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# THE NON-FORMAL CAREER COUNSELING GUIDE



DEVELOPED BY



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## **Introduction**

This non-formal education guide for career counseling and guidance is designed to support students aged 13–15 in discovering their unique potential and making informed decisions about their educational and professional future. The main goal of the guide is to provide practical tools and interactive activities that facilitate self-awareness, clarification of personal interests and values, exploration of career opportunities, and the development of key skills necessary for success in an ever-evolving job market.

Each activity is designed to be carried out either individually by students or in group settings under the guidance of a facilitator.

The guide is structured around exercises and activities that address essential questions related to career and personal development. Students will go through important steps to better understand their identity, including:

**Who am I?** – A puzzle of one's own personality, involving the identification of strengths, weaknesses, and passions.

**Discovering personal interests and values** – Exercises such as the professional interests assessment questionnaire or the personal values inventory will help students define their core motivations and preferences.

**External and internal influences** – Activities such as analyzing the family career genogram or assessing the factors that influence career decisions will provide insight into how family and societal environments shape professional choices.

**Designing the future** – Through exercises such as 'Where am I now and where will I be in three years?', students will learn to set realistic goals and anticipate changes in the labor market.

**Developing future-ready skills** – Exploring green careers will encourage students to prepare for sustainable and adaptable career paths.

**Making informed decisions** – Through a structured decision-making process and the creation of a personalized career profile, students will be equipped to build a concrete plan for achieving their goals.

Through interactive activities and self-reflection, the guide invites students to explore the endless possibilities of their future and to build a career aligned with their values, interests, and abilities. It does not simply provide answers, but also the right questions to help them discover the best version of their own professional journey.

## WHO AM I? (THE PUZZLE SELF)

**Objective:** To identify personal strengths, weaknesses, and passions in order to gain a clear understanding of one's own potential and of how others perceive one's personality.

**Task:** Complete the following puzzle.

**Exercise duration: 10 minutes**

### WHO AM I?

MY STRENGTHS	WHAT I CAN DO	WHAT I LIKE TO DO
MY WEAKNESSES	HOW OTHERS SEE ME	

**CAREER INTEREST ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**(ADAPTED FROM HOLLAND)**

**Objective:** To discover one's vocational personality type and the compatible career field, in order to support informed decision-making regarding the educational and professional pathway.

**Task:** The following questionnaire contains a list of various activities. Depending on how much you would enjoy performing each activity, mark an 'X' in the box that corresponds to your choice. You do not need to consider the skills or training required for these activities—focus only on how you feel about them. Work quickly. Your first reactions are usually the best answers.

Compare the final scores for each domain and create a ranking of your top three preferred domains.

**Exercise duration: 30 minutes**

A	Not at all (0)	A little (1)	Moderately (2)	A lot (3)	Very much (4)
1. Operating agricultural machinery.					
2. Performing construction work.					
3. Repairing watches or jewelry.					
4. Driving public transportation vehicles.					
5. Working as a security guard or museum attendant.					
6. Performing mechanic work in an auto repair shop.					
7. Repairing electrical installations in a building.					
8. Repairing mobile phones.					
9. Designing or assembling furniture.					
10. Fixing various household items.					
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>					

<b>B</b>	<b>Not at all (0)</b>	<b>A little (1)</b>	<b>Moderately (2)</b>	<b>A lot (3)</b>	<b>Very much (4)</b>
1. Working in a travel agency to make flight and hotel reservations.					
2. Performing front desk duties at a hotel.					
3. Managing a company's accounting records.					
4. Handling the administrative tasks of a business.					
5. Entering data into computer systems.					
6. Creating a company's expense budget.					
7. Monitoring merchandise inventory in a warehouse.					
8. Recording a company's financial data.					
9. Taking a programming course.					
10. Checking banking data to identify possible errors.					
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>					

<b>C</b>	<b>Not at all (0)</b>	<b>A little (1)</b>	<b>Moderately (2)</b>	<b>A lot (3)</b>	<b>Very much (4)</b>
1. Supporting people with disabilities in preparing for a profession.					
2. Providing instruction and education to children.					
3. Researching and proposing solutions to improve the lives of people in need.					
4. Providing care for individuals who are ill.					
5. Helping former inmates find employment.					
6. Guiding people in choosing a suitable career.					
7. Coordinating the activities of other people.					
8. Working as a family counselor, offering emotional and psychological support.					
9. Studying psychology and processes related to human behavior.					
10. Organizing group discussions for children with mental health disorders.					
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>					

<b>D</b>	<b>Not at all (0)</b>	<b>A little (1)</b>	<b>Moderately (2)</b>	<b>A lot (3)</b>	<b>Very much (4)</b>
1. Reading materials such as scientific books and journals.					
2. Conducting research in a physics laboratory.					
3. Studying celestial bodies such as the Sun, Moon, planets, and stars.					
4. Developing mathematical models to solve technical and scientific problems.					
5. Analyzing the effects of air pollution on the environment.					
6. Creating innovative technical or scientific equipment.					
7. Seeking solutions for treating serious illnesses.					
8. Coordinating research on controlling diseases that affect plants.					
9. Assisting researchers in conducting laboratory experiments.					
10. Studying the biology of marine species.					
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>					

<b>E</b>	<b>Not at all (0)</b>	<b>A little (1)</b>	<b>Moderately (2)</b>	<b>A lot (3)</b>	<b>Very much (4)</b>
1. Coordinating an administrative department.					
2. Managing a company's sales.					
3. Developing plans to launch a business.					
4. Making a profit from commercial activities or stock market investments.					
5. Administering and organizing the operations of a bank.					
6. Providing legal advice to a company.					
7. Organizing and leading teams.					
8. Recruiting personnel for large companies.					
9. Traveling to promote and sell a company's products.					
10. Planning and coordinating business projects.					
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>					

<b>F</b>	<b>Not at all (0)</b>	<b>A little (1)</b>	<b>Moderately (2)</b>	<b>A lot (3)</b>	<b>Very much (4)</b>
1. Performing a role on stage.					
2. Creating animated drawings.					
3. Writing a novel.					
4. Studying music or art.					
5. Writing plays.					
6. Composing or arranging musical pieces.					
7. Painting portraits or landscapes.					
8. Designing stage sets for theatrical productions.					
9. Creating soundtracks for films.					
10. Reviewing books as a literary critic.					
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>					

**A means Realistic**

**B means Conventional**

**C means Social**

**D means Investigative**

**E means Enterprising**

**F means Artistic**

Total scores	
<b>A =</b>	<b>D =</b>
<b>B =</b>	<b>E =</b>
<b>C =</b>	<b>F =</b>

**Write down the top 3 scores of the fields in descending order:**

**1.....**

**2.....**

**3.....**

\*In the Appendix, you will find descriptions of the fields: characteristics of the vocational personality type and work environment, as well as career possibilities.

## PERSONAL VALUES INVENTORY

**Objective:** To clarify the core values that influence personal and professional decisions, in order to build a career aligned with individual principles.

**Task:** The list below contains a series of values. Which values matter most to you? Choose the 5 most important values and write them down below in order of their importance to you.

**Exercise duration: 10 minutes**

- ➡ **Independence** – you want to have your own business, to be your own boss
- ➡ **Financial Stability** – you want to have enough money so that you don't have to worry about the future
- ➡ **Family** – your relationship with family members is a top priority
- ➡ **Friendship** – you want reliable friends and to be a loyal friend in return
- ➡ **Organization** – you prefer everything around you to be well-organized
- ➡ **Adventure/Thrill-Seeking** – you're always looking for new and exciting experiences
- ➡ **Living Environment** – it's very important to you; you already know where you want to live
- ➡ **Creativity** – you want to be able to experiment with all your ideas
- ➡ **Personal Development** – you seek continuous growth of your potential
- ➡ **Helping Others** – you are generous and attentive to the needs of those around you
- ➡ **Spirituality** – whether it's connecting with nature or engaging in religious activities
- ➡ **Education** – you value learning and developing new skills
- ➡ **Social Status** – you aim for power and authority

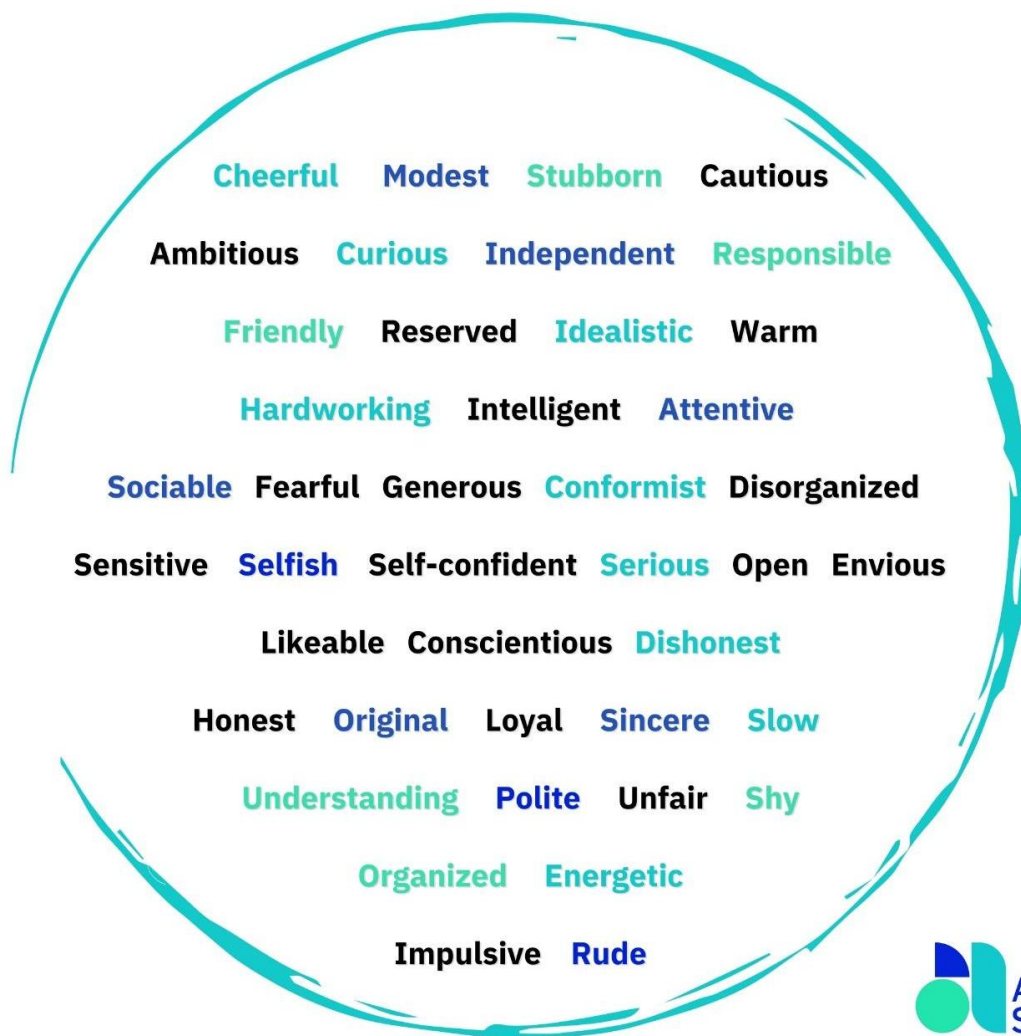
- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

## PERSONALITY IN ADJECTIVES

**Objective:** To raise awareness of dominant personality traits in order to better understand how they influence behavior and career choices.

**Task:** As honestly as possible, choose adjectives (traits) that describe you and adjectives (traits) you would like to have. Once you've made your selections, write them down in the table.

**Exercise duration: 10 minutes**





Traits that I have



Traits I would like

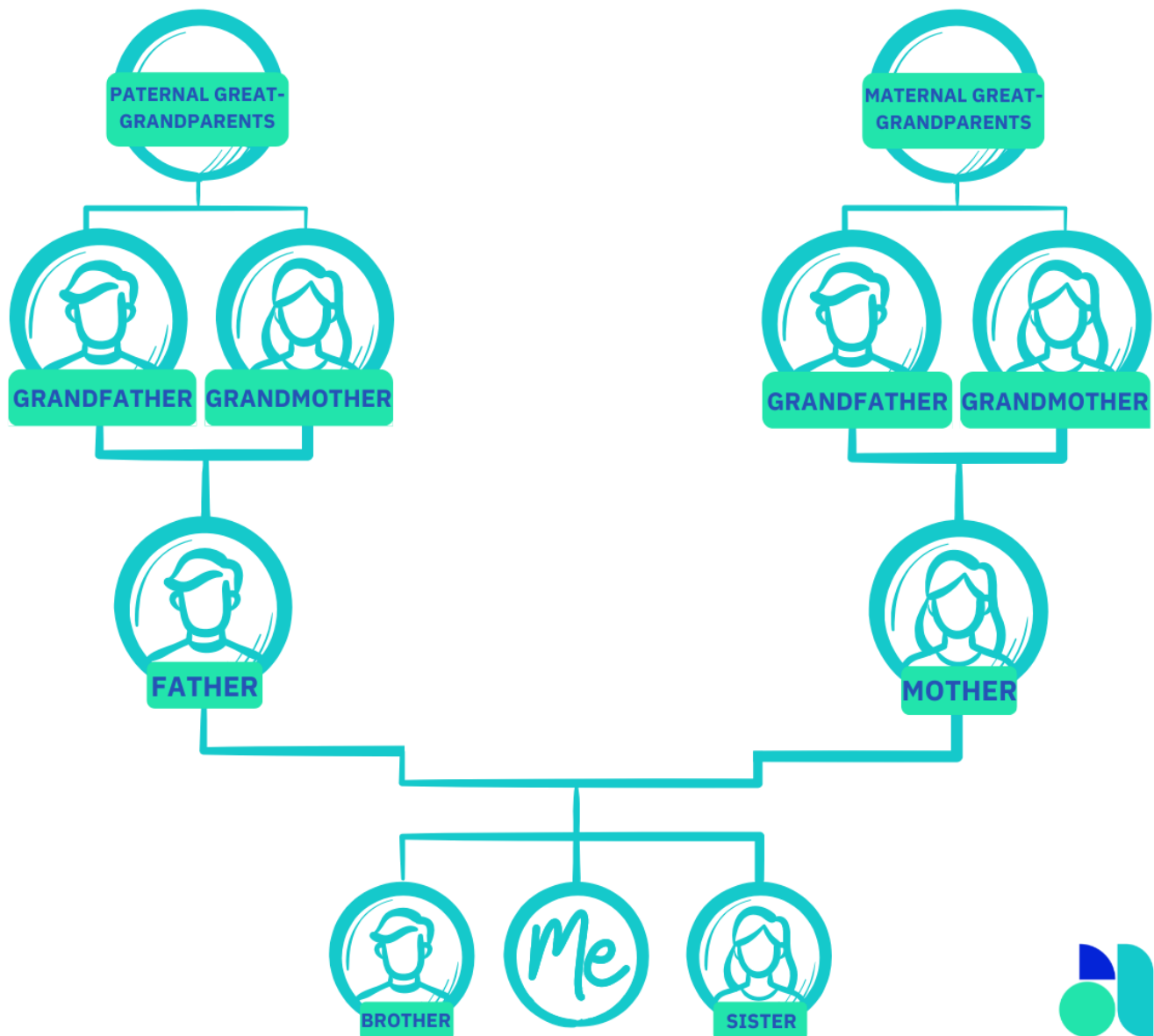


## CAREER GENOGRAM OF MY FAMILY

**Objective:** To analyze the influence of family traditions and the professional roles of family members on one's own career choices.

**Task:** Identify and write down your family members' professions inside the circles. Observe whether similar professions appear throughout your family history.

**Exercise duration: 10 minutes**



## VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

**Objective:** To evaluate volunteer experiences in order to identify the skills developed, interests discovered, and their potential application in a future career.

**Task:** Choose from the list below the volunteer activities you would like to get involved in.

**Exercise duration: 5 minutes**



Waste collection  
(when you go for a walk)



Helping the elderly in your  
community



Recycling activities



Mentoring activities for  
children from social centers



Collecting and donating  
clothes to those in need



Volunteer at an animal  
shelter



Volunteer in a nursing  
home



Socialization with children  
from social centers

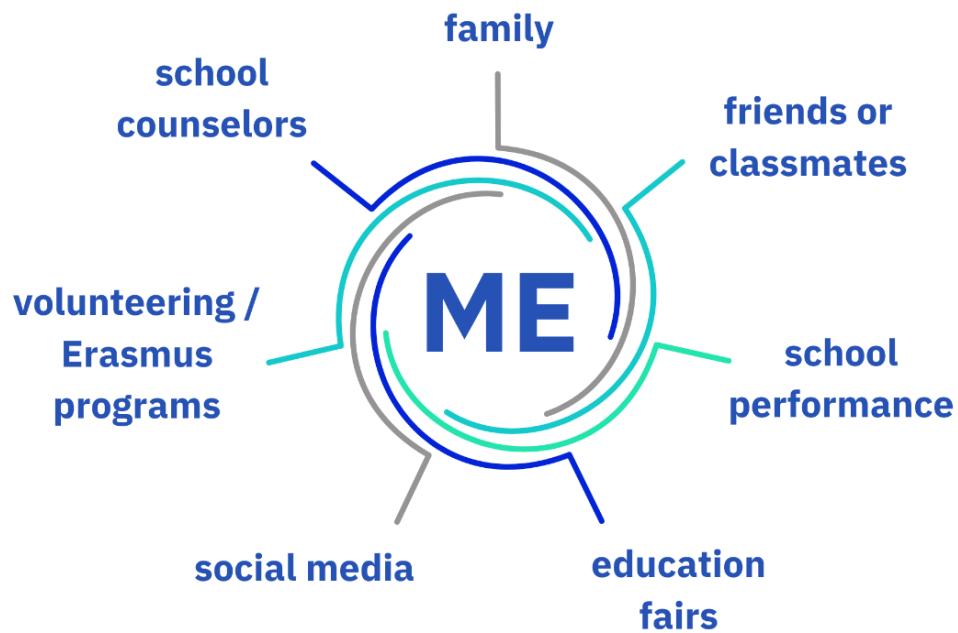
## CAREER CHOICE

### FACTORS THAT CAN INFLUENCE CAREER CHOICE

**Objective:** To identify external factors that may influence one's educational and career path.

**Task:** Who or what might influence your choice of a future career? Highlight the factors that are most important to you when choosing a career.

**Exercise duration: 5 minutes**



**Other factors for you:**

.....

## GREEN JOBS OF THE FUTURE (INACO, 2022)

**Objective:** To explore the opportunities offered by green jobs, in order to contribute to sustainability and enter a growing field.

**Task:** Imagine which of the following professions would suit you and mark them.

**Exercise duration: 10 minutes**

- **Urban Farmer** (grows plants vertically using rooftops, terraces, or balconies)
- **Green Designer** (creates clothing from recyclable materials, interior design objects from reusable materials, artworks from waste)
- **Engineer and Technician in Wave Energy**
- **Sustainability Consultant** (carbon emissions reduction, waste management and recycling, wastewater treatment, fossil fuel-free transportation)
- **Green Home Builder** (constructs environmentally friendly homes)
- **Environmental Researcher** (studies, evaluates, and forecasts the impact of rising temperatures or pollution on the environment)
- **Biogas Technician** (works with gas emitted by plants)
- **Environmental Lawyer**
- **Photovoltaic Solar Panel Installer**
- **Wind Turbine Specialist**
- **Hydropower Technician**
- **Engineer and Designer of Renewable Plastics**
- **Environmental Engineer**

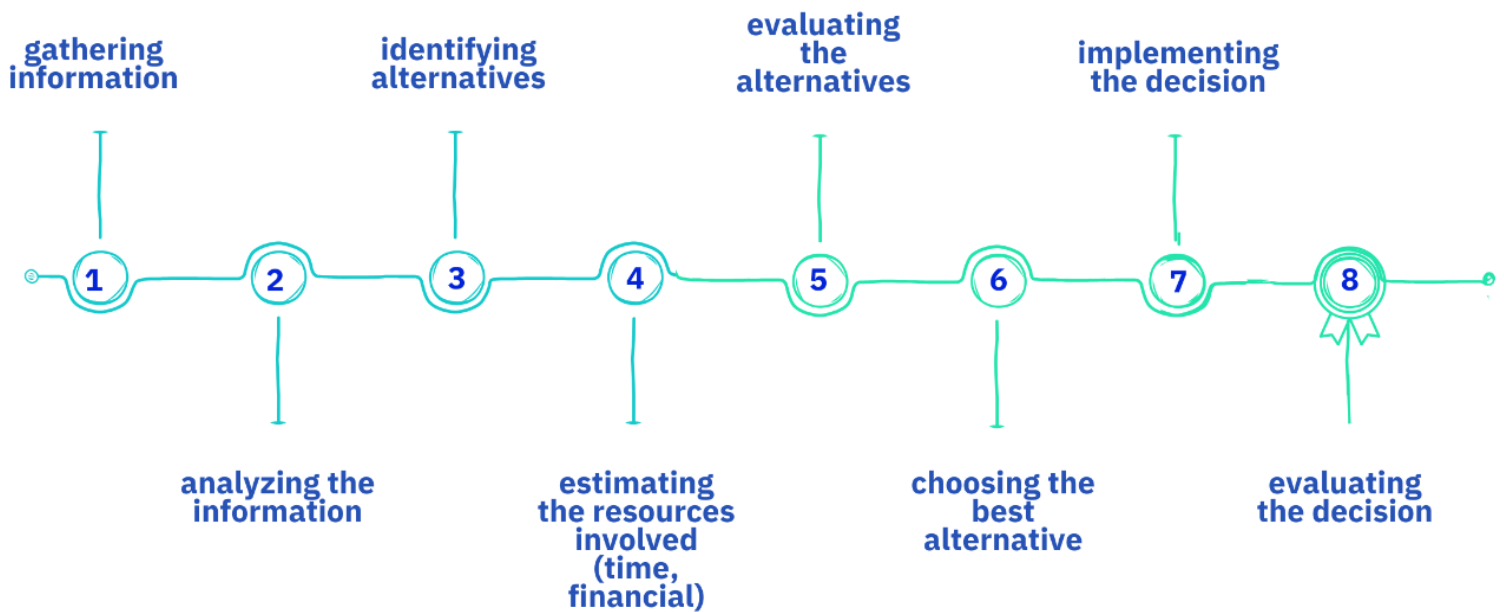


## HOW DO I MAKE A DECISION?

**Objective:** To learn a structured decision-making process in order to make more effective and well-founded educational and career choices.

**Task:** Follow the steps of the decision-making process.

**Exercise duration: 10 minutes**



## WHERE AM I NOW? WHERE WILL I BE IN THREE YEARS?

**Objective:** To establish a clear perspective on the current stage of personal and professional development and to define realistic goals for the next three years.

**Task:** Education is a path that climbs step by step, up the ladder of time toward your dream profession. On each step, note where you are now, your best academic and extracurricular achievements, and where you see yourself in three years — which high school and specialization — and most importantly, how you plan to get there.

**Exercise duration: 10 minutes**

What high school?

What job would I like?

What field of study?

What should I do to get there?



School results

Extracurricular results



## MY CAREER PROFILE

**Objective:** To create a personalized career profile that includes strengths, interests, values, necessary resources, and a concrete plan for achieving professional goals.

**Task:** Complete the steps of your career profile using all the information you've learned about yourself so far from the previous exercises.

**Exercise duration: 30 minutes**

### 1. Who am I?

- - **My Strengths**
  
- **What can I do?**
  
- **What do I enjoy doing?**

### 2. What are my interests? (top 3)

- 
- 
- 

### 3. What are my values? (top 5)

- - 
  - 
  - 
  -
- 



**4. Where am I now?**

**Where will I be in 3 years?**

**5. Who or what can influence my educational path choice?**

-

**Reflexive questions:**

**6. What alternatives do I have?**

**7. What kind of resources do I need? (Time, cognitive, financial)**

**8. Identifying possible obstacles – How could I overcome them?**

**9. What concrete actions can I take to reach my goal?**



## Appendix

### CAREER INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE (based on Holland)

According to Holland's theory, there are six psychological types — Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional — as well as six corresponding occupational environment types.

Psychological types are determined by people's preferences for certain activities, and their dominant preferences place them into a specific type (Klein, 2001, pp. 354-357; Lițoiu, 2000, pp. 36-40; Vitalia, 2009, pp. 101-108; Zlate, 2004, pp. 357-362;).

<p><b>Realistic:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- relates objectively to the environment</li><li>- enjoys physical activities</li><li>- has good motor coordination</li><li>- lacks verbal and interpersonal skills</li><li>- prefers practical, hands-on problems</li><li>- dislikes educational and social activities</li></ul> <p><b>Occupational Environment Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- manual, practical, motor-based activities</li><li>- tasks requiring skill, physical strength, technical abilities, dexterity, and hand coordination</li></ul> <p><b>Career Possibilities</b></p> <p>Mechanic, archaeologist, engineer, butcher, carpenter, dental technician, electrician, farmer, forester, firefighter, jeweler, optician, sailor, plumber, police officer, nurse, construction worker, airplane pilot, computer operator, designer, chef</p>	<p><b>Investigative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- relates to the environment in a theoretical, investigative manner</li><li>- thinks through problems, seeking to understand their causality and interdependence</li><li>- is interested in abstract concepts, ambiguity, and logical issues</li><li>- is introverted, unsociable, studious, persevering, critical, and cautious</li><li>- dislikes social, persuasive, and reflective activities</li></ul> <p><b>Occupational Environment Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- theoretical, abstract activities involving thinking, reasoning, and imagination</li><li>- activities where performance depends on intelligence and personal creativity</li><li>- tasks requiring scientific and mathematical skills</li></ul> <p><b>Career Possibilities</b></p> <p>Anthropologist, biologist, chemist, engineer, economist, geographer, geologist, pharmacist, psychologist, statistician, dentist, management consultant, mathematician, computer scientist</p>
<p><b>Artistic:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- prefers indirect personal interaction through self-expression in an artistic environment</li><li>- is sensitive, flexible, introspective, emotional, and impractical</li><li>- uses imagination as a form of self-expression</li><li>- dislikes rules</li><li>- dislikes orderly, structured, administrative, and business-related activities</li></ul>	<p><b>Social:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- is socially oriented, idealistic, altruistic, and skilled in interacting with and influencing people</li><li>- prefers safe, secure situations</li><li>- has verbal and interpersonal skills</li><li>- is warm and caring toward others</li><li>- dislikes manual and technical activities</li></ul>

<p><b>Occupational Environment Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unstructured activities with few rules, allowing for artistic expression, use of intuition, and emotions</li> <li>- activities that encourage creativity and connection with one's own feelings</li> <li>- activities requiring skills in music, language, visual arts, literature, music, dance, or graphic design</li> </ul> <p><b>Career Possibilities</b></p> <p>Actor, designer, architect, landscape artist, dancer, drama/foreign language teacher, graphic artist, journalist, photographer, writer</p>	<p><b>Occupational Environment Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- activities involving informing, educating, developing, and caring for other people</li> <li>- activities that require frequent and varied social interactions, often with emotional demands</li> <li>- activities requiring strong skills in building good interpersonal relationships</li> </ul> <p><b>Career Possibilities</b></p> <p>Teacher, psychologist, counselor, detective, dietitian, sociologist, social worker, physiotherapist, human resources consultant, educational psychologist, speech therapist, priest</p>
<p><b>Enterprising:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- is interested in interacting with others, mainly to lead and persuade them in order to achieve personal goals</li> <li>- is enthusiastic, adventurous, impulsive, and dominant</li> <li>- prefers action over reflection</li> <li>- craves leadership roles</li> <li>- is motivated by power and social recognition</li> <li>- dislikes theoretical activities based on abstract thinking</li> </ul> <p><b>Occupational Environment Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- activities that involve gaining others' support for personal benefit</li> <li>- activities that require planning and coordinating the actions of others</li> <li>- activities that demand leadership, persuasion, and interpersonal communication skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Career Possibilities</b></p> <p>Advertising director, car salesperson, bartender, administrator, manager, insurance agent, journalist, lawyer, prosecutor, public relations specialist, broker, travel agent</p>	<p><b>Conventional:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- has a formal, conformist verbal and behavioral style</li> <li>- values security and dependence</li> <li>- prefers clarity and control, but rarely uses imagination</li> <li>- is neat, sociable, conservative, generally practical and efficient</li> <li>- prefers to take on subordinate roles</li> <li>- dislikes unstructured, unsystematic, and artistic activities</li> </ul> <p><b>Occupational Environment Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- activities involving repetitive processing, guided by procedures and algorithms</li> <li>- activities that include data and number handling, in relatively stable professional environments</li> <li>- activities requiring numerical skills and the ability to use office equipment and materials</li> </ul> <p><b>Career Possibilities</b></p> <p>Administrator, bank clerk, accountant, financial analyst, librarian, computer operator, court clerk, economist, notary, cashier, receptionist, sales assistant, waiter</p>

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