

Living the Dream

ASPIRATIONS ACROSS THE WORLD

	doctor	teacher	Olympic athlete
all	19%	16%	10%
developed countries	8%	5%	19%
developing countries	27%	24%	4%

CAREER ASPIRATIONS BY GENDER

	boys	girls
president, prime minister, or secret agent	13%	8%
pilot, mechanic, or race-car driver	15%	2%

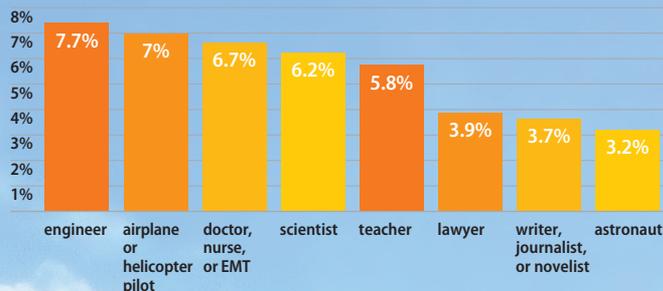
2 What did you want to be when you were younger? A firefighter? A ballet dancer? A train conductor? Did you end up with your dream job? According to research carried out by the online professional network LinkedIn, people who fulfill their childhood aspirations are part of a lucky minority. Needless to say, few would-be astronauts or presidents ever achieve their ambitions. In fact, fewer than one in ten people currently earn a living from their dream job, though just over one in five has at least found work in a related field.

LinkedIn surveyed over 8,000 professionals in 15 different countries, including Brazil, Singapore, Sweden, the UAE, and the US. The survey revealed that almost half of those who did not end up in their dream jobs had been attracted to a different career path as they grew up, while just over one in ten discovered that their original dream was too difficult or expensive to pursue.

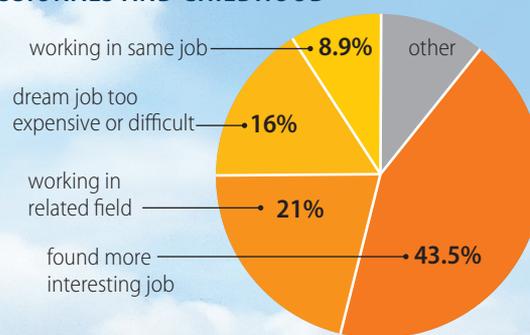
The most common dream jobs worldwide fell into the creative and artistic category, which encompasses everything from writers and actors to chefs and acrobats. However, the single most popular dream career in most countries, particularly in India, was engineer. Presumably the high starting salary, not to mention the growing job opportunities, job security, and social status of the profession, have something to do with its popularity.

The survey is depressing reading for those committed to smashing the glass ceiling. It found that boys were more likely than girls to envision themselves in the best jobs. More than 13% of boys aspired to be a president, prime minister, or secret agent, as opposed to 8% of girls. Girls, by contrast, nurtured more modest ambitions of achieving success as teachers, vets, singers, or nurses. Being a writer was among the most

CHILDHOOD DREAMS OF ADULT PROFESSIONALS



ADULT PROFESSIONALS AND CHILDHOOD DREAM JOBS



ambitious goals. No surprises there. The gender gap was even more noticeable in science and engineering: jobs like pilot, mechanic, and race-car driver were favored by 15% of boys but only 2% of girls.

Another survey, conducted by the children's charity ChildFund, asked over 6,000 ten- to twelve-year-olds in 47 countries around the world about their career goals. The most popular job, for just under a fifth of children worldwide, was doctor, followed closely by teacher with 16%. But the survey also revealed some fascinating global contrasts. In developing countries, just over a quarter of children listed medicine as their goal, and just under a quarter aspired to be teachers; in developed countries, by contrast, the figures were 8% and 5% respectively. Being a professional or Olympic athlete was the dream of 19% of children in the developed world. It is not surprising that only 4% of people in less affluent countries could allow themselves the luxury of such aspirations.

So should we take our earliest dreams seriously, or are they merely wishful thinking? "The dream jobs we aspire to as children are a window into our passions and talents," says Nicole Williams, a career expert for LinkedIn. "We don't generally enjoy doing what we don't have an inherent ability to do." So when choosing a career path, perhaps young people should reflect on their dream career and ask themselves, "What does this tell me about who I am and what I could do in the future?"