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HANDBOOK FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING



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EDUCATION IN PROGRESS

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THE AIMS OF THE HANDBOOK

Teachers and counsellors working in adult education are required to offer guidance and counselling to learners who are at very different stages in developing their future goals. While some learners may already have a clear vision for their career or study path, others will still be undecided between a variety of alternative goals; and some will not yet have any future goals in mind at all.

This handbook provides teachers and counsellors with tools for helping all learners reflect on their goals and personal interests, whether they have already developed a clear vision for the future or not. It presents a set of tailored practices for each of the following scenarios:

- (a) the learner already has a clear goal in mind;
- (b) the learner is undecided between several alternative goals;
- (c) the learner does not yet have any future goals; and
- (d) group counselling.

The practices presented in each scenario are easy to use and do not require any additional training. Educators and counsellors are free to choose how many of the practices they wish to use, as well as the order in which they are to be approached.

This handbook takes a hope-centered approach to guidance and counselling. All learners are affected by factors such as how confident they feel about succeeding in their studies, their hopefulness or tendency to dream about the future, as well as their ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Instead of simply providing learners with information about different options, or directing them towards some specific path, this handbook aims to give teachers and

counsellors the tools they need to help learners better reflect on their genuine goals and interests.

Note: as well as the four guidance scenarios mentioned above, the handbook also contains additional practices which can be used to supplement counselling sessions:

- a. *Learning to learn*: practices intended to help learners reflect on their own ability to learn.
- b. *Tools for self-reflection*: practices intended to help learners who require further tools for self-reflection: for instance, learners who do not yet have any future goals.

These additional practices may be used separately or in combination with the four main scenarios.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS/COUNSELLORS

To use the handbook, follow these steps:

1. Familiarise yourself with the different scenarios.
2. Determine which of the scenarios best applies to your learner:
 - a. The learner has a clear goal for the future
 - b. The learner has several alternative goals
 - c. The learner does not yet have any clear goals
 - d. You are working with a group of learners
3. Use the questions and exercises set out in the relevant scenario. There is no fixed format for using them; you are free to choose how many you use, and the order in which you do so.
4. At any point, re-assess the learner's situation and start again.

A: A CLEAR GOAL FOR THE FUTURE

Help your learners think about their goals and how to achieve them.

OPTIONAL WARM-UP: CREATIVE SELF-REFLECTION

Instructions for the learner:

Write down your name vertically on a sheet of paper. Your task is to come up with a short description of yourself for each letter of your name. Try to avoid single words. For example, rather than write “ambitious” for *a*, write “awesomely talented”. Instead of writing “non-competitive”, invent something like “not a fan of Mondays”.

Reflect: did the descriptions seem familiar? Did you discover anything new about yourself?

IDENTIFYING THE LEARNER’S GOAL (QUESTIONS FOR THE LEARNER)

Discussion topic a: Describe your ideal future and how you set your goal. How much have you investigated different options?

Discussion topic b: *Ability to adapt and hope-centered competencies:*

- How hopeful do you feel about the future?
- What kind of educational and career related efforts do you have to make a) right now, b) in the coming months, c) in the coming years, d) later in life?
- What kind of persistence is needed for these efforts?
- Are there any alternative paths for you to reach your goal?
- What kind of skills do you need to learn on these different paths?

EXERCISES FOR THE LEARNER

Exercise a: Write down different things that you like (as many as possible); for instance:

- Spending time with friends
- Watching movies
- Solving mathematical problems

Reflect: did you notice any common themes among the things that you like?
How could these themes motivate you to pursue your goals?

Exercise b: Write down at least five things you are good at.

Think: How could these things help you pursue your goals?

Exercise c: Drawing up an action plan for achieving your goals.

Reflect: How will I achieve my goals? What have I already done to pursue them? What do I still need to do?

Where can I ask for help?

What is my timetable for achieving my goals? What are the individual tasks and deadlines?ⁱ

CONCLUDING QUESTION: ARE YOUR IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL GETTING CLEARER?

B: SEVERAL ALTERNATIVE GOALS

Help your learners think about and decide on their main goal.

OPTIONAL WARM UP: TRAVEL – FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING

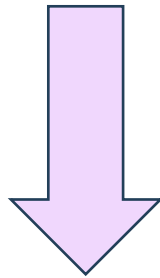
Instructions for the counsellor:

Look at the table below. Read the pairs of alternatives in bold out loud. Ask your learner which option they would choose. Next, read the additional information in parentheses. How would this information influence your learner's decisions?

Travel to the seaside (the trip takes two hours)	Travel to the mountains (the trip takes eight hours)
Travel by car (you do not have a driver's license)	Travel by train (three transfers are expected)
Take an evening stroll (it is raining)	Go to the cinema (you have seen all the films)
Hostel (15 euros per person)	Three star hotel (75 euros per person)
Go canoeing (the distance is 15km)	Go mountain climbing (there is a strong wind blowing)

IDENTIFYING THE LEARNERS' ALTERNATIVE GOALS (QUESTIONS FOR THE LEARNER)

Discussion topic a: What different goals do you have in mind?



Discussion topic b: *Ability to adapt and hope-centered competencies:*

- How hopeful do you feel about the future?
- What kind of educational and career choices do you have to make a) right now, b) in the coming months, c) in the coming years, d) later in life?
- How much have you investigated different options?
- What kind of effort and persistence is needed for these choices?
- What kind of skills do you need to learn to actualize your choices?

EXERCISES FOR THE LEARNER

Exercise a: Write down different things that you like (as many as possible).

For instance:

- Spending time with friends
- Watching movies
- Solving mathematical problems

Reflect: did you notice any common themes among the things that you like?

Exercise b: Write down at least five things that you are good at.

Thinking about the various paths you are considering, how could you use the things you have just listed in different jobs? How could these things help you pursue your alternative goals?

Exercise c. Motivation to study.

On a Word document or piece of paper, write: “Reasons to study”. On another document or piece of paper, write: “Reasons not to study”. Write down your reasons for both.

Reflect on the reasons you have written. Which career path would best fit the reasons you have for studying?

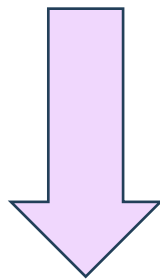
CONCLUDING QUESTION: ARE YOU ANY CLEARER ABOUT WHICH PATH YOU WOULD LIKE TO FOLLOW?

C. NO CLEAR GOALS YET

Help your learner think about and set future goals. To further assist your learner in self-reflection, or to add a warm-up exercise, see: “Additional exercises: b: Tools for self-reflection”.

Exercise a. Think (questions for the learner):

- What would you choose if all the jobs in the world were open for you?
- What study path would you choose if you did not have to worry about admission criteria?
- What career path would you choose if you did not have to worry about money?
- What would you do if you knew you could not fail?
- What would you do if no one could criticize you?
- What career path would you choose if you had no fears?
- What problems in society or the world would you want to solve?

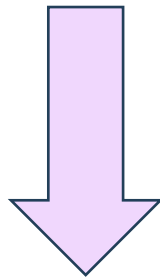


Reflect: were there any similarities in your answers?

Exercise b. From ideas to alternatives (Jarenko & Kankkunen, 2021)ⁱⁱ

First, write down your ideas about an ideal future job. These ideas can be big or small, abstract or concrete, for instance:

- I want to learn something new every day
- I want to interact with customers
- I want to travel around the world for work
- I want to have flexible working hours
- I want to bring my dog to the office
- I want to save the planet



Second, explore these ideas and possible combinations. What kind of interesting combinations can you see? For instance:

- What would be the easiest combination?
- What would be the most ambitious combination?
- What would be the craziest combination?
- What would be the riskiest combination?

Exercise c: Telling my story (reflecting on my experiences so far and bringing my story to life)

To help you identify what kind of work you would like to do, think about the following questions:

- What kind of work have I done so far?
- What jobs have I thought about?
- What are my most important life experiences?
- Which achievements am I most proud of?
- What responsibilities do I have in life?
- What do I like to do in my free time?
- Who did I admire when I was growing up?

Exercise d: Homework. Think about one or two study or career goals. Try to gather as much relevant information as possible.

- What are the requirements and admission criteria for the course/the job? What kind of skills are required?
- What would a typical day in school or at work be like?

Why do you think people choose these paths? What might motivate them to pursue these study goals or do these jobs?

CONCLUDING QUESTION: HAVE YOU COME UP WITH IDEAS FOR A FUTURE CAREER OR STUDY PATH?

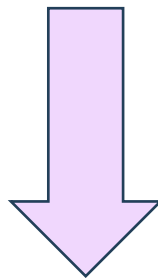
D. GROUP COUNSELLING

Help your learners think about their future goals.

Exercise a. Group discussion.

Think about these questions:

- What would you choose if all the jobs in the world were open to you?
- What career path would you choose if you did not have to worry about money?
- What would you do if you knew you could not fail?
- What would you do if no one could criticize you?
- What career path would you choose if you had no fears?
- What problems in society or the world would you want to solve?



Discuss: What kind of dreams for the future were mentioned? Could these dreams help you set concrete goals? What kind of goals might these be? How could you encourage each other to pursue them?

Exercise b. From ideas to alternatives (Jarenko & Kankkunen, 2021)

1. Independent reflection: Write down your ideas about an ideal job.

These can be big or small, abstract or concrete. For instance:

- I want to learn something new every day
- I want to interact with customers
- I want to travel around the world for work
- I want to have flexible working hours
- I want to bring my dog to the office
- I want to save the planet

2. Group discussion: Explore these ideas and possible combinations.

What kind of interesting combinations can you see? For instance:

- What would be the most ambitious combination?
- What would be the craziest combination?
- What would be the easiest combination?
- What would be the riskiest combination?

Exercise c. Homework. Think about one or two alternative study or career goals. Try to gather as much information about them as possible.

Are there any educational requirements and admission criteria for the education/job? What kind of skills are required?

What would a typical day at school or at work be like?

Why do people in general choose these paths? What might motivate them to pursue these goals and to do these jobs?

ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

These practices can be used to supplement the ones presented in the counselling scenarios above, or they can be applied independently.

E. LEARNING TO LEARN

Help your learners reflect on their learning skills and to think about their own past, present and future.

Exercise a. Reflection on future learning.ⁱⁱⁱ

1. What do I want to learn?
2. What are my motives for learning?
3. What benefits does learning bring to my life?
4. Does learning open up new opportunities for me? What opportunities do I see for myself?
5. Is there anything that can hinder my learning? How can I reduce barriers to my learning?
6. What weaknesses do I need to take into account in my learning?
7. How do I intend to learn? How will I monitor my learning? How will I know whether I have learnt something?

Exercise b. Exercises to identify barriers to learning.^{iv}

1. What memories do you have of school? How did you get on?
2. How do you feel about going back to learning?
3. What are your feelings about reading and writing? Do you read something every day? Do you ever find that you do not understand what you read?
4. How do you get on with writing, e.g., filling in forms? Do you ever find writing difficult? Does anyone help you with writing?

Exercise c. Reflection on time management.^v

1. When are you more focused or active: in the morning or in the evening?
2. How long are you usually able to stay focused?
3. Does it help you to focus if you have to do something by a specific deadline?
4. Are you able to plan short breaks to relax, to reward yourself, and to study longer?
5. Can you concentrate at unusual times or places?
6. Are you able to use unexpected free time to review material?

Exercise d. Reflection on previous learning. Looking to the future.^{vi}

1. Do you have experience of finishing a course or training? How did you feel at the end?
2. When you have successfully learnt something new, what has been decisive in your success
 - a. ... in your view?
 - b. ... in your counsellor's view (if applicable)?
3. What do you intend to do next?
4. How and where do you intend to continue your studies?
5. How would you evaluate the guidance you have received so far from your counsellors?

F. TOOLS FOR SELF-REFLECTION^{vii}

Help your learner reflect on their interests and aims with these additional tools.

Exercise a.

Which of the following characteristics do you most identify with? List at least three. Which ones would you like to develop?

- Cooperation skills
- Courage
- Perseverance
- Composure
- Ambition
- Independence
- Creativity
- Punctuality
- Resistance to stress
- (Add your own characteristic)
- (Add your own characteristic)

Exercise b.

What type of work would you most like to do? Rate the following types from 1 (not interested) – 5 (highly interested).

- Artistic
- Informative
- Caring
- Organizational
- Maintenance
- Cognitive
- Production
- Sport-related
- Educational
- (Add your own type of work)
- (Add your own type of work)

Exercise c.

Reflect:

What are your strengths?

Which abilities would you still like to develop?

What are your main interests?

Which values are most important to you?

Where would you like to study?

What would you like to achieve in your professional life?

AFTERWORD

This handbook is the first Project Result of the Erasmus+ project “Reaching the Stars”.

The handbook has been designed and compiled following a series of research activities:

- Theoretical background research into the concept of hope-based guidance and counselling
- A questionnaire for adult learners focusing on their needs and expectations for counselling (92 replies – at least 20 from each participating organization)
- Semi-structured interviews with adult educators and counsellors concerning their views relating to guidance as well as current guidance and counselling practices (20 interviewees – 5 from each participating organization)
- A questionnaire for adult educators and counsellors concerning guidance, with a focus on key competences (41 replies – at least 10 from each participating organization)

Reports of the above research activities are available in the online appendix to the handbook: <https://reachingthestars.eu/>

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- ⁱ Adapted from: Ljubljana: Andragoški center Slovenije, pp. 111-117. Available at: [Svetovalni pripomočki v izobraževanju odrslih.pdf \(acs.si\)\)](#)
- ⁱⁱ Sources: Jarenko, K., & Kankkunen, J. (2021). Kohti, ketterän urakehityksen työkirja. Latvia: Livonia Print.
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- ^{iv} Adapted from: Knaflič Livija, Counselling tools in adult education, 2007
- ^v Adapted from: Counselling tools in adult education, 2007
- ^{vi} Žalec Natalija, Counselling aids in adult education, 2007
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