist Carol Dweck, a growth mindset is the belief that abilities can improve with effort, persistence, and learning. Embracing challenges as opportunities fosters resilience and long-term success.

Failure as feedback: Rather than seeing failure as a limitation, view it as a stepping stone for growth and self-improvement.

Continuous learning: Celebrate effort and progress, understanding that mastery comes through persistence, not just immediate results.

Setbacks may feel discouraging at first, but they often hold valuable lessons that can lead to growth and improvement. Here are some examples of how challenges can become learning opportunities:

Academic example. A poor test score can highlight gaps in knowledge, prompting a student to revise study techniques or seek help.

Career example. Being passed over for a promotion might motivate someone to upskill or explore new roles.

Personal example. Struggling with a relationship teaches communication and emotional intelligence, ultimately strengthening future connections.

How to apply it

In education. Guide young people to set realistic goals and reflect on failures to identify areas for improvement. Celebrate small wins along the way to build confidence.

In the workplace. Encourage a culture where feedback is seen as constructive, and employees are empowered to take risks without fear of judgment.

In personal growth. Use journaling or mindfulness to process emotions related to both success and failure. Reflect on lessons learned and how they can guide future actions.

Through mentorship. Role models can share their own stories of failure and success to inspire resilience and perseverance in others.


Managing failure and success helps people cope with life's ups and downs in a balanced way. Both experiences give valuable lessons that promote growth, and by developing resilience and a growth mindset, individuals can learn to handle challenges and successes with confidence.

Objectives:


- To help participants understand the psychological impacts of failure and success, develop resilience, and adopt a growth mindset.
- To experience reflective discussions, experiential learning, and real-world case studies.
- To learn how to view setbacks as opportunities for growth and handle successes with humility.

Competencies:

- Recognizing and managing the emotions associated with both failure and success.
- Building resilience through strategies such as positive self-talk, stress management, and support systems.
- Developing a growth mindset by reframing failures as learning opportunities.
- Applying lessons from failure and success in academic, professional, and personal contexts.

 **Methodological approach:** This workshop uses a blended experiential and case-study approach. Participants will analyze real-world scenarios of failure and success, reflect on personal experiences, and engage in group problem-solving exercises. Interactive discussions and journaling exercises will help deepen self-awareness and promote practical application of resilience-building strategies.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitator, 15–20 participants

 **Needed resources:** printed case studies of failure and success (handouts), journals or notebooks for reflection exercises, flipchart or whiteboard and markers, sticky notes and pens, inspirational quotes or visuals related to resilience and growth mindset

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

▶ Workshop scenario

Step 1. Introduction – Understanding failure, success, and their psychological impacts.

During introduction – you can take up to 10 minutes – provide an overview of how failure and success influence emotions, self-perception, and motivation. You can help yourself with a theoretical introduction. The following step is a mini presentation of maximum 5 minutes with key concepts to discuss. Facilitator can write key concepts on flipchart or on presentation, whatever suits them best.

- Failure: “Failure can lead to self-doubt but also provides valuable learning opportunities.”
- Success: “Success can boost confidence but may also create pressure to maintain high performance.”

Facilitator highlights the common thread: Both failure and success impact self-perception and motivation and introduce the idea of resilience and a growth mindset as essential tools for navigating life’s ups and downs. Then he or she opens a group discussion (brief, about 5 minutes) with the following question: “Think of a recent success or failure you’ve experienced. How did it affect your motivation or emotions?” Then participants briefly share their responses.

Step 2: Case study analysis and personal experiences: learning from failure and success.

This step lasts about 40 minutes. Facilitator helps participants understand how to reframe setbacks and successes by analyzing real-world examples, how failures and successes can be managed constructively.

First part is small group activity (about 25 minutes). Divide participants into small groups and assign each group a case study. Facilitator distributes printed case studies of individuals who experienced significant failures or successes (e.g., famous entrepreneurs, athletes, or public figures), one can find them in category Handouts.

Groups discuss the following:

- What was the failure or success?
- How did the individual respond?
- What lessons did they learn, and how did they apply them to future challenges?

After that group sharing (about 5 minutes) follows. Each group presents a brief summary of their discussion and key takeaways.

In next part of the workshop participants are given a notebook/journal or asked to bring one and the facilitator is giving the following prompts:

- Describe a recent failure and how it made you feel.
- What did you learn from the experience?
- How did you apply (or how could you apply) these lessons to future situations?
- Reflect on a recent success. How did you celebrate it? Did it motivate or pressure you?

Participants pair up and share one failure and one success from their journals. Their task is to discuss how they handled the situation and what they would do differently next time. This activity should take about 10 minutes.

Step 3. Building resilience and a growth mindset.

Facilitator shows practical strategies for building resilience and adopting a growth mindset. Resilience is key to navigating both failure and success. Facilitator invites participants to learn how to build it effectively. Facilitator explains and introduces key resilience-building strategies in time frame of 5 minutes with following examples:

- Positive self-talk: Replace “I’m not good at this” with “I’m still learning.”
- Support systems: Reach out to mentors, peers, or family during challenging times.
- Stress management: Practice mindfulness, exercise, or relaxation techniques.

Discuss the concept of a growth mindset: “The belief that abilities can be developed through effort and learning.”

Next part is interactive activity Reframing failure (should take about 15 minutes). Facilitator distributes sticky notes to participants. Each participant writes down a recent failure or setback on one sticky note. On a second sticky note, they write down how they can reframe that failure as an opportunity for growth or learning. Participants place both sticky notes on a “Growth Wall” or board, creating a collective display of reframed failures.

Facilitator recaps key points: managing failure, building resilience, and adopting a growth mindset are essential for personal and professional growth. He or she encourages participants to reflect regularly on their experiences and practice reframing challenges.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- How can you use failures as feedback rather than setbacks?
- How do you stay grounded and humble during periods of success?
- What role does resilience play in long-term success?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- Failure and success are both valuable experiences that contribute to growth.
- Building resilience and maintaining a growth mindset are lifelong practices.
- Reflecting on lessons learned and seeking support will help participants handle future challenges and opportunities with confidence.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Encourage participants to share personal experiences without fear of judgment. Monitor emotional responses, especially during discussions of failure, and provide support if needed. Use positive reinforcement when participants demonstrate vulnerability or insight.

Useful comments to the participants

Sharing failures and successes is not about judgment but about growth. Embrace mistakes as opportunities to learn and improve. Use your support system—mentors, peers, or friends—when navigating challenges.

Tips for facilitators

Keep the environment supportive and encouraging, especially when discussing sensitive topics like failure. Adapt activities based on the group's comfort level and engagement. Provide follow-up resources, such as journaling prompts or growth mindset books/articles. Adjust activities for comfort and engagement: be flexible—if participants seem disengaged or uncomfortable, modify activities by offering variations like smaller groups, reflective writing, or less intensive discussions, to match the group's needs.

Handouts

Case Study [Handouts](#)

Job portfolio

■ Theoretical introduction

Job portfolio touches on a set of documents a candidate for a work position submits for the recruitment process that demonstrates his skills, experience and successes to potential employers, headhunters or clients. A well-prepared portfolio does not only help a person stand out but is necessary to progress to the interview stages and not be rejected at the early stages along with competitors who either don't meet formal criteria or presented a portfolio that is unattractive to recruiters. Updated portfolios meeting all the current employer expectations are required by graduates taking their first steps on the labour market as well as experienced professionals and freelancers.

Key components

A job portfolio should be a reflection and concise summary of your professional experience. It should include elements such as education, work history, and skills obtained both through formal and non-formal educational opportunities. It should be tailored specifically to the job you are applying for. In many professions, your portfolio should include samples of your best work. Photographers attach their best photos, graphic designers their works, programmers a sample of their code or an application they developed. Cover letters make your portfolio stand out and show it's not a generic set of papers sent to dozens or hundreds of companies looking for employees. Finally, it should have the correct form, be aesthetically pleasing, and fulfill formal requirements, including such simple elements as GDPR permissions to process the documents inside the recruitment process.

Why it matters

First impressions. A well-prepared portfolio captures the recruiters attention and helps to present the candidate's professionalism in a very consistent manner.

Proof of competences. Even before saying anything at the job interview a good portfolio will convince the recruiters that the candidate fulfils the formal criteria and has the necessary competences and the interview itself can then be directed towards highlighting strengths and giving the candidate the opportunity to shine.

Tailored documents. The best portfolios are those that directly address the expectations of the specific position. The cover letter addresses specifically the

company that announces the recruitment and the requirements of the job. The resume should prove that the needs of the employer will be met. Work samples should, if possible, present examples that are relatable and relevant to the particular employer.

Structure and confidence. The portfolio should help the candidate put all the information in order, even if sometimes the timeline was chaotic, which can also help to present the information at the interview stage. It gives the candidate confidence that he will be able to face the challenges that the job will put in front of him.

Elements of a complete portfolio

Tailored cover letter. Usually not more than a few paragraphs showing that the candidate put an effort into researching the expectations of the employer and highlights why he is the best one for the job. It should always be personalised, never generic.

Resume/CV. Listing education, work experience, competences and other elements that can be relevant for the employer. It should be clear, visually appealing, organised, neither too short nor too long.

Work samples (where relevant). Examples of best works that the candidate is most proud of and that also showcase his competences and talent, ideally ones that are also relevant for the potential employer.

Strategies for preparing a portfolio

Researching the company. Finding out information about the employer publishing the open position. Check websites on which employees comment on the work environment at the company. Research social media like LinkedIn and possibly get in touch with former employees.

Analyse the job description. Reading both what is written but also between the lines of the job description. Identifying requirements and skills as well as other factors that can be beneficial to include in the portfolio.

Preparing a cover letter. Making it personal, so that the recruiter feels the candidate put effort into the job application process.

Preparing work samples. Quality is more important than quantity. Choosing the best and most relevant examples that showcase how the experiences will benefit the employer does not go unnoticed.

Preparing the CV. The document should be clearly organised and contain all information required by the recruiters for the position. It should be visually appealing with consistent formatting, legible fonts and not cluttered with information that is not relevant for the job.

Updating and tailoring the content. New and more relevant experiences and work samples should replace older ones. Online portfolios should be constantly updated and older works should be evaluated and possibly removed if they can harm the recruitment process.

How to apply it

Evaluating the portfolio. A finished portfolio should be inspected by experts (career counsellor, youth worker, teacher) or peers. Sometimes valuable feedback can make a difference and get young people their dream job.

Keeping editable online versions. For easy updates and sharing the portfolio should be kept on cloud drives. Many platforms, including the Europass website, have online storage and edition options.

Presenting the sample. Depending on the type of sample the candidate can bring a presentation medium like a tablet or laptop for the interview to walk the recruiters through the portfolio and direct the interview in a favorable path.


A well-crafted job portfolio is a powerful tool that showcases a candidate's skills, experience, and potential, increasing their chances of securing a desired position. By tailoring, updating, and presenting it effectively, you can stand out in a competitive market and make a lasting impression on potential employers.

Objectives:

- To identify and analyze key resources, values, and experiences that are the foundation for participants' further development.
- To create an inspiring vision of the future.
- To develop a strategy and action plan that will lead to the realization of the participants' vision, based on their strengths and available resources.
- To strengthen motivation and commitment, coping with challenges, and effectively implementing changes in life.

Competencies:

- Learning about their strengths and learn to use them consciously.
- Gaining a clear vision of the future, which will help them make decisions and set priorities.
- Creating specific action plans, thanks to which their dreams and goals will become more achievable.
- Building motivation to act, learning how to consistently implement their intentions.
- Strengthening their sense of agency, thanks to working on positive experiences and opportunities.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop is based on the 4D coaching method, which allows to focus on possibilities and building a positive future, instead of analyzing problems. Going through all the stages will allow to create the basis for an individual action plan or portfolio of work. It is a transformational process that helps participants discover their potential, build an inspiring vision, create a specific plan and implementation.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitator, optimally 12 participants

 **Needed resources:** flipchart, markers; white sheets of paper, printed materials

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

▶ Workshop scenario

Step 1. Discovery.

The Discovery stage is a key moment of the workshop, where participants identify their strengths, values, successes and resources. The aim is to make them aware of what is already working well and what elements of their experience can be the foundation for further development. Facilitator's role is to help participants see their achievements and positive experiences, use coaching techniques, such as deepening questions, working with the success narrative or group reflection, create an atmosphere of trust that will allow for honest sharing of experiences. This step takes 30 minutes to implement. This step take 30 minutes to implement.

The facilitator should ensure that this stage is a positive experience that inspires participants to continue working in the change process.

Facilitator should print out the "My resources – table" for each participant and ask them to fill it in. After they have finished filling in the table, facilitator divides the participants into groups of 2 or 3 and ask them to discuss their tables with each other. The table below is a fragment of an individual action plan, which is a counselling tool.

Here are key questions to discuss in groups:

- What resources do I have?
- What works well?
- What successes do I have?
- What motivates me

Step 2. Dream.

This stage is about creating a vision of an ideal future. Participants imagine what they would like their reality to look like if all their dreams and ambitions were fulfilled. Facilitator's role is to inspire participants to think without limits and go beyond everyday patterns, use visualization techniques, mind maps or working with images to help create inspiring visions, help participants discover their deep desires and goals that really motivate them. This step takes 20 minutes to implement.

Facilitator prints out a "Weekly calendar" for each participant. Ask them to fill each day with what they consider to be their ideal activities, tasks that do NOT involve paid work. The entire day must be filled – from dawn to dusk.

After the exercise is complete, lead a discussion. Key questions for discussion:

- Who managed to fill their calendar completely?
- Was it difficult to fill all the time in the day?
- How would you feel living such a life?
- So what would your ideal life look like – what is your biggest dream in your personal and professional life?

Step 3. Design.

The third stage is the transition from vision to a specific action plan. Participants define how they can achieve their dreams based on their resources and capabilities. Facilitator's role is helping to translate dreams into real and feasible steps, supporting participants in formulating goals using the SMART method (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) and making them aware of what resources and support they can use to increase their chances of success. This step takes 20 minutes to implement.

Facilitator divides participants so they can work in pairs and distributes white sheets of paper and markers. Then explains the instructions.

1. Reflection on the vision of the future (5 minutes): Close your eyes and imagine that 5 years have passed and you have achieved your professional success – Where do you work? What does your day look like? What is your position or activity? How do you feel? Write down 2–3 key elements of this vision.

2. Defining the main goal (5 minutes): Based on the vision, write down one key professional goal that you want to achieve (e.g. “I want to become a project team leader in the IT industry”).

3. Aligning the goal with the SMART method (5 minutes):

- *S (Specific) – Specify the goal – What exactly do you want to achieve?*
- *M (Measurable) – How will you measure your success? How will you know that you have achieved the goal?*
- *A (Achievable) – Is it realistic? What resources do you have and what do you need to acquire?*
- *R (Relevant) – Why is this goal important to you? How does it fit into your vision*
- *T (Time-bound) – Set a deadline – By when do you want to achieve this goal?*

4. Summary and feedback (5 minutes): After formulating the goal, participants exchange their goals in pairs and give each other short feedback: Is the goal specific enough? Is it realistic and measurable? What are the 3 steps you need to take to make this goal your reality?

Step 4. Destiny.

The final stage is implementing actions and consolidating changes. Participants begin to implement their plans and consider how to maintain motivation and develop their actions in the long term. Facilitator's role is to support participants in finding ways to maintain engagement and consistency, help them find identify potential obstacles and strategies to overcome them, to facilitate the process of monitoring progress and building a support system (e.g. mentors, mastermind groups). This step takes 20 minutes to implement.

Facilitator implements group task of brainstorming – “The Path to Success”. He or she divides the participants into groups of 4. Each group will lead a brainstorming session and then share their reflections on the forum, and you as the facilitator will summarize the discussion. Then facilitator explains instructions for participants.

1. My path to the goal (5 minutes): Each participant writes down their main professional goal and the first steps they need to take to achieve it. Then they answer the question: What might stand in my way of achieving my goal?

2. Brainstorming: obstacles and solutions (5 minutes): Each group works on the goals of its participants - they should divide the sheet of paper into 2 parts:

- A. Possible obstacles – e.g. lack of time, decrease in motivation, lack of support, unexpected difficulties.
- B. Strategies for overcoming obstacles – e.g. setting smaller goals, finding a mentor, establishing a reward system, joining a support group.

Let them discuss it for the remaining time.

3. Long-term strategy – How to stay on track? (10 minutes): Each group selects 2–3 key strategies and determines how they will implement them. Additional questions for reflection:

- How will I monitor my progress?
- What will I do if I lose motivation?
- Who can I ask for support?

Step 5. Conclusion and summary.

Each group/participant shares one key takeaway. The facilitator can emphasize the importance of systematically monitoring progress and using support (e.g. mentors, success journal). Participants write down the 3 most important strategies on a flipchart.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- How does gathering all of this information help create the perfect job portfolio? What is worth updating on an ongoing basis?
- What new insights have you gained about your strengths and career resources?
- How does a clear vision of your future impact your motivation and decision-making?
- What methods will help you stay committed to your career aspirations and combat challenges as they arise?
- How can you update your career portfolio to accurately reflect your progress and development?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- The importance of self-reflection in shaping career choices and opportunities.
- The value of setting clear goals and creating structured plans for long-term success.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Encourage participants to self-reflect on themselves, strengths, achievements, etc., but also to engage in discussions with others, helping them recognize opportunities that they can use. Make sure that each participant has a chance to reflect on their portfolio or its development. It is worth giving them practical ideas and taking care of their preferences – for example, suggest people who prefer paper versions collect their portfolio in a binder and people who prefer online – in the cloud or on Google Drive.

Useful comments to the participants

A well-prepared career portfolio is like a road map to career success, providing clarity around your personal strengths, achievements and future aspirations. Recognising your core competencies and achievements enables you to make informed decisions and set realistic, achievable goals. By developing a clear career vision and translating it into actionable steps, you create a solid foundation for long-term growth. Career development is an ongoing process – regularly refining your portfolio ensures it accurately reflects you and your career path.

💡 Tips for facilitators

To keep participants focused on their career goals, facilitators should guide discussions in a clear and purposeful way. Encouraging meaningful reflection helps participants define their aspirations and identify practical steps to achieve them. Visualization exercises, such as mind maps, can make career planning more engaging and concrete, and therefore more realistic. Helping participants imagine their ideal career future increases their motivation and provides clarity about their next steps.

📄 Handouts

The theoretical part of the workshop should provide participants some knowledge of what a job portfolio is and information how to create some elements of a job portfolio. Participants should be given clear guidance on how to document their skills, experiences and achievements in a way that enhances their career prospects. Providing examples of well-structured job portfolios can provide a practical reference for organizing their own.

My resources – table

Education and work experience (including work, internships, volunteering etc.):	Acquired knowledge and skills:

Courses, training, workshops etc.		Acquired knowledge and skills:
<p>Motivation, gratification - What motivates me? What brings me joy?</p>		
Competence/qualification barriers (what knowledge and competences am I missing?)	Internal barriers (what blocks me, what characteristics?)	Social barriers (what norms, prejudices, stereotypes, etc. are blocking me?)
Barrier	How to minimize/remove it?	Who can help me with this?

My 5 most important successes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

My strengths and talents:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

My flaws and weaknesses:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My values:

My notes and reflections:

Try to answer questions...

What would I like to share with others? What makes me unique? 😊

Weekly calendar

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

Interview preparation

■ Theoretical introduction

Job interviews are a critical step in the hiring process, and being familiar with different formats can significantly enhance a candidate's preparation. Common types of interviews on labor market include:

- **Traditional face-to-face interviews:** conducted in person, these interviews allow candidates to showcase interpersonal skills, professionalism, and confidence in a direct setting.
- **Virtual interviews:** increasingly popular due to remote work trends, these interviews occur via digital platforms. Candidates should ensure technical readiness, a professional online setup, and effective virtual communication.
- **Behavioral interviews:** Focused on past experiences, these interviews assess competencies through examples. Using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) helps candidates structure responses clearly and impactfully.
- **Group Interviews:** Candidates participate in group tasks or discussions, where qualities such as teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving are evaluated.

Understanding the expectations of these formats helps candidates tailor their approach, ensuring they present their best self in any interview scenario.

Another important aspect to consider is effective communication during interviews which can greatly influence the outcome. The following theoretical principles provide valuable insights for candidates:

- **Albert Mehrabian's Communication Model:** This model emphasizes that 93% of communication is nonverbal, comprising body language (55%) and tone (38%), while only 7% is verbal content. Candidates should focus on maintaining confident body language, appropriate gestures, and a positive tone to create a strong impression.
- **Transactional Analysis (TA):** TA provides a framework for managing interactions. Candidates should adopt an Adult-to-Adult communication style to foster professionalism, mutual respect, and effective dialogue with interviewers.
- **Self-Presentation Theory (Erving Goffman):** This theory highlights the importance of impression management. Candidates should align their appearance, behavior, and verbal communication with the company's culture and the job role, creating a cohesive and authentic image.

By applying these theories, candidates can enhance their clarity, build rapport, and effectively communicate their value to employers.

Practical advice for interview preparation

Pre-interview preparation

- *Research the employer.* Candidates should familiarize themselves with the company's mission, values, culture, and recent achievements. This demonstrates genuine interest and allows candidates to tailor their responses.
- *Practice makes perfect.* Mock interviews and practicing common questions can improve confidence and fluency. Behavioral questions like "Describe a time when you overcame a challenge" are frequently asked at job interviews.
- *Prepare documents.* Candidates should ensure their CV, portfolio, and references are up-to-date and ready to share.

Dress Code

- In most contexts, professional attire is expected. For corporate roles, formal wear such as suits is ideal, while smart-casual attire may be more appropriate in creative or tech industries. Researching the company's dress code ensures a suitable choice.

Managing Emotions

- **Relaxation techniques:** practices like deep breathing or visualization can help candidates manage pre-interview nerves.
- **Positive self-talk:** encouraging inner dialogue reinforces confidence and reduces anxiety.
- **Pause and think:** taking a moment before responding to difficult questions allows candidates to compose thoughtful and clear answers.

During the interview

- Maintain eye contact, adopt a confident posture, and exude a friendly demeanor to build rapport with interviewers.
- Listen actively to questions, asking for clarification if necessary.


The interview process is more than an evaluation of a candidate's qualifications; it is an opportunity to connect with potential employers and demonstrate fit for the role. By understanding various interview formats, applying effective communication strategies, and preparing thoroughly, candidates can enhance their confidence and performance. Youth workers should emphasize these strategies, equipping young people to navigate the evolving labor market successfully. This preparation not only improves interview outcomes but also fosters skills that contribute to long-term career development.

Objectives:

- To prepare young people for job interviews, providing them with the instruments and methods necessary to support their candidacy coherently and convincingly.
- To identify and align the necessary skills for a job or profession.
- To manage their emotions and describe their qualities creatively.

Competencies:

- Establishing logical connections between personal skills and abilities and the requirements of potential employers for a particular job.
- Selecting and presenting personal skills and abilities creatively and convincingly during a job interview.
- Managing emotions effectively to maintain optimal performance in front of an interview commission.
- Anticipating the sequence and steps of a job interview to prepare for potential challenges and avoid disruptions in performance.
- Receiving and applying constructive feedback from job interview simulations to enhance familiarity with interview dynamics.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop relies on experiential learning as central approach, helping young people experience real-life situation by simulation and role play; this way, participants would have the chance to go through the experience of a job interview having to anticipate and adapt to the unexpected. The most important teaching methods engaged in this workshop are: collaborative learning, peer teaching, discussion, differentiation, questioning – all included in a learner-centered approach.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitator, 15–20 participants

 **Needed resources:** room, flipchart, paper and other stationary, pens, markers, handouts with interview questions, cards with skills and professions

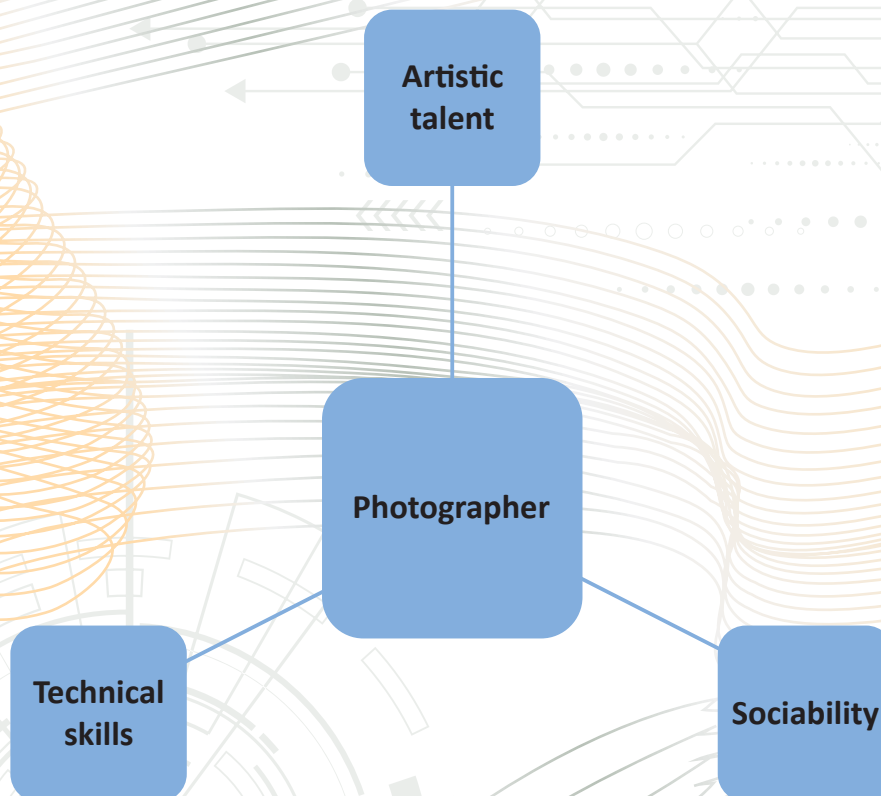
 **Duration:** 60 minutes

▶ Workshop scenario

The aim of the activity is to provide a framework for exercising job interviews and for familiarization with the progress and consecution of such an activity from multiple perspectives. The participants are going to simulate a job interview from both positions (employer and candidate). The workshop involves three successive steps/phases.

Step 1. Professional preparation.

This phase sets the stage for the rest of the workshop and its purpose is to establish similarities between skills & aptitudes versus jobs/professions. In other words, certain jobs require certain abilities and vice-versa, therefore it is fundamental for participants and virtual candidates to establish a good connection between the two.



Example of skills/abilities for a photographer

The facilitator lists a number of abilities randomly: math skills, spirit of organization, imagination, technical skills, attention to details, IT skills, sociability, artistic talent etc. (as facilitator, feel free to list as many and as diverse as you can). The participants are invited to select professions suitable for those abilities, trying to connect one profession with at least two-three abilities. For example: technical skills & artistic talent – photographer.

The facilitator prepares a set of **skill cards** (e.g., math skills, imagination, technical skills, attention to detail, IT skills, sociability, artistic talent, creativity, spirit of organization) and **job cards** (e.g., photographer, engineer, event planner, teacher). Participants are invited to match the skills to the professions they think are most suitable, connecting **at least two or three skills** to each job. For example:

- **Technical skills & artistic talent → Photographer**
- **Sociability & spirit of organization → Event Planner**

This activity can be conducted in groups, where participants debate and justify their matches, or individually, where participants complete the matching exercise and share their conclusions. Its purpose is to establish clearly that a job is connected to a certain set of skills and therefore:

- the participants should select those job vacancies which are suitable to his/her skills in order to avoid failure
- the candidate should focus his/her presentation during the job interview on those skills in particular, not on anything else.

Step 2. Interview simulation.

This phase consists of a simulation of the interview practice. The participants are divided in groups of two (in case of uneven numbers, the facilitator could group three participants in a team). Roles are divided: one participant is the candidate, one participant (or two in case groups are made of three) is the interviewer. The job in question would be one selected by the candidate. The participants are informed about their roles/responsibilities and the facilitator gives each of the participant a handout with the most frequently asked questions at an interview for inspiration:

- 1. the candidate:** must present his abilities the best he/she can, emphasizing how suitable he/she would be for the job in question; it is for this particular reason that the participant playing the candidate shall choose the profession for which he/she applies;
- 2. the interviewer:** must maintain a professional attitude; must regard the statements with suspicion and raise questions according to an attitude of disbelief and mistrust;

The simulation must be left to the improvisation and creativity of the direct participants. Questions and answers should occur spontaneously and be allowed to flow coherently according to the rhythm of the discussion. The naturalness of the situation would create conditions for candidate and interviewer to shape their own relations on the spot, to adapt to one another and modulate their behavior according to the reactions of the interlocutor.

Step 3. Emotional preparation.

Interviews usually cause terrible emotions in candidates, giving rise to feelings of insecurity or complexes of inferiority, depending on the matter at stake. Giving an interview may be equivalent to being subjected to a drastic evaluation by total strangers in a matter on which your life depends. Such a burden often makes candidates feel unsure of themselves. In order to help them overcome the blockages which may arise, the workshop includes a component which helps participants to identify potential weak points in their presentation and anticipate negative emotions and insecurities which may derive from them. For a third sequence of the workshop, the following exercise is proposed but may be replaced with a different one if the facilitator sees fit. The key is to ensure continuity of activity, inter-relation and therefore of emotion. The exercise involves an overturning of roles in the following manner:

- the candidate must say a weakness about his/her performance based on the experience of the interview (“I was not very convincing in.../I couldn’t find my words...”); ex.: please select one thing about your presentation in this interview that you did not like about your performance and there is space for improvement;
- the interviewer must say a positive thing about the candidate's performance, based on the experience of the interview; ex.: please select a positive thing about the candidate interviewed which you noticed in particular.

This exercise can be performed in frontal activity, with the entire group witnessing in order to collect more feedback and therefore allow the participant to familiarize oneself with emotional stress, feedback, different points of view and learn to handle these matters.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- Did any jobs require unexpected skills?
- Were there skills that matched multiple jobs?
- How did you feel during the interview process? What was the easiest part, but the hardest?
- What would you improve about your performance during the interview?
- Did you apply any method to manage your emotions?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- The importance of identifying personal skills when applying for jobs.
- The preparation for a job interview and to guide young people toward practical resources where they can find advice for interview preparation.

Useful comments to the facilitator


There are numerous books and websites with advice, indications, recommendations for how to present oneself at a job interview. The purpose of this workshop is not to transmit theoretical knowledge (which the participants can obtain by themselves) but to create a framework for them to speak, to ask, to be surprised, to observe his/her reactions and discuss their behavior with their peers to overcome potential stage fright or nervousness. Please focus on their experiences and reactions to their interactions rather than on practical advice and recommendations. The participants must have the chance to express themselves and learn from their own mistakes during simulation.

Useful comments to the participants

Job interviews are individual and personal experiences. They depend on the personality of the candidate, the personality of the interviewer, their “chemistry”, the mood they are in at that time. Try to be flexible and assertive, adapting to the person in front of you. All along, remember that nobody is perfect and strong preparation for the interview can significantly increase the success rate.

Tips for facilitators

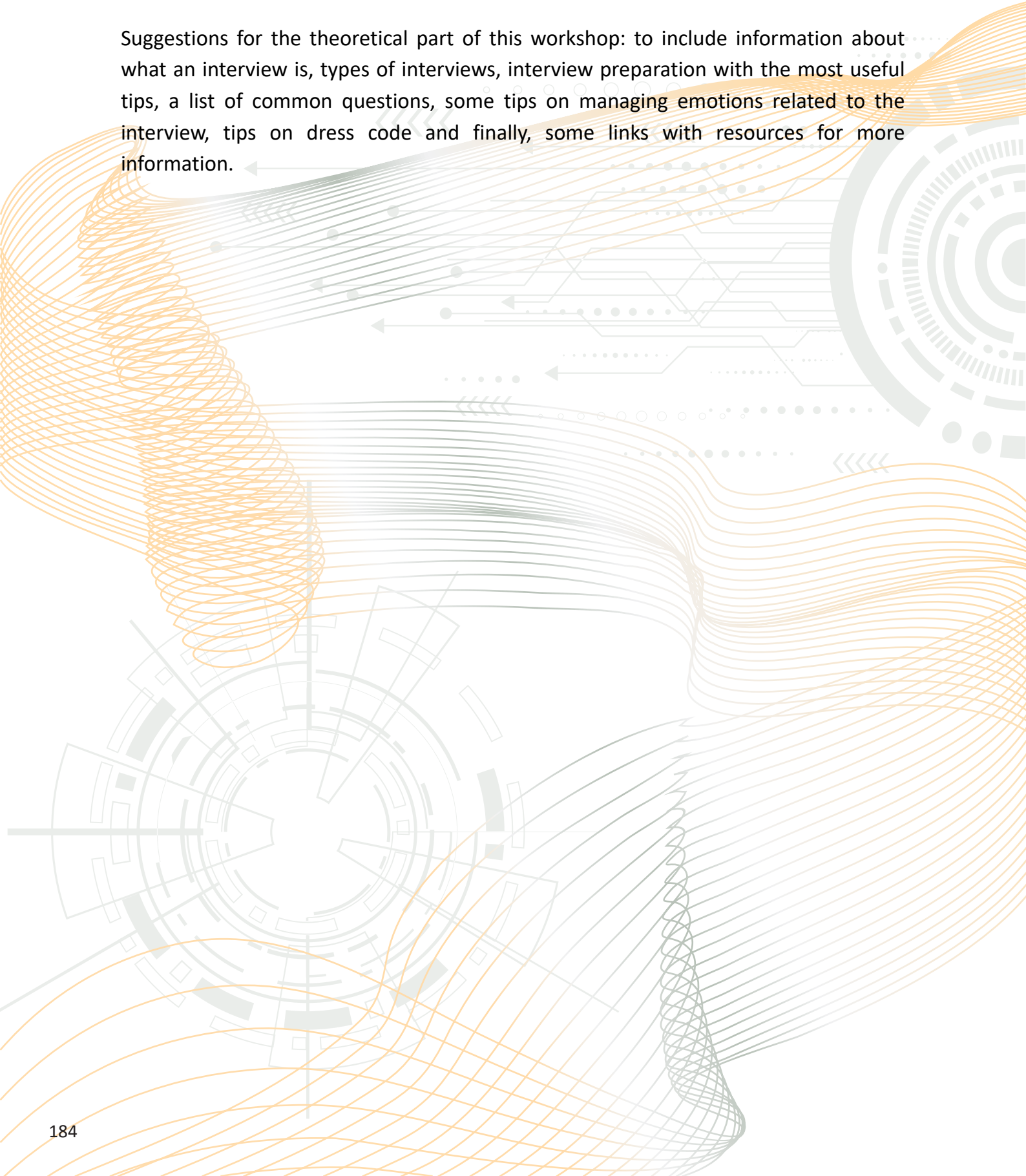
This workshop can be reloaded. If you practice it once with your group and then try it a second time in the same scenario but replacing the interviewers with real company recruiters from the area, the educational effect would be transformative for young people. If you try the second version from the very beginning, the participants would



be unsure of how the workshop goes and weary. If they did it before and only repeat it with company recruiters, they would be very open and expansive, asking questions and giving their best because they would feel on solid ground having gone through it before.

Handouts

Suggestions for the theoretical part of this workshop: to include information about what an interview is, types of interviews, interview preparation with the most useful tips, a list of common questions, some tips on managing emotions related to the interview, tips on dress code and finally, some links with resources for more information.



Social media and career readiness

■ Theoretical content

Social media platforms have become an integral part of professional networking, job searching and career development. The most notable example is LinkedIn, but platforms like X, Facebook, Instagram have helped people land their dream jobs and connect to potential clients and employers. Managing one's online presence must be purpose driven and responsible, otherwise it can generate risks and damage their reputation. Both the networking potential and recruitment capacity cannot be overestimated in the world where remote work is becoming more popular and accessible.

Key components

A professional social media presence should be the reflection of how you want your online persona to be perceived in the professional world. It can be a “marketing” tool, but should never project a fake or false image, as in the long term it will be confronted with reality with potentially severe consequences. You should set a goal and build your professional social media presence around it to help you reach it.

Why it matters

Help in expanding the professional network: The profile can reach people globally ignoring geographic boundaries, allowing them to interact with professionals worldwide. Following both companies and individuals helps to keep up-to-date with events, job opportunities and innovations in the sector. Interactions with others can lead to endorsements and recommendations as well as help in further development and getting inspirations.

Direct access to job opportunities: In many sectors, like IT, platforms like LinkedIn are the main tool for finding new employees. Usually all stages until the final interview, and more and more often even that, take place over social media without live interaction. Recruiters and headhunters often search the platforms and approach candidates directly, so a convincing profile might attract them. Companies often share information on social media which candidates can use to tailor their applications to make them more appealing.

Presenting your work: Posting professional content on social media can demonstrate a person's competences and passion for the work. Using hashtags and keywords can make content more discoverable for headhunters and recruiters. A social media profile

can be linked to a personal website or online portfolio which makes it easier and more accessible for potential employers to evaluate one's work.

Building a professional social media presence

Choosing the right platforms: For professional purposes LinkedIn is the obvious choice. Representatives of creative sectors and content related to a particular industry can supplement it with platforms like Instagram, YouTube or X, however proper management and consistency is crucial here. Personal website can be added if it's complementary with the content on the former platforms, giving more freedom and control.

Profile optimisation: A friendly profile picture helps to establish trust and close the anonymity barrier. A headline describing the current role and most relevant skills and interests that align with the goals should be included. Achievements and expertise should be highlighted and updated regularly.

Engaging with the professional community: Insightful comments on posts of experts or peers help build and grow the network. Using opportunities to share the latest news or trends to demonstrate staying up-to-date and generate visibility. Joining professional forums or chats (on LinkedIn, Reddit, X or Instagram) and active participation in them helps expand the network and stay updated.

Maintaining consistency: All interactions on the platforms should be consistent with the personal brand that someone wants to project and aforementioned goals as well as with the online persona. Usernames and profile pictures should be similar for easy recognition. Posts and interactions should be professional and approachable, never insulting or controversial. All platforms should be updated regularly and maintained.

Do's and don'ts of professional social media

Privacy: Separation of professional and personal social media accounts can be helpful to mitigate risks. Public sharing of sensitive information like phone numbers and addresses should be avoided.

Etiquette: Professional conduct should always be maintained as nothing gets lost on the internet and recruiters, employers or clients can dig up damaging posts or interactions from the past. Fact-checking before reposting anything is important to avoid harm to credibility.

Time: Professional social media should be neither neglected nor overused, as it can impact productivity and become a distraction. Time should be spent productively on meaningful interactions and engagements.

Security: Establishing strong passwords and two-factor authentication can help prevent data theft and account hacking. Having a separate email for professional and personal use can help avoid data breaches and confusion.

Reputation: Reviewing and taking down posts from the past that do not align with someone's current professional image or goals can help reduce reputation harm. Conflicts with other users should be kept civilised and ideally handled through direct messaging.

How to apply it

Job searching: Many jobs can be applied directly through social media, like LinkedIn's Easy Apply function. Direct communication with recruiters can further help to reinforce the image of a skilled professional that is interested in a particular job. Networking events held online can also allow interactions that can lead to an invitation for a job interview.

Career development: Professional achievements can be presented on the platforms reinforcing one's image of an experienced and competent worker. Online communities can help to find mentorship opportunities and to learn from more experienced colleagues.

Client search: Posting work samples, success stories and achievements can help attract potential clients.

Staying updated and learning: Following industry leaders helps to stay updated with the latest trends and innovations in the industry. Online learning challenges and hackathons can help expand the professional network and obtain new competencies.


Building and maintaining a professional online presence is an ongoing process that requires consistency, strategic engagement, and mindful interactions. By optimizing profiles, participating in industry discussions, and managing privacy and security, you can leverage social media to advance careers, connect with opportunities, and establish a strong professional reputation.


Objectives:


- To understand what elements influence the effectiveness of a professional profile.
- To stimulate creativity and reflection on one's professional image in social media.
- To learn how to consciously build your network of contacts and share knowledge.

Competencies:

- Ability to prepare a post and evaluate interesting content.
- Learning 10 rules for an effective social media profile.
- Ability to recognize what content should be included on social media.
- Learning how important it is to build a professional image on the Internet – for example in the context of job searching.

 **Methodological approach:** Participants of the workshop working on a real social media – LinkedIn, will be able to analyze a profile, draw conclusions and also design their own post. The workshop is strongly based on practical exercises, which will additionally consolidate the theory they learn.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitator and optimally 12 participants

 **Needed resources:** flipchart, markers; white sheets of paper; laptops or mobile phones; printed “likes”, adhesive tape

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

Workshop scenario

Step 1. Hashtag skills.

The activity is 20 minutes long. Facilitator distributes colorful “post-it” cards to participants and asks them to write down one hashtag with their skill on each note – e.g. #teamwork, #creativity, etc. Let each participant prepare 3–5 of their “hashtags”. After facilitator collects the notes on a flipchart, he or she groups them.

Once facilitator have grouped the skills, he or she leads a group discussion with the following questions:

- Which skills appeared most frequently?
- Which of these skills can be developed through experience, and which require formal learning or training?
- How can social media (e.g., LinkedIn) help showcase and develop these skills professionally?

The facilitator then summarizes findings for the participants: A professional social media presence should be the reflection of how you want your online persona to be perceived in the professional world. It can be a “marketing” tool, but should never project a fake or false image, as in the long term it will be confronted with reality with potentially severe consequences. You should set a goal and build your professional social media presence around it to help you reach it.

Step 2. LinkedIn profile – analysis.

This step takes about 45 minutes. Facilitator divides the participants into 3 groups and asks each group to choose one profile on LinkedIn (it can be a profile of a famous person, an expert in a field; it can be very professional and well-prepared, or very poorly...). Participants have 25 minutes for analysis.

Profile analysis guide questions for participants:

- What is your first impression?
- Does it have a profile picture? What does it look like?
- Does it have a header?
- How are skills and professional experience described?
- Does it have recommendations and give to others?
- Does it publish content such as articles, information about events, etc.? How often?
- What is your overall reflection?

Once participants have prepared their profile analysis, facilitator summarizes with a mind map on a flipchart entitled: “10 rules for an effective profile”. This part should last around 20 minutes.

Example rules:

1. Use a professional photo – A high-quality, industry-appropriate image builds credibility.
2. Write a strong headline – Highlight key skills or career focus, not just your job title.
3. Create an engaging summary – Briefly showcase your expertise, experience, and goals.
4. List relevant skills – Align them with your industry and career aspirations.
5. Highlight achievements – Use bullet points to show impact in previous roles.
6. Request recommendations – Collect endorsements from colleagues and mentors.
7. Stay active – Like, comment, and share industry-relevant content.
8. Join groups – Engage in professional discussions and expand your network.
9. Use keywords – Optimize your profile for recruiter searches.
10. Add certifications and projects – Showcase learning and accomplishments.

Step 3. My post and my “likes”.

Facilitator makes an introduction: Posting professional content on social media can demonstrate a person’s competences and passion for the work. Using hashtags and keywords can make content more discoverable for headhunters and recruiters. A social media profile can be linked to a personal website or online portfolio which makes it easier and more accessible for potential employers to evaluate one’s work. (25 minutes).

Each participant writes a short post that could be published on LinkedIn (e.g. “What did I learn in this workshop?”, “My reflection on the future of work” etc.). The post should be written on a white sheet of paper – in accordance with all LinkedIn writing rules. The participant can use emoticons, create graphics etc. After completing this part, facilitator asks all participants to hang their posts around the workshop room.

He or she distribute to each participant a “like” cut out from the next page – 2 pieces for each participant. Each participant can choose 2 posts to “like”.

After everyone has distributed likes, facilitator leads a summary discussion:

- Which post got the most likes and which got the fewest? Why?
- What elements are key to making a post interesting?
- What topics intrigued you the most?

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- What content should and shouldn't appear on social media if you are building a professional image?
- What aspects of your social media presence do you think need improvement after today's workshop? And which are already good?
- How can you use social media to showcase your skills and improve your career prospects?
- What are the key elements of a strong professional profile that make it stand out?
- How do you plan to maintain and update your online presence to reflect your professional development?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- The importance of a well-done and authentic professional image on social media.
- The value of networking and engaging in building career opportunities through social media.
- How constant updates and strategic content sharing increase visibility and credibility in the job market.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Invite participants to critically examine their current social media presence and identify areas for improvement. Make sure all participants have the opportunity to share their observations and discuss their experiences. Providing examples of successful LinkedIn profiles and social media strategies can help attendees understand the practical impact of a well-maintained online presence.

Useful comments to the participants

Social media has become an essential tool for development, including career development, allowing you to professionally present your expertise and connect with valuable networks. These don't have to be career-specific profiles – it's worth taking care of your online image everywhere, including on seemingly “private” profiles like Instagram or Facebook. A well-optimized profile can significantly increase your visibility to potential employers. The content you share, the discussions you participate in (including “private” discussions), and the way you present your skills can all affect how

others perceive you in the professional world. Consistency in updating your profile and sharing meaningful content will help you build credibility and stand out. Remember that an effective social media presence should reflect who you really are. Don't forget that what's online doesn't disappear. Everything leaves a trace, so it's worth consciously navigating social media.

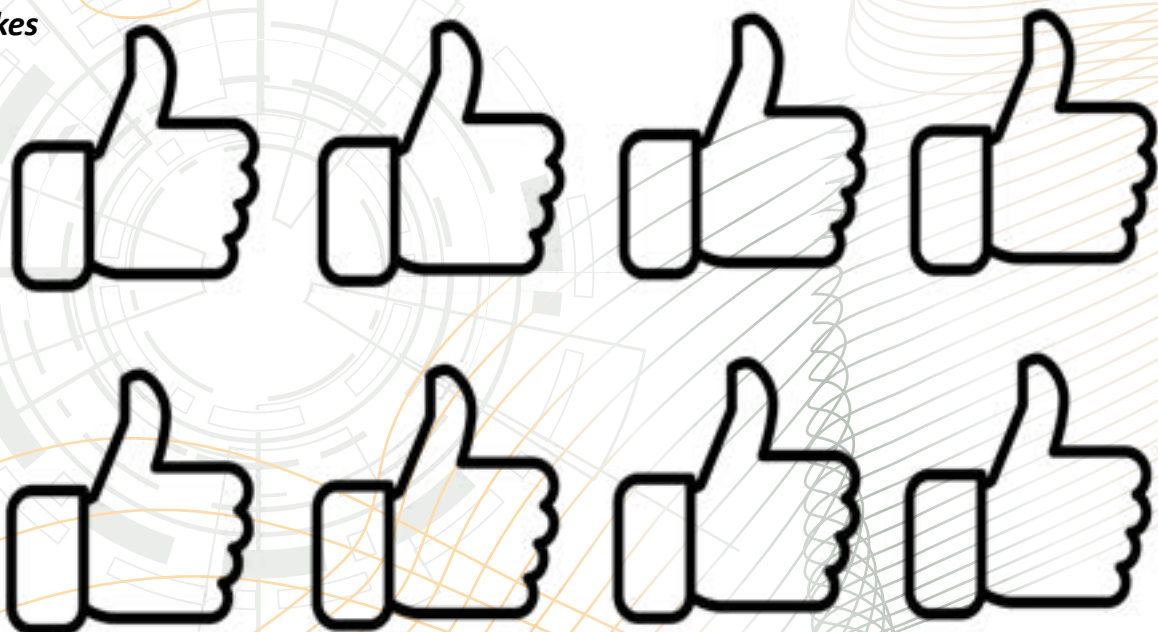
Tips for facilitators

Discussions should be organized and focused on key aspects of building an online presence. It is important to engage participants with real-world examples and encourage them to reflect on how their own profiles align with best practices. Using interactive activities such as profile reviews and written exercises can help reinforce learning and make the session more practical. Providing personalized feedback on participants' social media strategies will help them better understand how to improve their digital presence. Finally – facilitators should remind participants that effective professional presence is built over time and requires ongoing updates and commitment.

Handouts

Participants will likely be familiar with social media, so the theoretical part should focus more on principles and advice than on lectures on, for example, “what is social media.” It should focus on the key principles of an effective social media profile, such as choosing the right profile photo, creating a professional summary and showcasing relevant skills and achievements.

Likes





Goal setting

■ Theoretical introduction

Goal setting is the process of identifying what you want to achieve and creating a clear roadmap to get there. It provides direction, motivation, and a sense of purpose, enabling people to focus their energy on meaningful actions. In a career counseling context, understanding how to set realistic and achievable goals is crucial for personal and professional growth. This theoretical foundation prepares participants to translate aspirations into actionable steps, ensuring success in their endeavors.

Key components

Understanding the purpose of goals: provide a clear target, helping individuals prioritize their time and resources. They serve as benchmarks to measure progress and foster accountability. Whether short-term (immediate tasks) or long-term (life aspirations), goals ensure that efforts are aligned with personal or professional objectives.

Types of goals

Short-Term Goals: Achievable within days, weeks, or a few months, these goals build momentum toward larger objectives. Example: Completing a resume or attending a networking event.

Long-Term Goals: Spanning years or more, these goals define overarching aspirations. Example: Pursuing a specific career or earning a degree.

Process Goals vs. Outcome Goals

Process Goals: Focus on actions (e.g., practicing for 30 minutes daily).

Outcome Goals: Focus on results (e.g., winning a competition).

The SMART Framework Goals are most effective when they follow the SMART criteria:

- **Specific:** Clearly define what you want to achieve.
- **Measurable:** Quantify progress to track achievements.
- **Achievable:** Set realistic and attainable goals.
- **Relevant:** Ensure goals align with personal values and long-term aspirations.
- **Time-Bound:** Establish a deadline to create urgency and focus.

Example: “In the next six months, I will improve my public speaking skills by attending a workshop and delivering at least three presentations, receiving feedback from colleagues to enhance my confidence and leadership abilities.”¹

The psychology of goal setting

Motivation. Goals fuel intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, encouraging persistence.

Self-efficacy. Achieving small goals builds confidence to tackle bigger challenges.

Focus and clarity. Goals reduce distractions and help individuals channel their efforts effectively.

Clear goals act as a roadmap for career growth, providing direction and focus. They help prioritize actions by aligning tasks with your long-term aspirations, ensuring your efforts are intentional and effective. Goals also serve as a motivational tool, keeping you persistent and driven even during challenges. By setting measurable objectives, you can track progress and make informed decisions, like choosing job opportunities or educational pathways that fit your career vision. Ultimately, clear goals enable you to stay proactive, adapt to changes, and build a fulfilling professional journey.

Tips for setting realistic and motivating career objectives

Reflect on yourself. Identify your strengths, passions, and values to set meaningful goals.

Use SMART Goal. Ensure your objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Balance short and long-term goals. Pair immediate steps (e.g., learning a new skill) with long-term aspirations (e.g., achieving a leadership role).

Be flexible. Adjust goals as you grow or circumstances change.

Break goals into steps. Simplify big goals into smaller, actionable tasks to stay focused.


Seek feedback. Share your goals with mentors or peers for guidance and accountability.

Track progress. Use journals or apps to monitor milestones and celebrate achievements.

How to apply it

Breaking down goals. Guide participants to break large goals into smaller, manageable tasks. For example, “become a software developer” could be broken into steps like learning coding languages, building a portfolio, and applying for internships.

¹ <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-write-smart-goals>

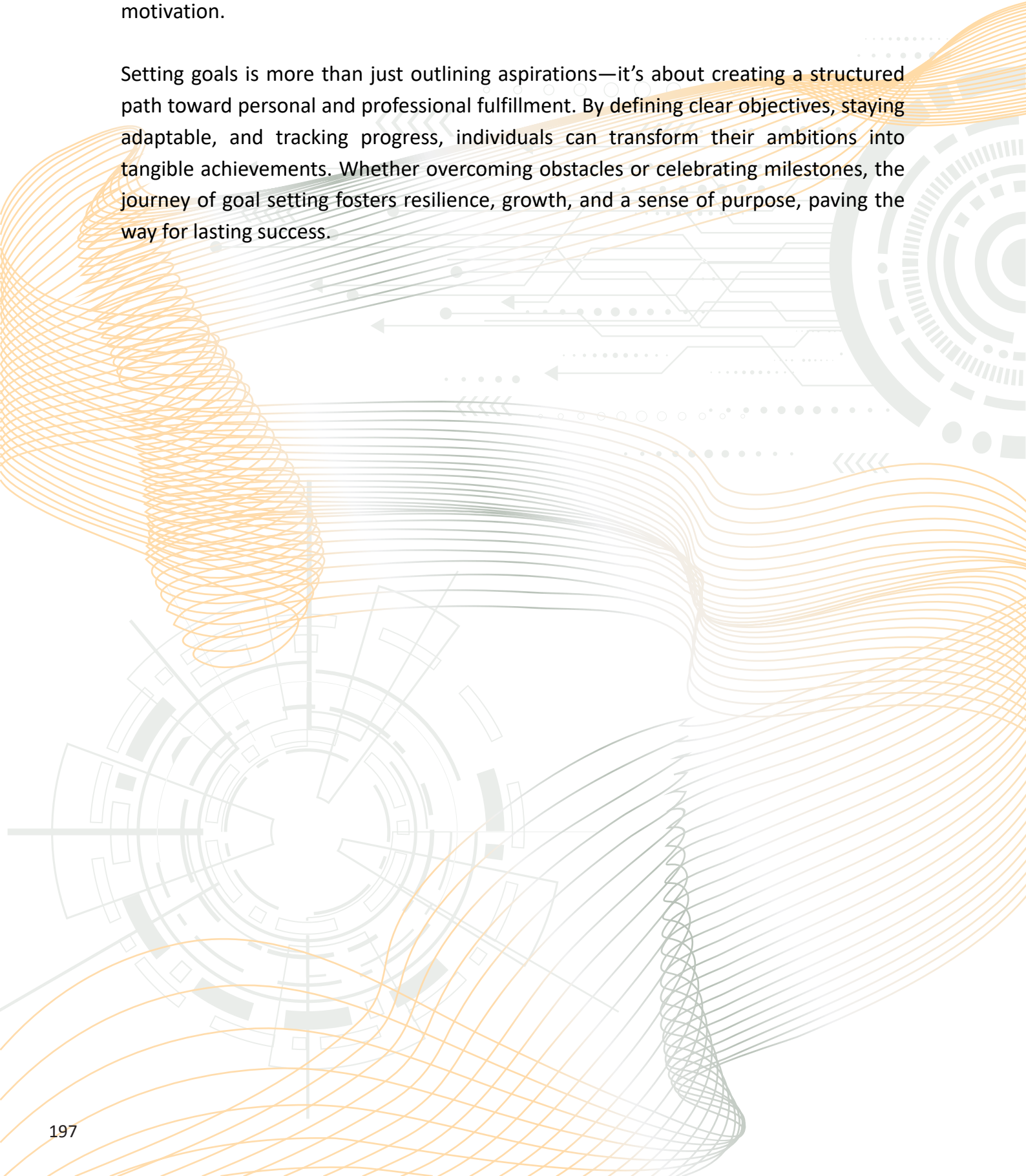


Tracking progress. Encourage the use of tools like journals, apps, or planners to monitor milestones and stay accountable.

Adjusting goals. Flexibility is important. Guide participants to reevaluate and adjust goals as circumstances change.

Celebrating wins. Recognize and celebrate progress to build confidence and maintain motivation.

Setting goals is more than just outlining aspirations—it's about creating a structured path toward personal and professional fulfillment. By defining clear objectives, staying adaptable, and tracking progress, individuals can transform their ambitions into tangible achievements. Whether overcoming obstacles or celebrating milestones, the journey of goal setting fosters resilience, growth, and a sense of purpose, paving the way for lasting success.




Objectives:


- To help participants understand the importance of goal setting for career development.
- To practice with templates to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goals.
- To create their own personalized career goals and an action plan to achieve them.

Competencies:

- Understanding the role of goal setting in personal and professional development.
- Distinguishing between short-term and long-term goals and how they interact.
- Learning to create SMART goals and break them into actionable steps.
- Building motivation and persistence by tracking progress and celebrating milestones.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop relies on a hands-on, reflective, and interactive approach. Participants will engage in self-reflection exercises, collaborative brainstorming, and practical goal-setting activities using the SMART framework.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitator, 15–20 participants

 **Needed resources:** flipchart or whiteboard and markers, handouts (SMART Goal Template, Goal Reflection Guide), sticky notes or small cards, pens and notebooks

 **Duration:** 60 minutes

▶ Workshop scenario

Step 1. Introduction – The power of goal setting.

Purpose is to provide participants with an understanding of how clear goals guide career growth and personal development.

Mini presentation (length should be about 5 minutes) should include the explanation of the purpose of goal setting – goals provide direction, keep you motivated, and help you measure progress. Facilitator can tell the participants to differentiate between short-term and long-term goals and their role in career growth. Then he or she briefly introduces the SMART goal framework, which ensure that their objectives are realistic and actionable:

- Specific.
- Measurable.
- Achievable.
- Relevant.
- Time-bound.

Facilitator continues with group activity (about 5 minutes long) based on following invitation: “Think of a personal or career/school goal you’ve had recently. Was it clear, or did you struggle with direction?” Participants briefly share their examples and challenges.

Step 2. Creating SMART goals.

In this step participants explore how to make their goals more structured and actionable using the SMART method. The purpose is to help participants set career-related goals using the SMART framework and break them down into actionable steps. The whole activity is 25 minutes long.

Facilitator provides an example of a poorly defined goal versus a SMART goal.

- Poor example: “I want to be successful.”
- SMART example: “In the next six months, I will improve my public speaking skills by attending a workshop and delivering at least three presentations, receiving feedback from colleagues to enhance my confidence.”

Facilitator then breaks down each SMART criterion with examples:

- **Specific:** Clearly define what you want to achieve.

- **Measurable:** Include metrics to track progress.
- **Achievable:** Set realistic targets within your control.
- **Relevant:** Ensure goals align with your values and aspirations.
- **Time-bound:** Establish deadlines to stay focused.

Facilitator presents individual goal-setting exercise and distributes the SMART Goal Template handout, which can be found in category Handouts. Participants choose a career-related goal (e.g., finding an internship, learning a new skill, or creating a portfolio). They complete the template by defining their goal using the SMART framework. After they finish, participants pair up and share their SMART goals. They provide feedback to each other on whether the goals meet all SMART criteria.

Step 3. Breaking goals into actionable steps.

The purpose is to guide participants how to create step-by-step action plans to achieve their SMART goals, breaking it down into actionable steps and milestones. This step takes about 15 minutes.

Facilitator provides an example of breaking down a goal. Goal example: “Learn Python programming and build a project in 3 months.” Facilitator explains possible action steps:

- Week 1–4: Complete an online Python course.
- Week 5–8: Build a simple project (e.g., a calculator app).
- Week 9–12: Expand the project and get feedback from a mentor.

Participants are invited to an individual activity. Participants break down their own SMART goals into smaller, actionable steps on their SMART goals handouts. They identify deadlines and milestones to track progress.

Step 4. Staying on track and maintaining motivation.

The purpose is to reinforce the importance of tracking progress, seeking feedback, and celebrating achievements. Facilitator invites participants to a group discussion (5 minutes) based on following questions:

- “What obstacles do you think you might face while working toward your goal?”
- “What strategies can you use to stay motivated and overcome setbacks?”

Facilitator invites participants to a final activity. Participants write down one immediate step they will take after the workshop to start working toward their SMART goal.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- What did you learn about setting effective goals today?
- How will breaking down goals help you achieve them more easily?
- What strategies will you use to stay motivated and adapt if challenges arise?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing:

- Clear goals provide direction and motivation.
- SMART goals break down big aspirations into achievable, measurable steps.
- Tracking progress and celebrating milestones ensures continued growth and success.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Encourage participants to focus on goals that are meaningful and relevant to their personal or professional growth. Provide constructive feedback during the goal-setting exercise to ensure participants understand and apply the SMART framework. Be sensitive to participants who may feel overwhelmed by long-term goals – help them focus on immediate, manageable steps.

Useful comments to the participants

Track progress using journals, apps, or milestone checklists. Share goals with a mentor or accountability partner. Adjust goals if circumstances change – flexibility is key. Celebrate small achievements to build momentum.

Tips for facilitators

- Create a supportive and motivating environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their goals.
- Offer real-life examples of success stories based on goal-setting and perseverance. Provide follow-up materials (e.g., articles or apps for goal tracking) to help participants continue working on their goals after the workshop.
- Monitor the group's comfort and engagement levels, and adjust activities as needed.
- For example, switch to individual reflection, smaller group discussions, or creative activities if participants seem hesitant to share openly.

S.M.A.R.T. [template.](#)



Career plan development

■ Theoretical introduction

A career plan can be structured around **short-term and long-term goals** and measurable actions, ensuring a balanced approach that accounts for immediate needs and future aspirations.

Short-term goals

Short-term goals focus on actionable objectives achievable within a few months to a year. These goals often involve acquiring skills, gaining certifications, or exploring job opportunities aligned with an individual's current qualifications. For example:

- completing a vocational training program;
- gaining an internship to build practical experience;
- networking within a specific industry or attending career fairs.

Long-term goals

Long-term goals are broader and extend over several years. They reflect an individual's aspirations for career progression, professional growth, or significant transitions.

Examples include:

- pursuing higher education, such as a master's degree or specialized certification;
- shifting to a new industry or career field through re-skilling.

By defining both types of goals, individuals create a layered plan that balances present priorities with a vision for the future. A practical framework for setting these goals is the **SMART criteria** ensuring goals are realistic and trackable.

Integrating personal values, skills, and opportunities

A successful career plan reflects an individual's unique attributes while aligning with market opportunities. This process involves three key elements:

Personal values

Career satisfaction often hinges on alignment with core personal values. Whether it's prioritizing sustainability, creativity, financial security, or social impact, identifying values helps guide career choices. For instance:

- someone driven by **social impact** could explore careers in healthcare, education, or non-profit work;
- a person valuing **environmental sustainability** might seek roles in renewable energy or green technology.

Skills and strengths

Recognizing strengths and transferable skills is crucial for crafting a realistic plan. Self-assessment tools like **Holland's Career Codes** or platforms like **Europass**¹ help individuals identify key competencies. Examples of transferable skills include:

- problem-solving and critical thinking;
- teamwork and communication;
- technical expertise, such as coding or data analysis.

Building on these skills through continuous learning enhances career adaptability.

Market opportunities

Awareness of labor market trends ensures that career plans remain relevant. For example:

- the rise of the **green economy** creates opportunities in sustainability-related careers;
- the demand for **digital skills** highlights growth in IT, AI, and cybersecurity roles.

By merging personal values, skills, and opportunities, individuals create a cohesive plan that maximizes their potential while addressing external demands.

Evaluating and revising the Career Plan

Career plans are dynamic and must evolve with changes in personal circumstances, market trends, and professional aspirations. Regular evaluation and adjustments are essential to stay on track. This process involves three main steps:

Periodic self-reflection

Taking time to reflect on progress helps identify areas for improvement or adjustment. Reflection can address questions such as:

- Are my current goals aligned with my values and aspirations?
- Have my interests or priorities changed over time?
- Am I acquiring the skills needed for emerging market trends?

Tracking progress

Using tools like **SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)** ensures goals remain measurable and actionable. For instance, individuals can set milestones and review them quarterly or biannually.

¹ Link to Europass: <https://europass.europa.eu/en>

Adaptation to change

The global labor market is constantly evolving due to factors like technological advancement and economic shifts. Career plans should incorporate flexibility to adapt to:

- Emerging industries and roles, such as health and biotechnology, space exploration etc.
- New personal interests or opportunities, such as relocating or switching industries.

A career plan that adapts to both internal and external changes ensures sustained growth and relevance.

The role of lifelong learning

Continuous learning is a cornerstone of effective career planning. The **European Union's lifelong learning strategy** emphasizes the importance of upskilling and reskilling to remain competitive in the labor market. By committing to lifelong learning, individuals enhance their capacity to adapt and excel in their chosen fields.


Developing a career plan is a proactive step toward achieving professional fulfillment and success. By combining clear frameworks, personal values, and market awareness, individuals can create a roadmap that guides them through short-term milestones and long-term aspirations. Regular evaluation ensures the plan remains flexible and responsive to life's inevitable changes.

Objectives:


- To help participants visualize their career aspirations and align their personal values, skills, and interests with long-term professional goals.
- To develop participants' ability to set clear, structured career goals through reflective exercises and strategic planning methods.
- To equip participants with the tools and strategies necessary to create actionable career plans, including identifying obstacles, resources, and concrete steps.

Competencies:

- Identifying their skills, values, and interests in relation to career choices.
- Setting both short-term and long-term career goals and breaking them down into manageable steps.
- Creating a concrete career map, including defining obstacles and resources needed.
- Developing strategies to overcome barriers and identifying potential solutions to challenges.
- Strengthening their belief in their abilities to achieve career goals and manage uncertainties.

 **Methodological approach:** The workshop is based on experiential learning and guided self-reflection. The approach emphasizes active participation, role-playing, and group discussion. Participants engage in reflective exercises such as visualizing their future careers, creating personal career maps, and role-playing interviews with their future selves. The primary methods include self-reflection and journaling, role-playing and peer learning, collaborative group discussions, guided visual thinking (creating career maps). The learning process focuses on peer learning, group activities, and self-discovery.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitator, 15–20 participants

 **Needed resources:** room, flipchart, large paper for the “Wall of Dreams”, markers, pens, and post-it notes, pre-designed “Career Map” templates or large sheets of paper for each participant, handouts with interview questions and reflective prompts

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

Workshop scenario

The aim of the activity is to provide a framework for exploring personal interests, values, and skills, and for creating a concrete and actionable career plan. Participants will gain clarity on their goals, identify steps to achieve them, and develop strategies to overcome obstacles along the way.

Step 1. Introduction: exploring the future.

This phase sets the stage for the rest of the workshop and its purpose is to help participants visualize their career goals and begin connecting them to their personal aspirations and values.

The facilitator introduces the scenario: “Imagine you are on an island, and you have a compass pointing you toward your dream career. What is your final destination?”

Participants are encouraged to reflect and answer two key questions:

- What job would you like to have in 5–10 years?
- What kind of lifestyle do you envision for yourself?

Each participant writes their answers on post-it notes and places them on a “Wall of Dreams” (a flipchart or large sheet of paper).

After they answer on post-it, the facilitator encourages participants to share their thoughts voluntarily. They provide supportive feedback to stimulate deeper reflection and inspire participants who might hesitate.

This introductory part will help participants verbalize their aspirations and begin thinking about how their values, interests, and skills align with their long-term goals.

Step 2. Role play: “Interview with My Future Self”.

This phase consists of a role-playing simulation where participants imagine themselves in their dream careers and are interviewed about their journey. Participants are divided into pairs (or groups of three in case of an uneven number). Each participant alternates between two roles: one participant is the interviewed one and the other one is the interviewer (in the case of an uneven number, two participants act as interviewers to ensure varied and dynamic questions). The participants are informed about their roles/responsibilities:

- 1. The interviewed/Future Self:** The participant imagines they are already working in their dream career and reflects on the steps they took to get there. They must describe their imagined future role and achievements; must explain how they

reached this position, emphasizing: the skills they developed, the key actions they took, the challenges they overcame; must provide advice to others who wish to pursue a similar path.

- 2. Journalist/Interviewer:** The participant takes on the role of a curious journalist, asking insightful and challenging questions about the “future self’s” career journey. They must maintain a professional attitude and ask probing questions about the **interviewed/future self’s** journey; must challenge statements by adopting an attitude of curiosity.

To guide the exercise, the facilitator can give participants handouts with few example questions to help structure the interview. They can also include a section where participants write down the key points shared during the role play.

Sample questions may include:

- “What inspired you to pursue this career?”
- “What was the most difficult challenge you faced, and how did you overcome it?”
- “If you could do one thing differently, what would it be?”
- “What advice would you give to someone aspiring to follow in your footsteps?”

It’s important to not have that many examples of questions because the simulation should remain as spontaneous and natural as possible. Participants are encouraged to use their creativity to embody their future selves fully. The interaction between the roles should flow naturally, allowing participants to modulate their behavior and responses based on the rhythm and direction of the conversation.

Step 3. Career Map: strategic planning

The purpose of this phase is to help participants develop a clear, structured, and actionable plan for achieving their career goals. By creating a personalized “Career Map”, participants will break down their aspirations into manageable steps, identify potential obstacles, and reflect on the resources available to them. This exercise emphasizes the importance of both short-term and long-term planning, giving participants a visual representation of their career journey.

This phase is centered around the idea that achieving a career goal is not a single step, but a journey made up of various stages, challenges, and decisions. Participants will reflect on where they are currently in their career development, where they want to be in the future, and the practical steps they need to take to bridge the gap.

The facilitator introduces the concept of a Career Map, explaining that it is a tool to help participants visualize and organize their career path. To achieve this, each participant creates their own “Career Map” using a large sheet of paper or a pre-designed template. This map acts as a visual guide, including key components such as:

1. **Start:** Their current situation (education, skills, and experiences).
2. **Obstacles:** Challenges or barriers they may face (e.g., lack of experience, financial constraints).
3. **Resources:** Tools, networks, or opportunities they can leverage (e.g., mentorship, online courses, networking events).
4. **Steps:** Concrete actions they can take in the next year to progress toward their goals (e.g., applying for internships, creating a CV, learning a new skill).
5. **Destination:** Their ultimate career objective.

The facilitator will guide participants through the creation of their maps step-by-step:

Step 1: Start – current situation:

Participants reflect on their current situation.

- What education or training do they have?
- What skills and experiences have they gained so far?
- What are their strengths and areas for improvement?

Step 2: Obstacles – anticipated challenges:

Participants identify potential barriers that might slow or hinder their progress.

- Examples of challenges: lack of experience, financial constraints, limited professional networks, or self-doubt.
- For each obstacle, they are encouraged to think about possible solutions.

Step 3: Resources – support systems:

Participants think about the resources available to them.

- Examples of resources: mentors, online courses, professional associations, career counselors, workshops, or personal connections.
- Facilitator Tip: Share examples of local or online resources, if applicable, to help participants brainstorm.

Step 4: Steps – action plan:

Participants outline 3-5 concrete steps they can take in the next year to advance their careers.

- Examples:
 - Create a CV or portfolio.
 - Apply for an internship or volunteer opportunity.

- Attend a networking event.
- Take a professional development course.
- Facilitator Tip: Emphasize that these steps should be actionable, measurable, and realistic.

Step 5: Destination – Career goal:

Participants define their long-term objective.

- What is their dream job or position?

While the Career Map has specific components, participants are encouraged to make it personal and meaningful to them. Creativity is welcomed, and participants can add symbols, sketches, or keywords that inspire or motivate them.

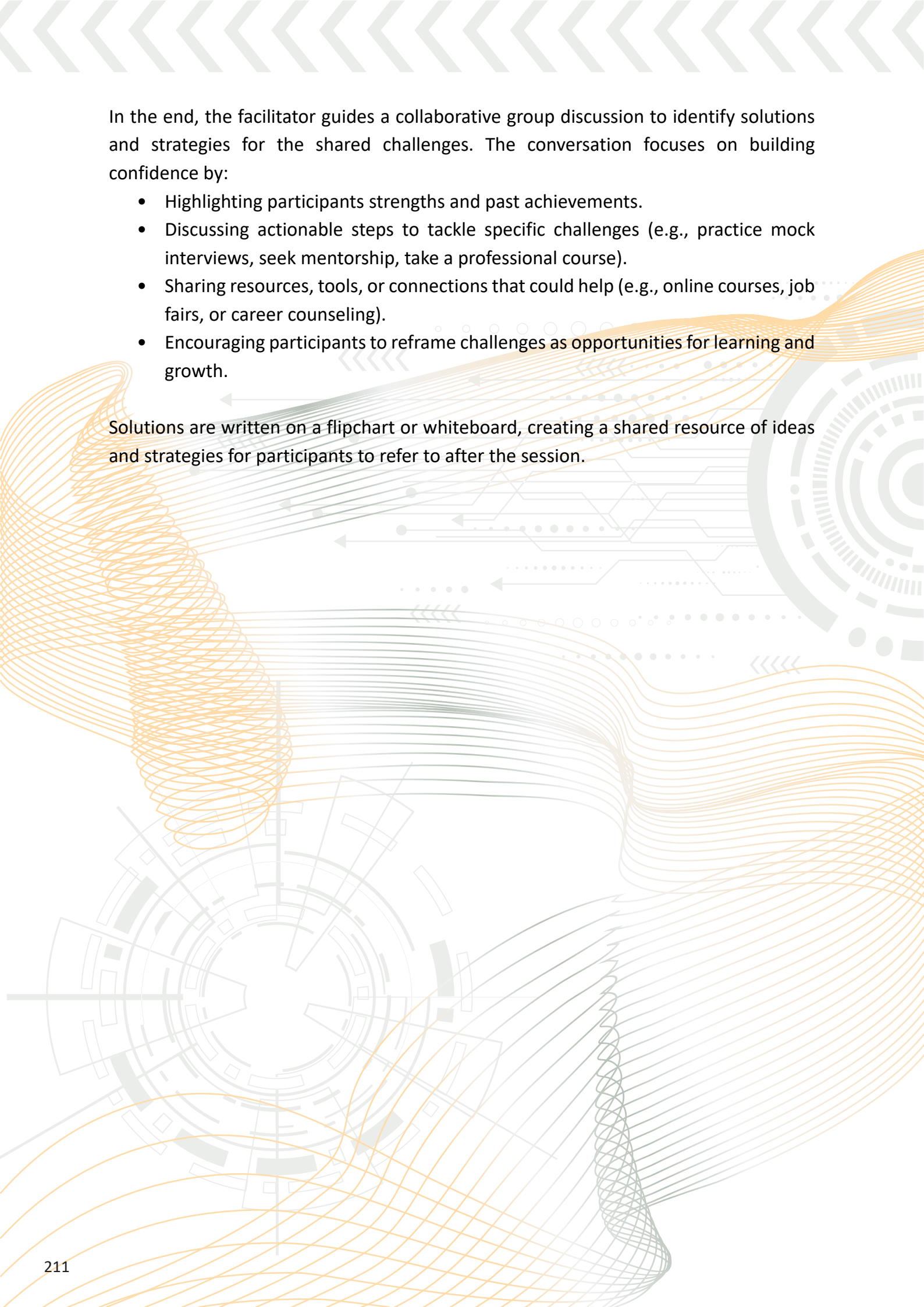
Once the Career Maps are completed, participants share their plans briefly with the group or in pairs. The other participants and the facilitator provide constructive feedback and suggestions.

Step 4. Strengthening confidence: overcoming challenges

This phase is designed to help participants strengthen their confidence and develop practical strategies to overcome challenges in their career planning journey. By reflecting on their fears, identifying obstacles, and discussing solutions in a supportive group environment, participants will gain the self-assurance needed to move forward. This step emphasizes empowering participants to recognize their strengths and adopt a proactive mindset when faced with difficulties.

In the beginning of this phase, participants are asked to think about their biggest fears or challenges related to their career goals (examples might include: fear of being unqualified for a position; anxiety about interviews or networking; uncertainty about where to start or how to progress; concerns about financial limitations or lack of support). Each participant writes two or three challenges on post-it notes or small pieces of paper.

After they are done writing, participants are invited to share their challenges with the group. They can do this by reading them aloud voluntarily or by sticking their notes (anonymously) on a designated “Challenge Board” for the group to review. The facilitator reassures participants that these fears are normal and shared by many people in their career journeys, emphasizing that challenges are opportunities for growth.



In the end, the facilitator guides a collaborative group discussion to identify solutions and strategies for the shared challenges. The conversation focuses on building confidence by:

- Highlighting participants strengths and past achievements.
- Discussing actionable steps to tackle specific challenges (e.g., practice mock interviews, seek mentorship, take a professional course).
- Sharing resources, tools, or connections that could help (e.g., online courses, job fairs, or career counseling).
- Encouraging participants to reframe challenges as opportunities for learning and growth.

Solutions are written on a flipchart or whiteboard, creating a shared resource of ideas and strategies for participants to refer to after the session.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- What new insights did you gain about your career aspirations?
- How did you feel when you imagined your future career?
- How did the Career Map activity help you structure your goals and identify challenges?
- What was the most challenging part of this exercise? How did you address it?
- Did you identify any new obstacles or resources you hadn't considered before?
- What actionable steps will you take immediately after this workshop to progress in your career journey?

The facilitator must conclude the activity by emphasizing the importance of:

- Aligning personal values and skills with career goals.
- Taking small, consistent steps toward larger career objectives.
- Viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and development.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Focus on encouraging reflection and ensuring that participants feel supported during their planning process. It's important to create a safe space where participants feel comfortable discussing their career aspirations and challenges. Keep the atmosphere positive and solution-focused, ensuring that participants recognize the journey as dynamic and evolving. Emphasize that the Career Map is a living document and can be revisited and updated as participants grow and progress in their careers. Also, remind participants that it's normal to feel uncertain or face setbacks along the way, and part of the process is learning to overcome these challenges.

Useful comments to the participants

Career planning is a dynamic process. The "Career Map" you create today is just a starting point. It's okay if things change. Adapt your goals as you learn more about yourself and your interests. It's important to stay flexible and open to new opportunities. Keep in mind that obstacles are a natural part of career development and facing them is an opportunity for growth. Stay focused on your strengths, and don't be afraid to seek help when you need it. Focus on building your strengths and taking small steps toward your goals – each step is progress. Use the Career Map as a guide but remember that flexibility and perseverance are key to overcoming challenges.



💡 Tips for facilitators

- Encourage creativity when participants are building their career maps. The more personal and meaningful they make it, the more they will engage with the process.
- Make sure to allow time for one-on-one or small group discussions for those who may need extra support or encouragement.
- If possible, collaborate with local professionals or career counselors to provide participants with insights or mentorship opportunities.
- After the session, suggest participants share their career plans with a mentor or trusted person for further feedback.
- For a follow-up, you can offer optional check-ins or workshops to help participants stay on track with their career goals.

Assessment

■ Theoretical introduction

Assessments in career guidance provide a structured approach to understanding personal and professional growth. Their primary purposes include:

- **Self-awareness.** Assessments encourage participants to reflect on their skills, interests, and values. This self-awareness lays the foundation for informed career decisions.
- **Tracking progress.** Regular assessments allow individuals to monitor their development over time. They help participants see how far they've come and identify areas that still need attention.
- **Guiding future steps.** Assessment outcomes can help participants and career counselors make data-driven decisions about next steps, whether it's additional training, exploring new industries, or revising goals.

By fostering reflection and providing actionable insights, assessments empower young people to take charge of their career journeys with confidence.

Overview of tools for assessing progress

Various tools are available to assess career development progress. These tools can be tailored to suit the needs of participants and the goals of the guidance program.

Self-assessment tools

- **Self-assessment forms.** These forms guide participants in evaluating their skills, interests, and values. Questions might include:
 - “What skills have I improved recently?”
 - “What type of work environment do I feel most comfortable in?”
- Tools like **Europass** offer templates for skills mapping and career planning.

Feedback surveys

- **Participant surveys:** Collecting feedback on workshops or activities provides insights into their effectiveness and areas for improvement.
- **360-Degree Feedback:** This involves gathering input from peers, mentors, or trainers, providing a well-rounded view of a participant's strengths and growth areas.

Digital assessment platforms

- **Online career Assessment tools:** Platforms like **Holland's Career Codes**, **MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator)**¹ allow participants to explore personality traits, career interests, and skills alignment digitally.

Practical task evaluations

- Assessments can also include evaluating performance during role-play exercises, group projects, or mock interviews.

By integrating diverse tools, assessments can cater to different learning styles and provide a holistic view of progress.

Cultivating a culture of reflection and feedback

To make assessments more effective, it's crucial to foster a culture of constructive feedback and self-reflection. Key principles include:

- **Transparency:** explain the purpose and benefits of assessments to participants.
- **Positivity:** frame feedback as an opportunity for growth rather than criticism.
- **Personalization:** tailor assessment methods to individual goals and learning styles.

When assessments are seen as empowering rather than evaluative, participants are more likely to engage deeply and use the outcomes to their advantage. Assessments are a powerful tool in career guidance, offering participants a structured way to reflect on their journey, identify opportunities, and make informed decisions. By using tools like self-assessment forms, feedback surveys, and practical evaluations, young individuals can track their progress and adjust their strategies for continuous improvement. This workshop emphasizes the importance of assessments not as a one-time activity but as an ongoing process, equipping participants with the skills and mindset to navigate their career paths with confidence and adaptability.


¹ <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>

Objectives:


- To equip participants with the knowledge and tools needed to assess their own skills, values, and career progress, fostering self-awareness and informed decision-making.
- To enable participants to design and implement effective feedback surveys, helping them assess their own development and the effectiveness of career-related activities.
- To guide participants in using assessment outcomes to refine their career goals, adjust learning strategies, and create actionable career plans.

Competencies:

- Developing self-assessment skills by learning how to critically evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and career progress using structured self-assessment tools.
- Improving the ability to create, interpret, and apply feedback surveys to measure personal growth and program effectiveness.
- Strengthening their ability to analyze assessment results and translate insights into meaningful career and learning adjustments.
- Using assessment findings to establish short-term and long-term career goals that align with their skills and aspirations.
- Learning to view assessments and feedback as opportunities for continuous improvement rather than judgment, promoting adaptability in career planning.

 **Methodological approach:** The methodological approach of this workshop has a strong emphasis on active participation, peer-to-peer learning, and self-reflection. Participants engage in activities, such as completing self-assessment forms, designing feedback surveys, and role-playing assessment conversations, allowing them to directly apply the concepts discussed. The approach is learner-centered, ensuring that each participant can connect the workshop content to their personal career development journey.

 **Participants:** 1 facilitators, 15–20 participants

 **Needed resources:** flipcharts, markers, printed self-assessment forms, feedback survey templates, observation checklists, paper, pens, sticky notes, smartphones or computers (optional for digital tools), and a projector or screen for presentations.

 **Duration:** 90 minutes

Workshop scenario

Step 1: Introduction to assessment tools.

The facilitator begins by introducing the topic of assessment in career guidance. The facilitator explains that assessment tools play a crucial role in helping individuals track their progress, identify areas for improvement, and refine their career strategies.

To illustrate this, the facilitator provides real-world examples of how assessments have helped individuals make informed career decisions and present three commonly used assessment tools:

- 1. Self-assessment forms** – These help individuals reflect on their skills, values, and career interests, allowing them to gain a clearer understanding of their strengths and areas for development.
- 2. Feedback surveys** – These tools collect insights on performance, whether from personal reflection or external sources (e.g., Google Forms or printed surveys), helping individuals and facilitators improve career programs.
- 3. Observation checklists** – These structured tools evaluate participation in activities such as group discussions, presentations, or role-playing exercises, providing valuable feedback on behavioral and professional competencies.

To encourage engagement, the facilitator asks participants: “What tools have you used to evaluate your progress in school, work, or personal goals?” Participants are invited to share their experiences, helping to create a connection between their existing knowledge and the tools being introduced.

Step 2: Using self-assessment forms.

To provide a practical experience with self-assessment, the facilitator distributes **self-assessment forms** to all participants. These forms contain guiding questions such as:

- “What skills have I improved recently?”
- “What are my strengths and areas for development?”
- “What career goals am I currently working toward?”

The facilitator explains that self-assessment is a personal reflection exercise, encouraging participants to answer honestly to gain meaningful insights into their progress. Participants are given **10 minutes** to complete the form independently, taking time to think about their career paths and personal development.

Once completed, the facilitator pairs participants for a **peer-sharing activity**. In pairs, participants discuss their reflections, focusing on their progress and areas where they see opportunities for growth. The facilitator moves around the room, encouraging discussions and ensuring that participants feel comfortable sharing their insights. After the discussions, the facilitator leads a short **group debrief**, highlighting how self-assessment forms reveal patterns that can guide career planning. They emphasize that these forms are not about judging oneself but about understanding strengths and setting realistic goals for improvement.

Step 3: Feedback surveys and adjusting strategies.

The facilitator introduces feedback surveys as a key tool in career guidance, explaining their role in assessing both individual progress and the effectiveness of career programs. To provide a practical example, the facilitator guides participants in designing a feedback survey.

Participants are divided into small groups and tasked with creating a survey to assess progress in a specific activity, such as a workshop, an internship, or a personal career goal. The facilitator encourages them to include a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions. Sample questions may include:

- “How confident do you feel about your skills after completing this activity?” (Scale: 1–5)
- “What was the most helpful part of this experience?” (Open-ended)
- “What additional support do you need to reach your goals?” (Open-ended)

After designing their surveys, each group presents their work, and the facilitator provides feedback, emphasizing the importance of clear, unbiased, and purposeful questions in gathering useful responses.

To deepen understanding, the facilitator transitions into a role-playing activity. Participants are paired, with one taking the role of the “youth being assessed” and the other acting as the “career counselor”.

Using the feedback survey results, the “counselor” provides constructive feedback and helps the “youth” adjust their career strategies. The facilitator guides the role-play by suggesting potential strategies, such as:

- Recommending specific training programs based on identified skill gaps.
- Suggesting mentorship or networking opportunities to help expand career knowledge.

- Helping the participant set new career goals aligned with their strengths and interests.

After the role-play, the facilitator invites participants to reflect on the exercise, discussing the importance of feedback in shaping career decisions.

Step 4: Applying assessment results.

To conclude the workshop, the facilitator leads a discussion on how to integrate assessment outcomes into career planning. Encourage participants to think critically about their assessment results and how these insights can influence their next steps.

The facilitator asks guiding questions such as:

- “How can assessment results help you identify gaps in your skills or knowledge?”
- “How might your career goals change based on the feedback you received today?”
- “How often should you reassess your progress, and why?”

Participants are encouraged to share their thoughts, and the facilitator emphasizes that assessment is an ongoing process, not a one-time activity. They explain that career paths are rarely linear and that regular self-reflection helps young people adapt to changes, stay motivated, and continuously improve their skills.

As a final step, the facilitator asks participants to create a personal action plan, outlining one short-term and one long-term goal based on their assessment findings. These plans serve as a practical takeaway, ensuring that participants leave the workshop with a clear next step in their career journey.

Debriefing and conclusions

Questions to reflect on:

- How did the self-assessment form help you reflect on your progress?
- What insights can feedback surveys provide that self-assessment might not?
- How can assessment tools support ongoing career planning?

The facilitator wraps up the session by reinforcing key messages:

- Assessment tools provide clarity and direction in career development.
- Feedback is an opportunity for growth, not criticism.
- Career planning is a flexible, evolving process that benefits from continuous assessment.

Useful comments to the facilitator

Encourage participants to see assessments as tools for self-improvement rather than as evaluations that judge their abilities. Reinforce the idea that assessments help them recognize strengths, identify areas for growth, and refine their career strategies. Adapt assessment tools and exercises based on participants' backgrounds, skill levels, and aspirations. If needed, modify the difficulty or structure of activities to ensure they remain relevant and beneficial to each participant.

Useful comments to participants

Make self-assessment a regular habit: take time to reflect on your skills, progress, and career aspirations regularly. Assessments are most effective when used continuously, helping you stay aligned with your personal and professional goals. Career goals and personal aspirations may evolve, so revisit your assessments periodically. Updating your strategies ensures that you remain flexible and responsive to new opportunities and challenges.

Tips for facilitators

Provide participants with concrete case studies or examples of how assessment results have led individuals to make informed career decisions. Explain tools in simple, clear language to ensure accessibility. Encourage discussions where participants share insights and learn from each other.

CONCLUSIONS

The Career Counseling Program consists of 19 structured activities to provide young people with essential knowledge, skills, and tools for successful career planning and professional growth.

“Adaptability is essential for career success.”

“Staying informed about industry trends is key.”

“Ongoing skill development is necessary.”

“Building a strong personal brand enhances career opportunities.”

“Soft skills are as important as technical skills.”

“Career readiness requires proactive steps.”

“Digital literacy is a must-have skill.”

“Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in professional success.”

“Aligning career goals with market demands leads to stability.”

“Resilience and a growth mindset drive long-term career success.”

These are only a few sentences young people hear quite a lot. Each activity of this Program is a stone in a mosaic of help on the path of their individual’s career design, ensuring that participants receive a holistic and practical approach to designing their careers. It addresses quickly changing labour market, entry preparation and most importantly the emotional and psychological aspects of career decision-making. By engaging in experiential learning, participants gain the confidence and competence needed to navigate the complexities of today’s job market. This Program fosters career alignment, informed decision-making and prevents career choices based solely on external expectations or temporary trends.

The program not only provides knowledge but also cultivates a mindset of continuous growth, strategic career management, and resilience in the face of professional challenges. Through its structured and interactive approach, the Career Counseling Program ensures that young people are well-equipped to enter the workforce with confidence, clarity, and a strong foundation for long-term success.

APPENDIX: COMPETENCE AND SKILL MATRIX

Understanding the trends of the labour market = Ability to understand the current and future labour market trends, focusing on aspects important from the point of view of the employee, starting with entry level jobs and tasks. It should help in making informed career decisions taking into account both formal and non-formal education paths as well as putting emphasis on the concept of lifelong learning.

Related to workshop(s): Labour market dynamics

Knowledge:

- Understands what influences the labour market trends with an emphasis on technologic, ecological and globalisation related factors.
- Knows where to look for information on the labour market trends like statistics, reports, research papers and forecasts, especially free and open resources focusing on the situation of youth and people who are only about to take their first steps on the labour market.

Skills/Abilities:

- Performs basic analysis of labour market reports to identify jobs that are “future-proof” as well as those that are in risk of declining in the coming years.
- Lists competencies and maps out career paths that give a higher probability for a career in an emerging sector.

Attitudes:

- Adopts a mindset of lifelong learning, reskilling and upskilling to remain competitive and relevant in a shifting labour market.

Understanding and using digital tools, relevant to career counseling = The ability to leverage technology ethically, responsibly, and efficiently to support young people with applicable and personalized career guidance.

Related to workshop(s): Labour market dynamics

Knowledge:

- Identifies various platforms used for career assessment with the ability to make connections to different areas of career counseling, such as soft skills, self-assessment, career readiness.

Skills/Abilities:

- Incorporates digital tools seamlessly into career counseling practices, but with informed use.
- Selects and applies appropriate tools to meet the unique needs of young people.

- Is updated on advancements in digital resources relevant to career counseling and encourages young people to use them.

Attitude:

- Is open to trying new digital resources and tools relevant to career counseling with ensuring compliance with data protection laws and confidentiality standards while can discuss potential dilemmas on this topic and promoting responsible use of digital tools to safeguard young people's information.
- Raises awareness of the beneficial use of digital tools.

Explain key trades of employable youth = The ability to identify, articulate, and communicate the essential qualities and traits that enhance a young person's employability.

Related to workshop(s): Career readiness

Knowledge:

- Understand key trades of employable young people and communicate them in a way that is clear and relatable to young people.

Skills/Abilities:

- Helps young people connect their skills, interests, and goals to key trades of employability.
- Provides examples to illustrate how these traits are valued by employers and impact workplace success.

Attitudes:

- Encourages critical thinking about labor market information to make strategic career choices, such as pursuing additional training or transitioning to a growth field due to developing new employability key trades.
- Encourages predicting the future of the labor market, highlighting what key trades will young people need in the labor market for future employability in 5–10 years (after having labour market experiences), and encourages them to start developing them.
- Follows trends in the field of youth employment and knows how to integrate them into already existing workshops and activities.

Active use of self-assessment tools = The ability to help young people gain insight into their values, skills, attitudes, and values through the selection, presentation, use, and interpretation of self-assessment tools.

Related to workshop(s): Self-knowledge: Who am I?

Knowledge:

- Familiarity with various assessment instruments, such as personality tests, skills inventories, values questionnaires, and interest surveys, especially interactive methods.

Skills/Abilities:

- Analyzes assessment outcomes, is able to highlight key patterns while linking and aligning them to career paths, development opportunities, or personal growth areas.
- Explaining results in a clear, accessible, unbiased manner.
- Helps young people reflect on the use of results relating their real life experiences, goals and aspirations.

Attitudes:

- Supports young people to translate insights, results of tools into actionable follow-up steps, such as identifying career options, setting development goals, or improving self-awareness.
- Encourages further self-assessment, self assessment tools and reflection as part of lifelong learning.

Master career theories = The ability to comprehensively understand and apply foundational and contemporary career development theories to support young people in their career exploration and informed decisions.

Related to workshop(s): Career and personality

Knowledge:

- Has in-depth knowledge on different foundational and contemporary theories, such as Holland's RIASEC model, Super's life-span, life-space theory, Bandura's social cognitive theory, Krumboltz's social learning theory, Roe's personality theory, the chaos theory of careers ...

Skills/Abilities:

- Translates and connects theories into practical tools, examples, and counsels to address young people's career challenges and informed decisions, based on needs and also adapts it to diverse contexts.
- Has the ability to use an interdisciplinary approach to address link between career theories, personalities, and career paths.
- Critically evaluates theories and refines the application based on needs assessment.

- Empowers young people for further use of theoretical knowledge for self-guided career development.

Attitude:

- Uses a youth-friendly approach, relatable and understandable to explain and facilitate on career theories.

Crisis management = The ability to navigate crises that may arise within the youth and self-assessment context, especially regarding redefining their goals and dreams through recognizing signs of distress, providing support; guiding the group through uncertainty, confusion, or anxiety related to career decisions, life transitions, or personal struggles; maintaining the supportive, non-judgemental environment.

Related to workshop(s): Career and personality, Self-knowledge: Who am I?, Soft skills exploration, Career Readiness

Knowledge:

- Identifying emotional, behavioral, or psychological signs that a participant is not well by understanding stressors in the context of self-assessment, redefining goals, and dreams, pressure of choosing a career, fear of failure, and outside expectations.

Skills/Abilities:

- Offering immediate, empathetic support to young people in crisis to help them manage their emotions and regain composure by using different techniques.
- Recognizes when a crisis extends beyond the scope of career counseling and makes appropriate referrals and cooperation with mental health professionals, support groups, or other resources.

Attitude:

- Reinforces the positive idea of crisis: while challenging, also opportunities for growth, development, hope, and direction with a focus on strengths and potential.
- Helps youth develop coping strategies for handling stress, uncertainty, and difficult decisions related to career planning, also through encouragement of resilience.

Assertive communication = The ability to express thoughts, feelings and needs in a clear, respectful and confident manner while maintaining consideration and empathy for others.

Related to workshop(s): Career and personality, Self-knowledge: Who am I?, Soft skills exploration, Career Readiness

Knowledge:

- Understands one's own needs, emotions, opinion and articulates it in a composed and calm manner.

Skills/Abilities:

- Is able to listen actively with summarizing and validating young people's experiences.
- Demonstrates attentiveness to others through different techniques.
- Is clear, and understandable and gives the opportunity to define potential unclarities.
- Sets boundaries in a calm and composed manner and maintains group boundaries, such as respecting time limits, confidentiality, and turn-taking in discussions.
- Ask clear questions.
- Applies assertive communication skills to address disagreements and seeks constructive solutions while respecting all of the involved parties while upholding one's own needs and values.

Attitude:

- Recognizes the value of assertive communication in career counseling as well as in different workplaces.
- Encourages all young people to participate in discussions by creating a safe and inclusive environment and modeling assertive communication to inspire participants to articulate career goals, skills, and values their thoughts confidently and respectfully in the group setting.

Career field exploration facilitation = The ability to guide young people in discovering and analyzing various career fields by providing accurate information, relatable examples, and engaging activities.

Related to workshop(s): Career fields exploration

Knowledge:

- Understands the classification of career fields and their associated roles, skills, and qualifications.
- Is aware of the evolving demands and opportunities in different sectors of the labor market.

Skills/Abilities:

- Facilitates interactive discussions that help youth identify connections between their interests and potential career fields.
- Presents complex industry trends and opportunities in an accessible and youth-friendly manner.

Attitudes:

- Demonstrates openness to exploring diverse career paths, including unconventional or emerging fields.
- Shows enthusiasm for helping young people find alignment between personal strengths and career opportunities.

Explain labor market trends and guide informed decisions = The ability to analyze and interpret labor market data, trends, and opportunities to provide young people with clear, actionable guidance, enabling them to make informed career decisions that align with current and future job market demands.

Related to workshop(s): Career fields exploration

Knowledge:

- Understands tools and methods for skills and interests assessment (e.g., Holland Code, MBTI).
- Knows examples of how various skills can be applied across multiple career fields.

Skills/Abilities:

- Uses self-assessment tools to help participants identify their core skills and match them to relevant career fields.
- Facilitates group activities to illustrate the diversity of career paths that align with similar skill sets.

Attitudes:

- Values each individual's unique combination of skills and talents.
- Demonstrates a commitment to fostering confidence and self-awareness in young people.

Understanding future work environments = Ability to predict how technological, environmental, cultural and social changes will affect the way people work in the future.

Related to workshop(s): Careers of the future

Knowledge:

- Understands the nature of remote and hybrid work, gig economy, automation, artificial intelligence and how they can impact the workplace today and in the near future.
- Understands the concept sustainability as well as ethical and responsible actions undertaken by employees in relation to co-workers, customers and the environment.

Skills/Abilities:

- Guides youth in connecting their personalities, interests and strengths with the needs of a “future-proof” labour market.
- Uses various workshop and coaching tools to facilitate the process of guiding young people in an engaging and interesting way.

Attitudes:

- Encourages the stances of flexibility and openness towards innovative and unconventional types of work that have the prospect of becoming highly sought-after and pioneering positions at the workplace.
- Promoting creative thinking and resourcefulness to identify new and innovative jobs that are emerging and don't have a considerable financial entry barrier and would be acceptable for start-up incubator funding programmes.

Facilitation of soft skills = The ability to guide young people in groups in developing key soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving in the current labour market and workplaces through engaging and participatory methods.

Related to workshop(s): Soft skills exploration

Knowledge:

- Identifies key soft skills, such as communication, team work, problem-solving and communicates them in a way that is understandable and relevant to young people.
- Identifies soft skills in practical examples in everyday life with ability to connect it to theory, identifying and communicating it. .

Skills/Abilities:

- Implementation of soft skills during the facilitation itself, i.e. ongoing informed use.

- Provides tools and resources on soft skills, with emphasis on measuring soft skills, such as SkillRobo, to support youth in exploring and developing soft skills of young people.

Attitudes:

- Positive attitude towards implementing soft skills in non-formal education.
- Positive attitude and developed critical thinking on soft skills in the labour market and workspace.

Building a unique personal identity = The ability to articulate and present a clear, authentic, and consistent personal identity that aligns with individual values, skills, and aspirations, promoting a positive impression in both personal and professional interactions.

Related to workshop(s): Personal branding

Knowledge:

- Uses storytelling techniques to highlight personal achievements and experiences effectively.

Skills/Abilities:

- Develops a personal mission statement to guide professional and personal decisions.
- Demonstrates self-awareness by identifying and articulating personal strengths and values.

Attitudes:

- Consistently maintains professional behavior in communication, both online and offline.

Emotional intelligence in personal and social context = The ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions while empathizing with others, developing stronger interpersonal relationships, and effective conflict resolution.

Related to workshop(s): Socio-emotional learning

Knowledge:

- Identifies and labels personal emotions in various situations with accuracy.

Skills/Abilities:

- Implements techniques such as deep breathing or mindfulness to regulate emotional responses.
- Responds calmly and thoughtfully to emotionally charged situations.

- Recognizes and validates others' emotions during interactions.

Resilience and adaptability = The ability to recover, learn, and grow from obstacles while maintaining a balanced perspective on achievements and challenges, using them as stepping stones for personal and professional growth.

Related to workshop(s): Managing failure and success

Skills/Abilities:

- Adjusts plans and strategies based on feedback and evolving circumstances.
- Reflects on failures to learn lessons and improve future performance.
- Maintains a positive perspective and continues to take initiative after obstacles.

Attitude:

- Acknowledges and celebrates successes while staying grounded.

Growth mindset development (through [GROW](#) model) = The ability to embrace challenges and view failures as opportunities for learning, creating a mindset that values persistence and continuous improvement.

Related to workshop(s): Managing Failure and Success

Skills/Abilities:

- Reframes obstacles as necessary steps in personal or professional development.

Attitude:

- Seeks constructive criticism to improve performance.
- Celebrates small milestones on the way to larger achievements.
- Encourages and supports peers in overcoming challenges with optimism.

Preparing job application resources = Ability to prepare compelling and tailored CVs, cover letters, portfolios and other accompanying documents required by headhunters and recruitment specialists.

Related to workshop(s): Job portfolio

Knowledge:

- Understands how the recruitment process works, what are the expectations of recruitment specialists regarding submitted documents and how their evaluation process looks like.
- Knows how to translate a candidate's employment history, educational

achievements and other successes into an attractive set of documents that make him stand out and allow him to progress to further recruitment stages.

Skills/Abilities:

- Teaching young people how to read job descriptions critically and evaluate them to adapt the application document to meet the recruitment specialist's expectations.
- Preparing a professional, clear and accurate set of recruitment documents showcasing the candidate's strengths and suitability for the position.

Attitude:

- Increase awareness of the need to research the company a candidate applies to.
- Promote the necessity to prepare tailored and personalized cover letters that can be attached to each job application.
- Support young people in overcoming insecurities and self-doubt when presenting their skills and achievements for the purpose of applying for a job.
- Manage expectations and provoke self-reflection to promote a realistic overview of the candidate's situation in relation to a job he is applying for.

Preparing youth for the interview process = The ability to guide young people in understanding the structure, expectations, and dynamics of job interviews, enabling them to approach the process with confidence and clarity.

Related to workshop(s): Interview preparation

Knowledge:

- Understands the typical stages of an interview, including introductions, competency questions, and follow-ups.
- Knows how to identify and address common interview formats (e.g., panel, virtual, or behavioral interviews).

Skills/Abilities:

- Designs engaging role-play scenarios that mimic real-life interviews to prepare youth for diverse situations.
- Teaches effective preparation strategies, such as researching companies and practicing common questions.

Attitudes:

- Encourages youth to view interviews as mutual evaluations rather than one-sided assessments.
- Demonstrates patience and empathy when addressing participants' concerns and anxieties about interviews.

Managing stress and building confidence = The ability to equip young people with strategies to manage pre-interview anxiety and present themselves confidently during interviews.

Related to workshop(s): Interview preparation

Knowledge:

- Understands psychological techniques for stress management, such as mindfulness and breathing exercises.
- Familiar with common barriers to confidence in young people and methods to overcome them.

Skills/Abilities:

- Facilitates activities that simulate high-pressure situations, helping participants practice stress-management techniques.
- Guides participants in identifying their strengths and turning weaknesses into opportunities during interviews.

Attitudes:

- Empathizes with participants' nervousness and builds a supportive environment.
- Inspires confidence through positive reinforcement and constructive feedback.

Building and maintaining a professional online presence = Ability to help young people create an authentic digital presence that highlights their suitability for a job position and adopting good practices and responsible use of social media as well as underscoring the risks and dangers.

Related to workshop(s): Social media and career readiness

Knowledge:

- Knows how to create a professional online presence, using platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram to promote themselves and their works.
- Understands the risks of irresponsible use of social media that can result in reputational damage and difficulty in finding employment after the online presence has been investigated by recruiters.

Skills/Abilities:

- Teaching young people how to evaluate their existing social media presence in the context of career planning and how to introduce improvements and adjustments, change privacy settings and remove inappropriate and potentially damaging content.

- Guiding potential job seekers how to develop a strategy that will reflect their professional interests and help them create a convincing persona that is attractive to future employers.

Attitudes:

- Promoting awareness of a responsible and positive digital footprint on social media, both professional and personal
- Maintaining a balance between authenticity and promotion to keep recruiter expectations realistic.

Strategic thinking and planning = The ability to set clear, achievable goals aligned with personal or organizational objectives, and systematically plan and implement steps to achieve them.

Related to workshop(s): Goal Settings

Skills/Abilities:

- Break down long-term goals into actionable short-term steps.
- Tracks progress and adjusts goals based on performance and unforeseen changes.
- Sets SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals.

Attitude:

- Engages in regular self-reflection to evaluate alignment with long term aspirations.

Facilitation career plan development = The ability to guide young people in creating personalized, actionable career plans by assessing their strengths, interests, and opportunities, while aligning with labor market demands and individual aspirations.

Related to workshop(s): Career plan development

Knowledge:

- Familiarity with various self-assessment tools (e.g., personality tests, skills inventories, interest assessments) to help youth discover their strengths and preferences.
- Understanding of current and emerging labor market trends, including industries in demand and future opportunities.
- Comprehensive knowledge of career planning frameworks, including how to establish both short-term and long-term goals.

Skills/Abilities:

- Effectively guides youth in using self-assessment tools to identify their unique skills, interests, and career aspirations.
- Simplifies complex labor market data into clear, relatable information for young people.
- Demonstrates the ability to map out personalized career plans, connecting youth to actionable steps aligned with their goals.
- Provides constructive feedback to help youth refine their goals and strategies over time.

Attitudes:

- Advocates for lifelong learning and adaptability as essential qualities in career development.
- Cultivates a belief in youth empowerment, emphasizing self-reliance and ownership of career choices.
- Demonstrates patience, recognizing that career planning is a dynamic and evolving process.

Facilitating goal setting and strategic planning = The ability to guide young people in identifying personal and professional goals and creating actionable steps to achieve them.

Related to workshop(s): Career plan development

Knowledge:

- Understands SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goal-setting methodology.
- Familiar with strategies for breaking long-term goals into short-term objectives.

Skills/Abilities:

- Helps youth identify realistic career goals based on their strengths, interests, and resources.
- Demonstrates how to map out career pathways, including necessary education and skill development.

Attitudes:

- Encourages a proactive approach to goal-setting while remaining flexible to change.
- Shows enthusiasm for participants' aspirations and celebrates their progress.

Utilizing assessment tools for career guidance = The ability to effectively select, use, and interpret a variety of career assessment tools to provide meaningful insights into youths' strengths, interests, and areas for development.

Related to workshop(s): Assessment

Knowledge:

- Understanding of various career assessment tools and their purposes (e.g., personality tests, skills inventories, interest checklists).
- Familiarity with best practices for administering assessments and ethical considerations (e.g., confidentiality, informed consent).
- Knowledge of how to interpret and contextualize assessment results for different career paths.

Skills/Abilities:

- Administers career assessments accurately and efficiently in both individual and group settings.
- Analyzes and interprets assessment results, linking them to career options and individual growth plans.
- Communicates findings in a clear, accessible, and engaging manner that fosters understanding and motivation.

Attitudes:

- Shows sensitivity and respect for the personal nature of assessment results.
- Maintains an open-minded and non-judgmental approach to diverse assessment outcomes.
- Encourages participants to view assessments as tools for self-discovery and growth rather than fixed labels.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Assertiveness Skills: available on <https://www.revolutionlearning.co.uk/topic/assertiveness-skills-articles/>.

Belc, Sabina; Cepin, Matej [et al.]: *Kaj pa, če bi mi ... kako spodbujati pobudništvo mladih?* (What if we ... How to encourage youth initiative), Socialna akademija, Ljubljana, 2021.

Bransford, John; Stein, Barry: *The Ideal Problem Solver*, W. H. Freeman & Co Ltd, San Francisco, 1993.

Špiclin, Anja: *Dejavniki poklicne odločitve (Factors of Career Decision)*, diploma thesis, Ljubljana, 2005.

Root Cause Analysis Explained: Definition, Examples, and Methods, available on: <https://www.tableau.com/analytics/what-is-root-cause-analysis>.

Sipii, Volodymyr; Deshchenko, Oleksandr; Honcharova, Nataliia; Hrytsenko, Andrii; Hrytsiuk, Olena: *Prospects for the Development of Soft Skills in Future Education: Trends and Risks*, Conhecimento & Diversidade, 2024.

MindTools. (n.d.). The GROW model of coaching and mentoring. MindTools. Available on: <https://www.mindtools.com/an0fzpz/the-grow-model-of-coaching-and-mentoring>

Lake Superior State University. (2021). SMART goals worksheet. Available on: <https://www.lssu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SMART-Goals-Worksheet-1.pdf>

National University. (n.d.). Social-emotional learning (SEL): Why it matters for educators. National University. Available on: <https://www.nu.edu/blog/social-emotional-learning-sel-why-it-matters-for-educators/>

School of Personal Branding. (2019). *Personal brand statement guide and worksheet*. Available on: <https://schoolofpersonalbranding.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/personal-brand-statement-guide-and-worksheet.pdf>