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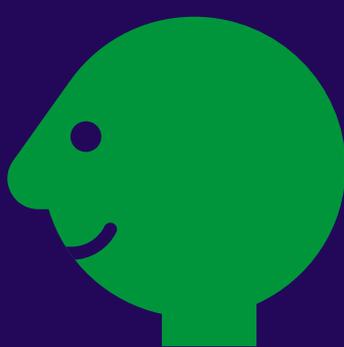
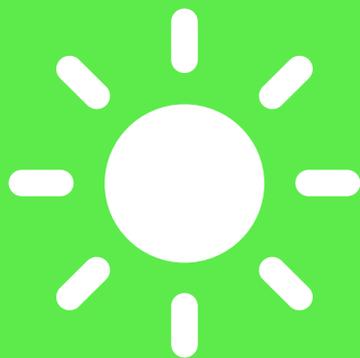
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# Green careers guide

Theo Anagnostopoulos  
Greece



# Theo Anagnostopoulos

## Greece



**Theo Anagnostopoulos is a person of many titles: geneticist, science engager, social entrepreneur, and since 2021, a National Geographic Explorer. He is the general manager and co-founder of the social enterprise SciCo (Science Communication), which aims to promote science to the general public through innovative means, whilst having an international reach.**

Theo's mission is to connect people by creating opportunities for non-scientists to engage with science, reaffirming science's vital role in our everyday lives. As a science communicator, he tries to empower youth and the general public through groundbreaking initiatives to become problem solvers and team players, and cultivate science-based thinking, inspired by data and facts. Through numerous high-impact outreach activities, including science festivals, educational platforms and workshops, the organisation has reached over 400,000 people.

### **A shift from scientific research to outreach**

Theo, from a young age, was a curious and innovative spirit and loved science and scientific discoveries. He soon realised that he wanted to become a scientist and what a better place to accomplish his dream than in the UK? He studied genetics at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and completed his master's in human reproductive biology at Imperial College London. He received a PhD in medical genetics from King's College London, University of London, and upon his return to his home country, he continued his research in hereditary breast and ovarian cancer as a postdoctoral fellow at "Demokritos" Research Centre in Greece.

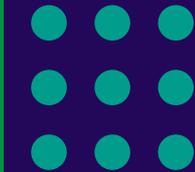


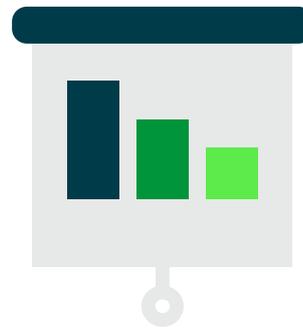
Through his intensive laboratory-based career, he realised how unfortunate it was that the general public could, quite frequently, not understand the importance of significant scientific discoveries and realised the importance of scientific engagement. It became clear to him that he had to serve science from a different perspective.

The turning point in his career came in 2007 when he participated in FameLab, an international science communication competition organised by the British Council. As a FameLab finalist, he discovered his passion for science communication and got inspired to found SciCo, with the support of the British Council.

### **Climate change action, more pressing than ever before**

Climate change is a global challenge that if we fail to address immediately as a planet, it will threaten not only the environment, which already does, but also human well-being and economies. Never before there has been such a pressing need to engage climate action. 2020 was the hottest year on record and the decade ending of the hottest decade ever.





Appreciating the importance of communicating climate change and its impact, in 2012, Theo was trained by former US Vice President Al Gore on climate change issues, and has been his ambassador for the Climate Reality Project ever since.

In recent years, Theo is an active supporter of projects that aim to invite the public to become a 'citizen scientist' to help save the planet. With this more experiential and hands-on approach, students, educators and anyone with an internet-connected device can gather their own measurements, and create a citizen science project.

### His work in the green industries

Theo is always on the search for environmental awareness projects. For his latest environmental education project, Theo was awarded a National Geographic Explorer status. This project – launched in collaboration with the team of SciCo, the British Council Greece and local STEM educators in Xanthi – will use the “language” of science to bridge cultural differences between an isolated population in northeastern Greece and their surrounding populations. More specifically, the team will run a STEM educational program with an angle in environmental science to bring together Pomak and non-Pomak teenagers from the area of Thrace.

The project, supported by the National Geographic Society, is scheduled to begin in autumn 2021 and aims to reduce young Pomaks' social isolation and raise awareness of climate change, exploitation of renewable energy sources and preservation of the region's natural wealth. The Pomaks, an officially recognised ethnic minority group of Greece since the Lausanne

Treaty (1923), reside amidst a unique natural environment with wetlands, ornithological wealth and rich biodiversity, while the area has immense potential for solar and wind energy production.

The students will initially have the opportunity to study projects on a small scale and gradually implement them in their schools and the local community to tackle real problems. This approach will establish a safe and inclusive space for education, cultural and environmental engagement, whilst building and enhancing students' skills.

SciCo and Theo have over a decade of experience in science education. Among other projects, since 2017, they are running the successful STEMpowering Youth programme, which has empowered over 12,000 educators and teenagers in underprivileged areas to solve local, real-life problems through science and technology.

### Tips for people looking to pursue a fulfilling career

Theo's advice to people who wish to follow an empowering career and find happiness in their professional life is simple but crucial: to use your educational journey as a path to inner exploration and not as a 'binding written contract', where job and degree titles coincide. But this journey doesn't stop at university; it is a life-long process of self-reflection. It's never too late to recalibrate your goal to move forward to a profession that makes you happy, and why not make your hobby your career!

