

Your Future Profession

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Your Future Profession:

Methodology + Recommendations

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1. Introduction

This methodology outlines the approach and tools used in the "Your Future Profession" project (CB0500280), aimed at increasing the competitiveness of youth (ages 18-25) in Latvia and Sweden. It is based on the experience gained during the first cycle of the project and will be refined after the second cycle. The final version will incorporate insights from all activities, including mentoring, internships, and digital meetups.

The project aim

"Central Baltic Region youth trying different professions", or in short, "Your Future Profession" project aims to address the employment challenges faced by young people aged 18-25, focusing on improving their ability to overcome failures and fostering entrepreneurship, leadership skills, self-realization, and personal development. The Project is about increasing the employability and entrepreneurial capabilities of young individuals. By supporting informal education activities during the project, the goal is to back the transition from education to employment. By doing so, the project enhances the competitiveness and personal development of young people taking a part in it.

The project result

People with increased competitiveness: Individuals who have improved their skills, knowledge, and experience to make them more competitive in the job market.

*work affiliation achieved-individuals who have successfully obtained employment or secured work-related opportunities such as internships;

*actively job-searching- individuals who are actively seeking employment opportunities and engaging in job search activities.

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2. Participant Recruitment and Profiling

The project PROCESS

“Your Future Profession” will consist of two six-month cycles, in which a total of 80 unique participants will participate. During the first month of the project, the participants work individually with career counselors and take various career and personality tests to define their interests, strengths and potential career paths. Later, the participants can visit various companies in so-called “Strike Practices”, work individually with mentors, and once a month participate in online events and joint workshops about various professional and personal growth topics. In the last month of the project, the most active participants will have the opportunity to go on an international internship exchange.

Participants were selected through an open call and interviews, ensuring motivation and alignment with the project's goals. After submitting their applications, each young person had an individual interview with the national coordinator from their respective country to ensure that their interests and expectations truly aligned with the objectives of the project. Individual profiles revealed diverse aspirations—from psychology and law to arts and entrepreneurship.

3. Career Counseling Methodology

Following the admission process, a random selection was conducted to assign each participant to a specific career counselor. This ensured a balanced and objective distribution of support. During the first month of the program, the main goal of each counselor-participant collaboration was to determine which of the two program paths was the best fit for the individual:

1. Internship + Start-up Phase
2. Internships + Employment Phase

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Each participant received 1:1 career guidance, using a range of personalized tools:

- Values Circle
- Skills Portfolio
- Holland Self-Assessment Test
- Vision Board S Mood Board
- SWOT Analysis
- Eisenhower Matrix

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These tools enabled participants to:

- Reflect on current and future career paths
- Gain clarity on personal priorities
- Align their goals with practical steps

Career counselors were impressed by the young participants' openness, motivation, and readiness to explore their potential. They noted:

- "Every participant had their own unique spark and was eager to collaborate."
- "It has been incredibly exciting to follow their processes. I've received great feedback on both the individual sessions and the group meetings."
- "It was a pleasure to see their motivation and focus on growth. They were punctual, polite, and engaged in the process."
- However, participants gained clarity, practical advice, and new perspectives:
- "The sessions helped me see my plans are achievable and strengthened my confidence in my career direction."
- "I learned new opportunities in my field, how to write a CV, and tips for exploring professions."
- "Through conversations and tests, I discovered strengths I didn't know I had. It motivated me to dream big and take bold steps."
- "I realized the importance of stepping out of my comfort zone and aligning with my values. These sessions truly inspired me."

This has been a transformative experience, preparing participants to take their next steps in the job market with confidence!

6. Individual Development Activities

Participants were supported in exploring industries and work environments through both career coaching and thematic events. In addition, participants had access to 1:1 mentoring sessions, where they met with their assigned mentors multiple times to delve deeper into their personal goals, career interests, and workplace preferences. During these mentoring conversations, topics discussed included work conditions they would thrive in, whether they identified as team players, and even specific aspirations such as the desire to become a pilot.

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Some participants had not yet secured a job but expressed a strong interest in doing so. In such cases, mentors helped them understand the requirements of their chosen fields and guided them in creating actionable plans. For example, one participant who aspired to work in aviation developed a roadmap for acquiring the necessary skills. Others expressed interest in large-scale manufacturing environments, casting agencies, or pursuing studies in agriculture with the aim of building a career in the agricultural sector. Participants with interests in media production and journalism reported that the project support helped them clarify their direction and make particular decisions about their next steps. Project participants are active in looking for a job that is related to their choice of future studies or present studies. 1 on1 mentoring is focused on the particular participants needs. And every session is meant to improve, support and help. Every mentoring ends with homework that is individualized based on the session. And in between mentoring sessions there is a written or spoken communication regarding the homework or any other development questions.

Many expressed interest in exploring entrepreneurship or establishing a private practice (e.g., in psychology, law, or marketing). Some participants started part time jobs so they can pay for the tests for the university application when necessary. Participants are eager to gain experience, find some job opportunities that are most likely close to their dream professions or jobs.

Mentors helped create a roadmap for how and where to look for a job.

7. Digital Meetups

Monthly online sessions brought together all participants and international experts, offering meaningful guidance, fresh perspectives, and community connection. These meetups were designed not only as educational sessions but also as moments of reflection and inspiration.

Key sessions included:

Kick-Off: The opening session introduced the project goals, structure, and opportunities. Participants connected across borders and set intentions for their journey. At the Kick-Off Ida Johansson and Belgin Alalinli inspired to both the future as and entrepreneur and the future as an employee.

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Find Your Perfect Suit: Focused on self-discovery and identifying career directions aligned with personality, strengths, and interests.

Two Me's – Present and Future (with Johan Skjennum): This reflective session guided participants to explore their current identity and future aspirations. Johan introduced two powerful tools:

- The Jung Type Indicator (JTI), helping participants understand their personality strengths and blind spots
- The Emotion Wheel, which helped participants identify how emotions can reveal unmet needs and improve relationships and decision-making.

Competitiveness in the Labor Market (with Liene Žigūre): In this practical session, Liene - with experience as both employer and job seeker - shared useful strategies to succeed in today's job market:

- What employers really look for in candidates
- How to align one's strengths, values, and goals
- How to stand out through thoughtful preparation and targeted applications

Building Your Personal Brand (with Mira Thimmayya): A dynamic session on personal branding and storytelling. Participants explored:

- Their digital footprint and how it shapes their public image
- The power of storytelling and finding their unique narrative
- Effective content strategies for visibility and authenticity
- The idea that personal branding extends beyond social media - actions and values matter equally

EU Job and Career Trends (with Sandra Dimitroviča): Career consultant Sandra offered valuable insights into the European labor market:

- Key transferable skills in demand across industries
- Long-term career trends and future of work scenarios
- Where and how to find a job more successfully
- Qualities needed to secure stable, meaningful, and well-paid positions in job market

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Staying Motivated (with Monika Cālīte): As the holidays approached, Monika encouraged participants to stay focused on their bigger picture. Her key message: “Motivation comes from clarity about your ‘WHY’. When your actions align with the best version of yourself, motivation is no longer a struggle.”

Meetups provided:

- Insightful lectures and professional guidance
- Tools for personal reflection and goal setting
- Storytelling and branding strategies
- A platform for networking and cross-border exchange

These digital meetups became a cornerstone of the project—boosting engagement, inspiring self-development, and cultivating a supportive learning environment.

8. Internship and Start-up Program Structure

Participants selected one of two tracks:

1. Internship + Start-up Phase
2. Double Internship + Employment Phase

Each participant completed internships tailored to their background and interests. To provide a broader perspective and hands-on understanding of various sectors, participants had the opportunity to try out at least three different internship placements. This structure enabled them to compare work environments, discover personal preferences, and develop a more informed vision of their professional future.

Participants benefited significantly from the STRIKE Practice Bank, which includes over 20 internship placements across industries such as: Gym, Cafe, Event Agency, Youth House, Manufacturing, Metal Part Production, Hotel, Restaurant, Sales & Marketing, Dentist, Electrician, Sewing, Board of Education Law firm, Influencer, Keynote Speaker, Investment firm, Real estate and Athletic Education AI, Leadership coach, Marketing

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Regarding the Start-up Phase, we are happy to observe that several participants began working more actively on their start-up ideas during the project. Some took particular steps toward building their business models, validating their concepts, and even prototyping services. This enthusiasm indicates not only strong entrepreneurial potential but also a valuable long-term impact – with participants now seriously considering becoming future employers themselves. Such developments contribute positively to labor market dynamics and entrepreneurial culture in both countries.

9. International Internship Program

We believe that such internships have a high positive impact on participants, as they significantly broaden their understanding of the labor market in the partner country. Beyond professional insight, the experience fosters intercultural competence and builds confidence in international communication and mobility.

Key benefits include:

- Exposure to different work cultures and expectations, which enhances adaptability and soft skills
- Understanding industry-specific trends and innovations that may differ from the home country
- Networking with professionals and peers abroad, opening up new career perspectives and contacts
- Strengthening language and communication skills in real-life work settings
- Increased motivation and independence, as participants step outside their comfort zones
- Enhanced CV and competitiveness, especially in cross-border or international job applications

This internship opportunity not only supports vocational growth but also contributes to shaping globally aware and career-ready young professionals.

The international internship in Latvia was organized thematically: Manufacturing day, Technology day, Creative Industries Innovation day, Digitalization day, Start-up Environment day etc.

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10. Evaluation and Expert Engagement

Evaluation tools included:

- Application assessment criteria
- Participant feedback surveys
- Career counselor insights

Initial findings show high satisfaction and positive outcomes:

- Increased motivation and clarity
- Better understanding of potential career paths
- Steps taken toward employment or education

A comprehensive expert database was created, featuring career counselors such as Ieva Cipriķe, Maija Kaļiņičenko, Agnese Lejniece, Elīna Tapiņa, Felicia Gillberg and Emma Trygg. Their feedback highlighted the participants' openness, self-awareness, and growth potential.

This methodology demonstrates the project's capacity to help young people:

- Improve their skills and mindset
- Explore job and business opportunities
- Become competitive in the modern labor market

The final methodology will be submitted at the end of the project, enriched with insights from Cycle 2 and long-term participant outcomes.

11. Project result

In the first implementation cycle, the project aimed to recruit a total of 40 participants from the partner countries – 20 from Latvia and 20 from Sweden. We are very pleased to report that this target was fully met, and even more importantly, almost all 40 participants remained engaged throughout the program. Dropout was really small number.

This strong engagement gives us confidence that, should the second cycle show a similar level of participation, we are well on track to achieve our full project results.

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12. Feedback from participants

- Understanding of personal strengths and interests: 88.5%
- Improved competitiveness in the job market: 88.8%
- Usefulness of the knowledge gained in real-life/job search situations: 98.5%
- Satisfaction with career consultations: 77.2%
- Satisfaction with national mentors and organizers: 86.0%

Based on the evaluation, we can clearly see that the project's content is well-aligned with the objective of increasing participants' competitiveness in the labor market. The knowledge, experience, and internship opportunities gained through the project are expected to significantly contribute to participants becoming actively job-searching individuals – those who are not only prepared but also motivated to pursue employment and professional growth.

13. Long term impact and sustainability

The "Your Future Profession" project provides young people with more than just a short-term experience – it lays a strong foundation for future career development, entrepreneurship, and adaptability in a dynamic labor market.

Long-term impact includes:

- Improved employability: Participants leave the program with a clearer understanding of their skills, goals, and the steps needed to reach them – making them more competitive and confident job-seekers.
- Increased entrepreneurial intention: The start-up phase inspires several participants to pursue business ideas more seriously. Some have already begun taking concrete steps, which may result in the creation of new jobs and a more dynamic economy.
- Lifelong self-assessment skills: Tools like SWOT, Holland test, Vision Board, and mentoring sessions empower participants to continue evaluating and adjusting their career paths long after the project ends.
- Expanded networks and international experience: Through cross-border collaboration and international internships, participants build valuable connections and develop intercultural competence that supports mobility and employment across Europe.

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- Ripple effect: Participants become role models in their communities and schools, inspiring peers to pursue professional growth and engage in international opportunities.

Sustainability measures:

- STRIKE Practice Bank remains available as a long-term tool to connect youth with diverse industries and internship hosts in Latvia.
- Expert and mentor database developed during the project will continue to support youth work and career guidance activities.
- Methodology and tools used in this program will be refined and made available to project partners and other organizations for replication and scaling.
- Partnership continuity: Close collaboration between Latvia and Sweden establishes a solid foundation for future joint initiatives and mobility programs.

14. Recommendations

Based on the implementation experience of the Your Future Profession project, several recommendations can be made for organisations wishing to replicate or adapt this methodology for supporting young people in their transition from education to employment or entrepreneurship.

- Start with the individual, not with the programme. Young people enter the programme with very different levels of experience, confidence, motivation and career clarity. Individual profiling and career counselling should therefore be the starting point. Tools such as the Values Circle, Skills Portfolio, Holland Self-Assessment Test, SWOT analysis and Vision Board proved useful in helping participants understand their strengths, interests and possible career directions.
- Combine career counselling with practical experience. Career guidance becomes significantly more valuable when young people can immediately test their interests in real working environments. Participants should therefore have opportunities to explore several workplaces and professions rather

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than being limited to one internship. The project experience showed that trying different placements helped participants compare work environments and make more informed career choices.

- Keep the programme flexible and personalised. A successful youth programme should not assume that all participants have the same goal. Providing both an employment-oriented and an entrepreneurship-oriented pathway allows young people to choose a direction that corresponds to their ambitions. Individual mentoring should remain flexible and respond to the participant's changing needs throughout the programme.
- Ensure continuous mentoring and follow-up. One-off consultations are not sufficient for meaningful personal development. Regular 1:1 mentoring, individual tasks between sessions and ongoing communication help young people turn ideas into concrete actions. Mentors should support participants in setting realistic next steps and follow up on their progress. This approach was an important part of the project's individual support model.
- Build and maintain a diverse internship network. A broad network of companies and organisations is essential for matching young people with opportunities that reflect their interests. The STRIKE Practice Bank demonstrated the value of having internship hosts from very different sectors, from manufacturing and hospitality to law, marketing, education and creative industries.
- Include an international dimension whenever possible. Cross-border internships and joint activities provide benefits that cannot be achieved through local activities alone. Exposure to another country's working culture strengthens adaptability, intercultural communication, independence and confidence, while also expanding participants' professional networks and understanding of the wider European labour market.
- Create space for entrepreneurship even for participants who initially focus on employment.

Young people's career ambitions can change during the programme. Several participants became more interested in entrepreneurship and began developing business models, validating ideas or prototyping services. Therefore, entrepreneurship should remain accessible as an option throughout the programme rather than being treated as a completely separate pathway.

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- Measure both practical outcomes and personal development. Employment or internship outcomes are important, but they do not capture the full impact of this type of programme. Evaluation should also measure changes in confidence, self-awareness, motivation, career clarity and perceived labour-market competitiveness. Participant feedback in Your Future Profession showed particularly strong results regarding understanding personal strengths, labour-market competitiveness and the practical usefulness of acquired knowledge.
- Plan sustainability from the beginning. The methodology, mentor database, internship network and learning materials should be treated as long-term resources rather than project-only outputs. Maintaining these resources makes it possible to continue supporting young people, replicate the programme and develop future national or cross-border initiatives.

The main lesson from Your Future Profession is that young people's competitiveness cannot be strengthened through training alone. The strongest results come from a **combination of self-discovery, personalised guidance, practical work experience, mentoring, peer learning and international exposure**. Future programmes should therefore create a flexible journey in which young people are given both professional support and the opportunity to test, reflect on and adjust their career choices in real-life situations.