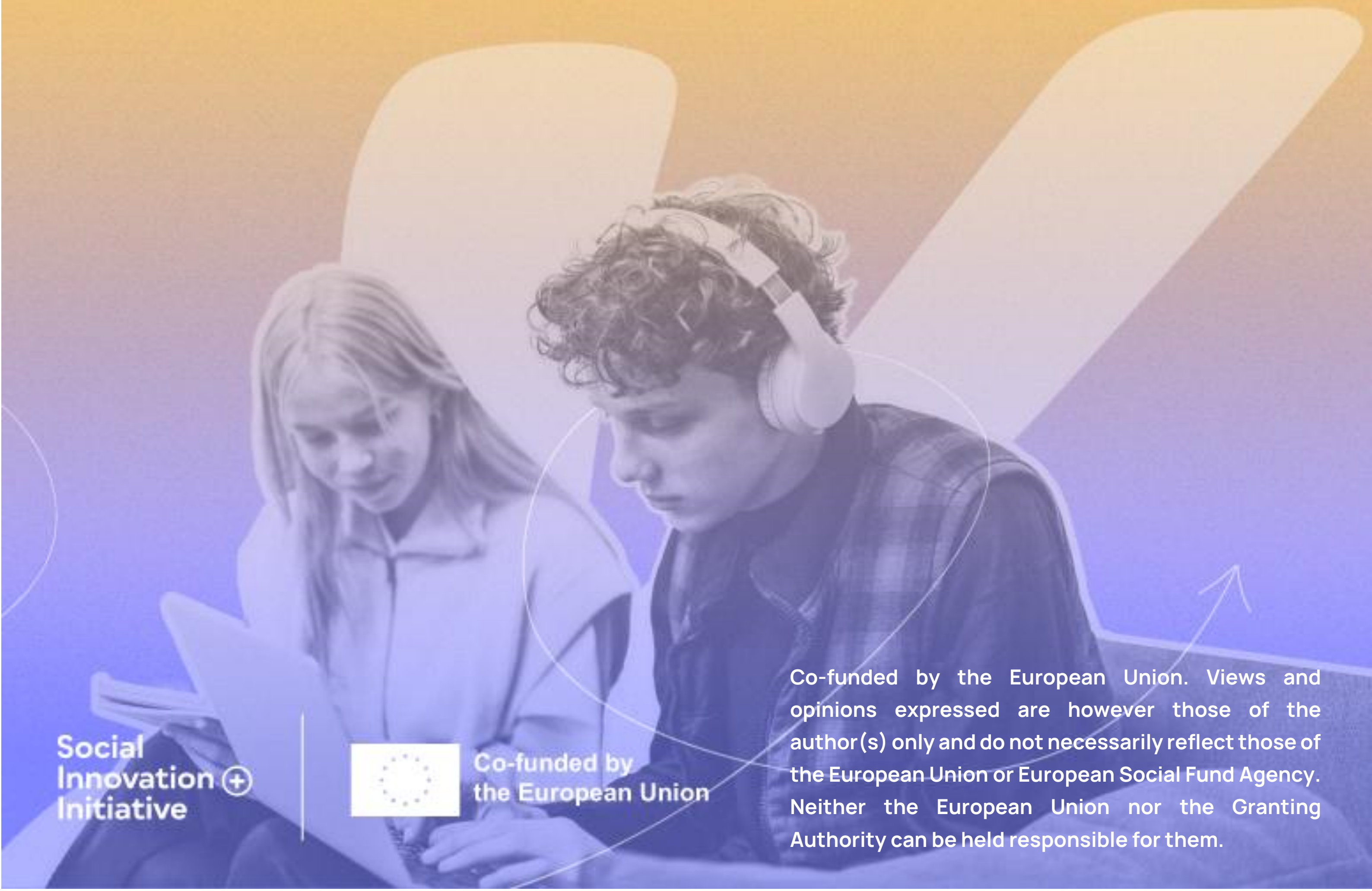
YouthPioneer

Project design training programme (PDP) focusing on entrepreneurship projects for NEETs



Social Innovation + Initiative

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Deliverable D003.001 Project design training programme (PDP) focusing on entrepreneurship projects for NEETs

Produced by:	**GrantXpert Consulting with contributions and support from CESIE ETS, European Association for Social Innovation, Institute of Entrepreneurship Development, Incoma, Botevgrad Municipality.**

YouthPioneer

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Introduction

Deliverable D003.001 – *Development of a Project Design Training Programme with a Focus on Entrepreneurship Projects for NEETs* has been created within the framework of the YouthPioneer project, which aims to enhance the entrepreneurial and employability skills of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs). This deliverable supports the project’s objective of empowering NEETs with the competencies, confidence, and mindset necessary to design, plan, and implement viable entrepreneurial projects that contribute to their long-term professional and personal development.

The development of the training programme was coordinated by **GrantXpert Consulting**, with all consortium partners contributing equitably to the creation of its content and structure. The programme provides a comprehensive and practical learning framework that integrates theoretical guidance with hands-on activities and mentorship. It focuses on building the entrepreneurial capabilities of NEETs through active participation, reflection, and experiential learning.

The training programme is organised into four interlinked modules: **Situation Analysis**, **Problem Solving**, **Planning and Leadership**, and **Mentor’s Hints**. The *Situation Analysis* module introduces learners to essential analytical tools such as the problem tree and SWOT matrix to identify needs, challenges, and opportunities. The *Problem-Solving* module supports participants in developing creative and feasible solutions through techniques such as the solution tree and mind mapping. The *Planning and Leadership* module focuses on structuring ideas, defining clear project steps, and strengthening leadership and organisational skills. The final module, *Mentor’s Hints*, presents practical, concise, and motivational advice from experienced entrepreneurs.

Each module combines theoretical input with **practical exercises**, encouraging participants to apply their learning in real-life contexts. The programme fosters problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, and planning - ensuring NEETs’ skills development and enhancing their opportunities for sustainable employment or entrepreneurial careers.

Who Is This For?

This programme has been specifically designed for youth workers, trainers, and educators who work directly with young people. It serves as a practical guide to help them support youngsters in developing the key skills needed to conceptualise, design, and plan viable entrepreneurial projects. Through its structured activities and tools, the programme aims to encourage creativity, initiative, and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset among young participants.

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CHAPTER ONE

SITUATION ANALYSIS

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1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

1.1 Introduction to Situation Analysis

At the start of this module, introduce yourself and explain to your participants that the focus will be on equipping them with tools to analyse situations and identify problems using the Problem Tree and SWOT Analysis. Show them how these tools can help uncover root causes and assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in any situation, ultimately boosting their decision-making and problem-identification skills.
You can check what the participants already know by asking them questions like:

- "Have you ever faced a situation where you had to analyse a problem and find a solution?"
- "What do you understand by 'problem identification' and 'situation analysis'?"
- "What methods have you used to assess a situation or identify a problem?"

These questions will help you decide if any exercises need to be skipped or adjusted depending on the group's current understanding.
The first part of the module introduces the theoretical principles behind the tools, highlighting their objectives and the learning outcomes you want the participants to achieve. The second part gives you practical exercises to help participants apply the tools effectively in real-world situations, encouraging hands-on learning.

1.2 What Is Situation Analysis?

Situation analysis is the process of understanding and assessing a particular situation to identify its key problems, needs, and opportunities. It involves looking at all the factors that influence the situation and understanding how they interact with each other. The main goal is to get a clear and accurate picture of the current situation in order to make informed decisions and develop effective solutions.
Key terms in situation analysis include *problem identification*, which is the process of recognizing the core issues within a situation, and *needs assessment*, which involves determining what is required to resolve the issues identified. These concepts help break down complex situations into more manageable parts, allowing for a systematic approach to finding solutions. Understanding these concepts is essential because they help us think critically about the problems we face and come up with practical, achievable solutions.

1.3 Understanding Situation Analysis with Your Group

You will find that learners understand the theoretical concepts of Situation Analysis—like identifying the core problem, analysing causes and effects, and assessing needs—most effectively through their active participation. By engaging them actively, you help participants to:

- activate their existing knowledge and skills,
- collaborate with each other, and
- learn from each other's experiences.

This approach allows them to connect knowledge gained from other learning frameworks—whether formal, non-formal, or informal—to the new concepts they are acquiring. Additionally, by applying the analysis to real-life situations, you give learners the chance to identify their own gaps and needs. This module is designed to address those gaps, helping them expand their abilities in situation analysis and decision-making in real-world contexts.

1.4 What Is Coming Next?

Once your participants have completed the previous activities and understood the importance of situation analysis through practical application in group discussions and teamwork, you can move on to introduce the two key tools: the Problem Tree and SWOT Analysis. These tools will help participants deepen their understanding of the causes and effects of a problem, as well as explore ways to address challenges or take advantage of opportunities in a given situation. By guiding them through these tools, you give participants hands-on experience in situation analysis and decision-making for real-life scenarios.

1.5 The Problem Tree: Theoretical Overview

The *Problem Tree* is a visual tool you can use in situation analysis to help participants identify and understand the root causes, the main problem, and its effects. It allows you to break down a complex issue into its various components in a clear and structured way. In the *Problem Tree*, the central 'trunk' represents the core problem, the 'roots' show the underlying causes, and the 'branches' illustrate the consequences or effects of the problem.

This tool offers several benefits for your participants. It encourages them to dive deeply into the issue, helping them distinguish between symptoms and root causes. Mapping out both causes and effects provides a clear visual representation, making complex problems easier to understand and discuss. It also fosters critical thinking, as participants analyse how factors are interconnected and how one issue may lead to others. This structured approach can help identify potential entry points for addressing the problem or mitigating its effects.

As a trainer, your role is to keep participants focused on identifying realistic and relevant causes and effects. Encourage equal participation from all group members and monitor the group's progress to ensure the analysis remains relevant and doesn't become too broad or unfocused. Use the Problem Tree to break down a clearly defined problem, and guide participants to avoid introducing unrelated or peripheral issues. Also, remind them that the tool is for understanding the problem in depth—not for proposing solutions, which will come later.

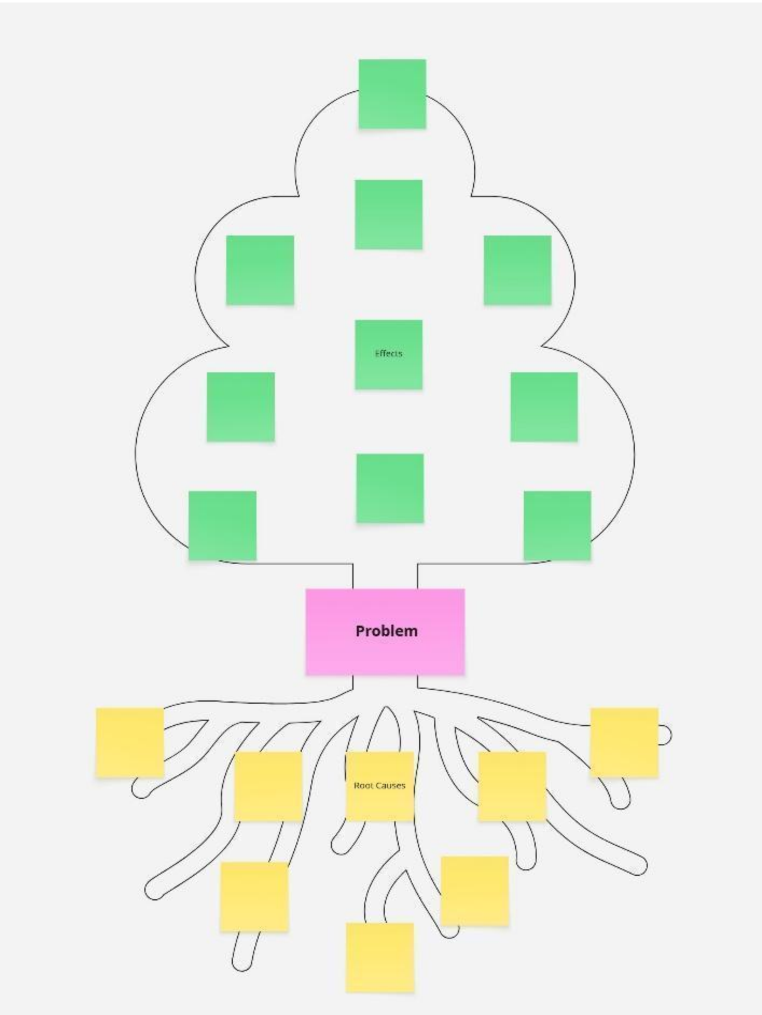
1.6 The Problem Tree: How It Works

You can use the Problem Tree as a visual and structured method to analyse a problem by breaking it down into its core elements: causes and effects.
Start by having participants identify the central problem, which you place at the 'trunk' of the tree. This represents the main issue that needs to be understood in depth.
Next, guide participants to identify the root causes—the factors that have contributed to the problem. Place these at the base of the tree, beneath the trunk, to show how the problem has developed over time.

Finally, have participants identify the consequences or effects, which you depict as branches extending from the trunk, illustrating how the problem impacts different areas or groups.

As participants work through the Problem Tree, they will gain a clearer view of how the issue is interconnected with various factors, both internal and external. This exercise also helps them appreciate the complexity of problems and the multiple levels at which they affect individuals, groups, or systems. Encourage participants to think critically about the relationships between causes and effects, giving them a comprehensive understanding of the problem's structure.

Remember, the Problem Tree is not about providing solutions. Its purpose is to deepen understanding of the problem. Once the analysis is complete, you can move on to exploring possible interventions or solutions.



The Problem Tree form

If you need better understanding of the Problem Tree method, please watch this video: [***Design Thinking for Education, Ep. #23: Problem Tree Analysis***]

1.7 Identification of the Core Problem: Is This Really What Comes to Mind First?

When you apply the Problem Tree, it's essential that the core problem—the one at the trunk—is clearly defined. But how can you be sure you really understand what the core problem is? Imagine starting an analysis of causes and effects for a problem that seems one way but is actually something different.
This is exactly what happened at Toyota in the automotive industry, which led them to develop the '5 Whys' technique to reduce the chances of addressing the wrong problem. Here's the story:
Toyota noticed that cars produced in one of their factories were experiencing assembly quality issues, such as faulty components and poor fit. The engineers applied the 5 Whys method to identify the root cause. The process went like this:

- **Why are there problems with assembly quality?**
  – Because the parts are not being fitted correctly.
- **Why are the parts not being fitted correctly?**
  – Because the workers are not following the prescribed assembly procedures.
- **Why are the workers not following the procedures?**
  – Because they do not fully understand the assembly process and the quality requirements.
- **Why don't the workers fully understand the procedures?**
  – Because they didn't receive adequate training on the assembly procedures and quality requirements.
- **Why was there inadequate training?**
  – Because the training process hadn't been redesigned to provide thorough guidance to the workers.

Using the 5 Whys method, Toyota[1] discovered that the real issue wasn't just poor component quality or assembly errors—it was inadequate training and communication of procedures. Instead of just fixing surface-level problems, they tackled the root cause by redesigning the workers' training program to ensure full understanding of processes and quality requirements, aiming to reduce errors and improve product quality.

This example shows how crucial it is to identify the real problem before starting the analysis. If you skip this step, causes and effects can get mixed up. The 5 Whys method helps you uncover the true root cause, offering a much more effective solution than simply treating surface-level symptoms.

1.8 Theoretical Overview of Swot Analysis

Use SWOT Analysis as a strategic tool to guide your participants in assessing a situation by identifying its internal and external factors. When applying it in the context of Situation Analysis for project design, help them explore the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and

[1] *For documentation on the origin of the 5 Whys method by Sakichi Toyoda, founder of Toyota Industries Corporation, and for additional examples, you can visit the following websites:*

- ToolsHero: 5 Whys Root Cause Analysis (Toyoda)
- Asp.org: Five Whys and Five Hows

threats surrounding a given situation. This will give them a comprehensive snapshot of both the current state and future prospects, enabling more informed decisions.

- **Strengths**: Encourage your participants to identify the internal capabilities or resources that give an advantage in achieving their goals, such as a skilled team, strong reputation, or unique assets that set the project apart.
- **Weaknesses**: Ask them to recognise internal factors that could hinder progress, like missing skills, limited resources, or process inefficiencies. Understanding these will help them pinpoint areas for improvement.
- **Opportunities**: Guide them to spot external factors that could be leveraged for success, such as emerging markets, new technologies, or shifts in trends that create a favourable environment.
- **Threats**: Help them consider external challenges that might pose risks, such as competition, regulatory changes, or economic fluctuations, and think about ways to mitigate them.

Remind your participants that applying SWOT Analysis helps them look at the situation in a balanced way, considering both internal dynamics (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats). This holistic perspective is essential for effective planning and decision-making.

	Positive	Negative
internal	**STRENGTHS**	**WEAKNESSES**
external	**OPPORTUNITIES**	**THREATS**

SWOT template

1.9 Importance of Swot in Situation Analysis

When you guide your participants through project design, explain that Situation Analysis serves as the foundation for planning, and that SWOT Analysis plays a key role by giving them a clear framework to identify the critical factors influencing the project. Emphasise that it helps them avoid overlooking potential advantages or risks, and supports strategic thinking that can boost the project's chances of success.

Encourage them to clearly map out the internal and external factors at play so they can develop strategies that leverage strengths, minimise weaknesses, seize opportunities, and mitigate threats. By incorporating SWOT into Situation Analysis, you help participants conduct a comprehensive assessment of the project environment and make well-informed decisions—essential for designing projects that are both realistic and strategically sound.

1.10 Closing / Reflection

Throughout this module, you guided your participants to explore the core theoretical principles and practical applications of Situation Analysis. You helped them learn how to identify and define central problems, analyse their causes and effects, and assess internal and external factors using the Problem Tree and SWOT Analysis.

You encouraged them to apply these tools in sub-groups, engaging in collaborative discussions, creative problem identification, and structured reflection. You supported them as they practiced critical thinking, strategic analysis, communication, and teamwork while exploring real-life scenarios, such as youth unemployment or the use of young people's skills in the labour market.

You highlighted the value of experiential learning, helping participants connect theory with practice, reflect on personal and professional insights, and develop practical strategies for analysing and addressing complex situations. You also used Exercise 6 (Keep, Toss, Twist & Turn) to close the module effectively: it functioned as a qualitative evaluation tool while reinforcing the principles of participation, collaboration, and interaction that had guided the entire module.

1.11 Suggested Closing Questions

- What was the most surprising insight you gained from the Problem Tree, SWOT, or reflective exercises?
- How did working in sub-groups help you understand different perspectives on the same problem?
- Which skill or approach from this module will you apply first in your own context?
- Did the exercises change the way you view the causes and effects of problems?
- How could you adapt the tools and methods from this module to future challenges or projects?
- How did the reflection in Exercise 6 help you consolidate your learning and personal takeaways?

1.12 Practical Exercises

Exercise No 1: Let's get to know each other's names

MODULE	*Situation Analysis*
EXERCISE NAME	Let's get to know each other's names
NUMBER OF EXERCISE	*1*

PREPARATION REQUIRED	*A space is needed without chairs and tables where all team members can stand in a circle to maintain eye contact with everyone.*
MATERIALS REQUIRED	*A small soft ball*
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	15-25 minutes
GROUP EXERCISE	Yes Minimum number of participants: 5 Maximum number of participants: more than 15
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	The goal is for all team members to be able to remember each other's names in a very short period of time, to indirectly express a personal trait that helps mutual acquaintance and to break the ice through a funny game. The skills are activated and/or further developed through this exercise are: - Creativity - Memory - Collaboration - Communication
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	The team members stand in a circle and, while handling the small soft ball, share their name and an animal (or object) that starts with the same initial letter as their name. The process is repeated several times with variations until all members know each other's names and feel relaxed.
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	The team is standing in a circle so that everyone can maintain eye contact with all the other members. We ask each team member to think of an animal (or an object if we want to make a variation) whose name starts with the same letter as their own name. For example: Andreas – alligator, Thomas – tiger, Katerina – koala, and so on. Once we're sure that each member has thought of an animal associated with their name, the first member – who holds the ball – starts by saying their name and animal, then throws the ball to another member, who

	does the same. We repeat this process 3-4 times, ensuring that the ball is passed at least twice to each member. In the next round, the process changes slightly. The member holding the ball must first say the name and/or animal of another member and throw the ball to them. The member who catches the ball repeats the same process for another member, and so on, until 3-4 more rounds are completed. In the final rounds, it's best to only use the name, removing the animal. ***Important note*** It has been observed in some groups that the identification of members with animals creates a fun atmosphere, and often, group members continue to refer to each other by the animal's name rather than their own. If this is acceptable to all members of the group, it can be maintained. However, experience shows that some members may not want to identify with the animals they have chosen and may feel uncomfortable if someone addresses them by the animal's name after the game ends. The person facilitating the training should pay attention to these dynamics and act accordingly. If members continue to call each other by animal names and are enjoying it, it should be allowed. If any members appear uncomfortable, they should be asked to respect it and stop using the animal names
MATERIALS TO BE USED	N/A
SOURCES	N/A

Exercise No 2: Mission: Community

MODULE	*Situation Analysis*
EXERCISE NAME	*Mission: Community*
NUMBER OF EXERCISE	*2*

PREPARATION REQUIRED	*If the group of participants is larger than 5 people, it should be divided into sub-groups of 3 individuals. Make sure there is enough space for each sub-group to work relatively independently (not necessarily in separate rooms, but not so close that they are disturbed by the conversation of the group next to them).*
MATERIALS REQUIRED	*A4 sheets for notes, pens, and markers in various colours, flip chart or whiteboard.*
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	*45-60 minutes* *(For groups larger than 15 participants, the time may be extended)*
GROUP EXERCISE	Yes Minimum number of participants: 3 Maximum number of participants: more than 15
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	Through this exercise, the participants will practically understand the key theoretical concepts of Situation Analysis, challenge their available skills, collaborate, and indirectly assess the educational needs addressed by the Module. The skills are activated and/or further developed through this exercise are: - Critical Thinking - Creativity - Collaboration - Communication
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	If the group of participants is larger than 5 people, the trainer divides them into sub-groups of 3 participants (either randomly or with the logic of ensuring as much uniformity as possible). The steps are presented by the trainer gradually (not all at once). Participants take notes on their papers for each step, and once the first 3 steps are completed, each sub-group presents their results to the plenary. Note: Prepare each sub-group by informing them that they will need to designate one member of the group as the rapporteur to present the results of the process at the end. They have the freedom to present

	together (e.g., one member presenting each step), but it is important that they are well-prepared.
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	Once the trainer has divided the participants into sub-groups of three, they present the exercise scenario to all the groups together and answer any questions that may arise. **The Scenario**: "In the central neighbourhoods of your city, there are no open spaces for sports, walking, or relaxation (e.g., parks and open facilities). You want to organize a public event involving the local community to raise awareness about this issue, but from the very beginning, you are facing a lack of interest in the initiative itself. If this continues, the event may fail to achieve its goal." Once the scenario is understood by all sub-groups, the first challenge is given: **Step 1: Problem Identification (5 minutes)** The objective of this step is to help participants recognize and define the core problem. In this phase, each sub-group will discuss and identify what they believe the main problem or challenge is. Examples of such problems could include "lack of resources", "limited time", «unknown event organisers", or "incorrect communication channels", etc. The main goal here is for participants to understand that identifying the correct problem is crucial to solving it. It is important to emphasize that the purpose is not to solve the problem itself at this stage, but rather to highlight the significance of clearly defining what the problem is. A time limit of 5 minutes should be set for this step to maintain focus and avoid overanalysing the issue. Each sub-group must take notes during their discussion to present their findings to the larger group at the end. These notes should capture the key points and insights that emerge from the discussion, ensuring that the sub-group is prepared to share their analysis of the core problem with the rest of the participants. **Step 2: Brainstorming Causes and Effects (5 minutes)** Once the first phase is completed, the trainer asks each sub-group, depending on the main problem they have identified, to record the primary causes and effects of that problem and their interconnections.

	Again, a time limit of 5 minutes is given to allow the members of each sub-group to spontaneously record the causes and effects that come first to their minds. **Step 3: Identifying Needs (5 minutes)** Once the second phase is completed, the trainer asks each sub-group, based on the problem and the causes and effects they have outlined, to record the needs they have identified (e.g., resources, skills, support, collaborations, technological tools, etc.). The trainer should guide the group to discuss and capture realistic needs that, if met, could help address the problem. It is important to clarify that the sub-group is not expected to solve the problem, but to focus specifically on the task at hand. The limited time (5 minutes) is designed to prompt each sub-group to act spontaneously and record the first needs that come to mind, without overanalysing the situation. There is no right or wrong answer, and the group will not be evaluated on whether their response was correct. The goal is for participants to grasp the basic elements of situation analysis. **Step 4: Presentations in the plenary and group discussion (15-20 minutes)** Once the first three steps are completed, the trainer gathers all sub-groups and asks each one to present the results of their discussion to the whole group (not more of 5 minutes per sub-group is needed). For the presentation, the use of a board (or flip chart) and coloured markers is recommended. It is beneficial for each step to be presented separately, allowing the entire group to see the connections between the problem, the causes and effects, and the needs that have been recorded by each sub-group. This approach will help participants better understand how each element of the situation analysis relates to one another. **Step 5: Assessment of the Key Elements of Situation Analysis (15 minutes)** The trainer facilitates an open discussion with the whole group in order to evaluate the process and ensure that the key elements of Situation Analysis are understood, using the following questions (or some of them): • *How did you find the previous process?* • *What do you consider to be the key elements of Situation Analysis?*

	● *Why are they important?* ● *Have you ever faced a problem and failed to solve it? Would you like to briefly describe it? Why do you think the solution did not progress? What would you do differently after today's experience?* ● *Are there aspects that still leave you uncertain or raise questions for you?* It is recommended that the trainer record the participants' answers on the board in a coded manner and, at the end, highlight (by underlining) those elements that represent the desired learning outcomes of the process. In the case that the trainer uses the last question (*"Are there aspects that still leave you uncertain or raise questions for you?"*), this can serve as a bridge to move on to the next and final step of the exercise. **Step 6: What is coming next? (5-10 minutes)** After completing the process described above, where participants have grasped the importance of situation analysis through practical application, the trainer moves on to introduce **two key tools** for deeper analysis: 1. **The Problem Tree** 2. **SWOT Analysis** Purpose of these tools: These tools will help participants further examine the causes and effects of the problem, as well as explore solutions and opportunities related to the situation. They will provide a structured way to analyse the problem and inform decision-making for real-life situations. ***Important note for an inclusive approach*** **Ensure equal participation**: It's crucial to make sure that everyone has a chance to contribute within the sub-groups and during the group discussion. **No right or wrong**: Avoid judging the points brought forward by the groups as right or wrong. That is not the purpose of the exercise. In fact, mistakes can also lead to the desired learning outcomes. When the sub-groups present their results, try to minimize criticism from the other

	groups and limit cross-group debate as much as possible. This is not a competition, and there will be no winners or losers. **Don't forget to have fun**: in this exercise, participants are invited to experiment with their ideas and experiences in a safe environment. Encourage creativity and enjoyment. The goal is not to find solutions to all the world's problems today—and that's perfectly fine.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	N/A
SOURCES	N/A

Exercise No 3: Why, why, why, why, why?

MODULE	*Situation Analysis*
EXERCISE NAME	Why, why, why, why, why?
NUMBER OF EXERCISE	*3*
PREPARATION REQUIRED	*The room should be structured in such a way that the team can be split into pairs (if the total number is odd, create pairs and one trio), and each pair should be able to find a space to collaborate for approximately 20 minutes. No additional rooms are needed.*
MATERIALS REQUIRED	*A4 sheets (or papers) for notes and pens.*
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	40-60 minutes Depending on the number of participants
GROUP EXERCISE	Yes Minimum number of participants: 3 Maximum number of participants: more than 15
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	The exercise aims to help trainees understand their way to define a problem.

	The skills are activated and/or further developed through this exercise are: - Critical Thinking - Strategic Thinking - Creativity - Collaboration - Communication - Problem Analysis - Change Management
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	Participants are randomly divided into pairs (and one trio if the total number of the group is odd), and each pair is given a statement (problem) which they must try to analyze using the 5 Whys method. At the end, all pairs present the progress of their analysis to the plenary.
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	**1. Introduction to the 5 Whys Technique (5 minutes)** Explain shortly the 5 Whys method: It helps identify the root cause of a problem by repeatedly asking “Why?” to each answer. Emphasize that each answer should build on the previous one. **Example:** Problem: My coffee is cold. 1. Why is my coffee cold? Because I didn't heat the water as much as I should have. 2. Why didn't I heat the water as much as I should have? Because I was distracted by something else and forgot. 3. Why was I distracted by something else? Because I was trying to finish a task I had taken on. 4. Why was I trying to finish a task? Because I had limited time and needed to complete it quickly. 5. Why do I have limited time? Because I didn't plan my day properly and left some tasks until the last minute.

	Conclusion: The root cause of the cold coffee is that I didn't plan my day properly, which led to being rushed for time and overlooking small yet important details like heating the water properly. **2. Problem Selection (5 minutes)** Assign a problem from the list (Document: SITUATION ANALYSIS-EXERCISE 3-List of problems-5Whys) for the pairs to work on, such as “The team failed to deliver a project on time” or “A new hire left the company after a few weeks”. Alternatively, the trainees can choose their own problems if they prefer. There is no right or wrong in terms of content, but only in terms of process. This means that they must faithfully follow the process of analysing the initial problem by applying the sequence of the five questions. However, the content of the situation provided in the problem should be imagined by them, meaning they should think creatively (though realistically, e.g., an alien invasion as a reason for missing a deadline would be better avoided). **3. The 5 Whys Process (15-20 minutes)** Each group states the problem and asks “Why?” five times to dig deeper. Encourage participants to record their questions and answers and their conclusion on their paper. **4. Group Reflection & Discussion (5-10 minutes)** After completing the 5 Whys process, have each group share their findings. Prompt reflection with questions such as: ● Was the root cause creative? ● How might addressing the root cause change the outcome? ● How can you apply this method to other problems? **5. Wrap-Up & Takeaways (5 minutes)** Summarize how the 5 Whys technique helps identify the root cause, leading to more effective solutions. Encourage trainees to brainstorm

	potential solutions and move from problem identification to problem-solving.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	SITUATION ANALYSIS-EXERCISE 3-List of problems-5Whys
SOURCES	This exercise is a variation of the exercise used in the Train the Trainer programme of the European project Power Up (2023-1-BG01-KA220-ADU-000156540), coordinated by the trainer from the Centre for Creative and Social Practices organisation from Bulgaria.

List of Problems-5whys

1. A product launch was delayed.
2. The marketing campaign did not meet its goals.
3. A new employee is struggling to adapt to the team.
4. The customer support team is overwhelmed with requests.
5. Sales representatives are not meeting their targets.
6. A website redesign has led to an increase in bounce rate.
7. Users are not engaging with a new feature in the app.
8. The team failed to deliver a project on time.
9. A major system outage occurred during peak hours.
10. The team is constantly missing deadlines.
11. A new software integration caused unexpected issues.
12. Employee productivity has decreased in the past month.
13. Client feedback on a product has been largely negative.
14. A new hire left the company after a few weeks.
15. Customers are complaining about the quality of customer service.
16. Social media engagement has dropped significantly.
17. Users are reporting difficulty navigating the website.
18. The team is facing communication breakdowns during projects.
19. The company's customer retention rate has declined.
20. The company is experiencing difficulties with remote team collaboration.

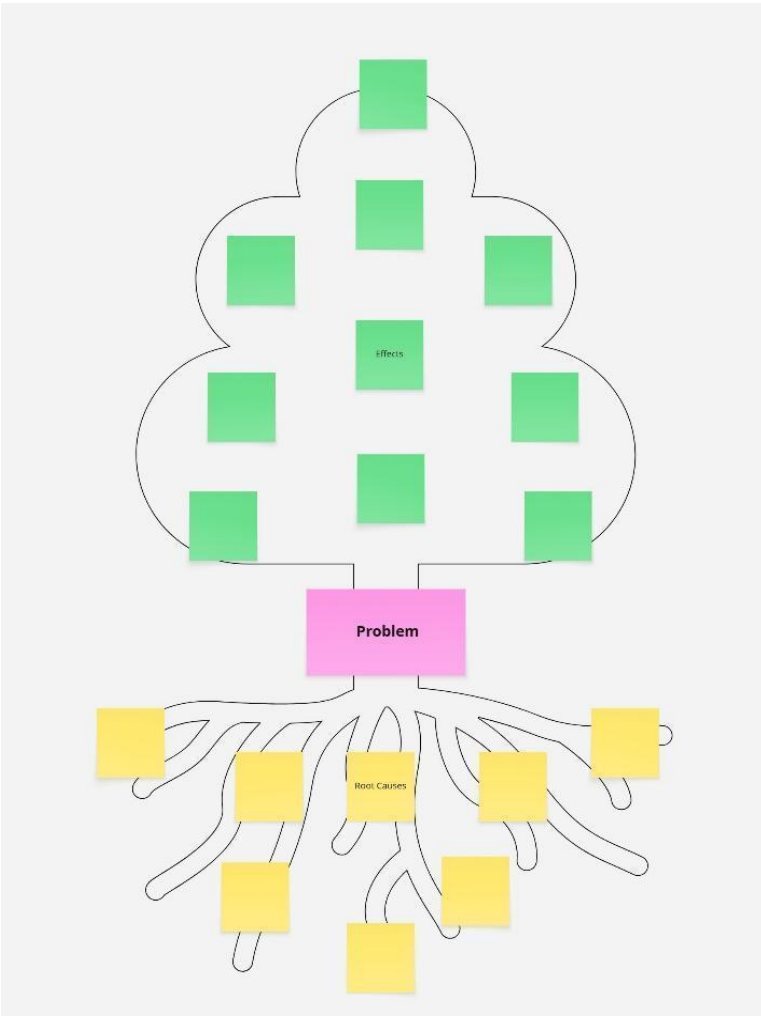
Exercise No 4: Trust the Tree

MODULE	*Situation Analysis*
EXERCISE NAME	Trust the Tree
NUMBER OF EXERCISE	*4*

PREPARATION REQUIRED	*The room should be arranged in such a way as to allow parallel work of 4-5 sub-groups and the presentation of their results to the plenary.*
MATERIALS REQUIRED	*A4 sheets or paper for notes, pens, flip charts or large sheets (flip chart size), coloured markers.*
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	*100-120 minutes*
GROUP EXERCISE	*Yes* *Minimum number of participants: 3* *Maximum number of participants: more than 15*
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	The main objective of the Problem Tree exercise is to help participants analyze a complex issue by identifying its root causes and consequences. Through this process, they develop a shared understanding of how personal, social, and economic factors are interconnected, while also preparing the ground for exploring possible solutions in a structured way. Key Skills Activated/Developed - Analytical Thinking - Collaboration & Teamwork - Communication - Critical Thinking - Creativity - Empathy & Social Awareness - Strategic Thinking
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	The participants will be divided into sub-groups of 3 people and will be asked, through 5 successive stages, to use the Problem Tree to analyse the situation of youth unemployment
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	**Step 1 – Introduction and Formation of Sub-Groups (20 minutes)** The trainer begins by introducing the purpose of the Problem Tree method, explaining that it helps uncover the causes and consequences of a central problem while also highlighting the interactions between them. The trainer presents the focus problem, *youth unemployment*, and

	clarifies that this will serve as the starting point for the groups' work. The trainer then divides the participants into sub-groups of three people each and ensures that every group has the necessary materials, such as flip-chart paper or large sheets, markers, and sticky notes. **Step 2 – Defining the Problem (15 minutes)** The trainer asks each sub-group to write *youth unemployment* (or a redefined problem related to it) in the centre of their sheet. The members are invited to discuss what this problem means for them and to agree on a common definition that frames their tree. At this point, the trainer reminds participants that they can also draw on their previous experience with the 5 Whys method, if they wish, in order to dig deeper into the meaning of the problem or even to redefine it before continuing with the analysis. **Step 3 – Identifying the Causes (15 minutes)** The trainer invites participants to brainstorm and record possible root causes of *youth unemployment* (or the redefined problem related to it). They are encouraged to place these as the "roots" beneath the central problem on their tree. The trainer reminds them to go deeper into the until they uncover underlying factors, such as lack of skills, limited job opportunities, or a mismatch between education and the labour market. **Step 4 – Identifying the Effects (15 minutes)** The trainer asks each sub-group to identify the consequences of *youth unemployment* (or the redefined problem related to it) and record them as the "branches" above the central problem. The discussion should include both short- and long-term effects, ranging from personal and emotional consequences to social, political and economic outcomes. **Step 5 – Examining Interactions (15 minutes)** The trainer encourages the groups to look closely at their trees and examine how causes and effects interact with one another. Participants are asked to highlight these relationships by drawing arrows or lines between elements, thereby visualising youth unemployment (or the redefined problem related to it) as a systemic issue with multiple interdependent factors. **Step 6 – Presentations in Plenary (30 minutes)** Each group is invited to select a rapporteur to present its Problem Tree to the plenary. During the presentations, the rapporteurs are asked not only to describe the identified causes and effects but also to explain the reasoning behind the connections that were drawn. After each presentation, the trainer facilitates a short round of clarifying questions and encourages comparisons across the different groups' analyses.

	Debrief and Reflection The trainer closes the workshop with a brief reflection. Participants are invited to share what insights emerged from the process, whether there were common patterns or significant differences between the trees, and how this exercise might inform the analysis of situations or/and design of potential solutions in future sessions.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	It is preferable to encourage participants to design their own Problem Tree. To give them an idea of what it might look like, we provide this illustration: SITUATION ANALYSIS-EXERCISE 4-The Problem Tree
SOURCES	N/A



Exercise No 5: SWOT happens!

MODULE	*Situation Analysis*

EXERCISE NAME	SWOT happens
NUMBER OF EXERCISE	*5*
PREPARATION REQUIRED	*The room should be arranged in such a way as to allow parallel work of 4-5 sub-groups and the presentation of their results to the plenary.*
MATERIALS REQUIRED	*A4 sheets or paper for notes, pens, flip charts or large sheets (flip chart size), colored markers.*
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	*100-120 minutes*
GROUP EXERCISE	*Yes* *Minimum number of participants: 3* *Maximum number of participants: more than 15*
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	The main objective of the SWOT Analysis exercise is to help participants critically assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the utilization of young people's skills in the labour market. Through this process, they gain a clearer understanding of both individual and systemic factors that influence employability and workforce integration, while also identifying areas where strategic action and innovation can create new opportunities. Skills through this SWOT Analysis Exercise: - Analytical thinking - Strategic thinking - Critical reflection - Collaboration and teamwork - Communication - Creativity - Self-awareness and empowerment
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	The participants will be divided into sub-groups of 3 people and will be asked, through 5 successive stages, to apply the SWOT Analysis to

	analyze the situation "Utilizing the Skills of Young People in the Labour Market".
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	**Step 1 – Introduction and Group Formation (15 minutes)** The trainer begins by introducing the purpose of the SWOT Analysis method, explaining that it helps identify internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats, in relation to a specific topic. The trainer presents the focus topic: *Utilizing the Skills of Young People in the Labour Market* and then divides the participants into sub-groups of three people each and ensures that each group has the necessary materials, such as flip-chart paper or large sheets, markers, and sticky notes. **Step 2 – Identifying Strengths (15 minutes)** The trainer asks the sub-groups to discuss the positive internal factors that support the effective use of young people's skills in the labour market. Participants are encouraged to record these strengths on their sheets, reflecting on existing personal skills, educational achievements, networks, or resources that can facilitate employability. **Step 3 – Identifying Weaknesses (15 minutes)** The trainer invites the groups to examine internal weaknesses that may hinder the utilisation of young people's skills. Participants discuss and record limitations, gaps in skills, lack of experience, or other factors that reduce employability. The trainer encourages critical reflection while maintaining a constructive approach, focusing on how these weaknesses could potentially be addressed. **Step 4 – Identifying Opportunities (15 minutes)** The trainer asks participants to explore external opportunities that could enhance the use of young people's skills. Groups consider trends in the labour market, emerging sectors, educational programs, mentorship, networking, or policies that create potential advantages. These opportunities are recorded on the sheets as part of the SWOT framework. **Step 5 – Identifying Threats (15 minutes)** The trainer guides participants to examine external threats that may negatively affect the effective use of young people's skills in the labour market. Participants discuss and record challenges such as economic downturns, skills mismatches, competition, discrimination, or other barriers that could impede youth employment. **Step 6 – Interpreting and Mapping Connections (10 minutes)** The trainer asks groups to review their completed SWOT tables and reflect on the relationships between elements. Participants are

	encouraged to consider how strengths can be leveraged to seize opportunities, how weaknesses can be mitigated, and how threats can be addressed or avoided. They may use arrows, notes, or diagrams to illustrate these interactions. **Step 7 – Presentation and Plenary Discussion (20 minutes)** Each group selects a rapporteur to present its SWOT Analysis to the plenary. During the presentation, participants explain the rationale behind their categorisation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and highlight any interesting insights or potential strategies that emerged. The trainer facilitates questions and discussions, comparing findings across groups and encouraging reflection on actionable steps. **Debrief and Reflection** The trainer closes the workshop by inviting participants to reflect on the process and share key takeaways. Discussion points may include insights gained about the skills of young people, strategies for improving employability, and how the SWOT Analysis can be applied to other contexts or problems.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	It is preferable to encourage participants to design their own SWOT Analysis table or form. To give them an idea of what it might look like, we provide this table: SITUATION ANALYSIS-EXERCISE 5-SWOT Template
SOURCES	N/A

	Positive	Negative
	STRENGHTS	WEAKNESSES
internal		
	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
external		

Exercise No 6: Keep, Toss, Twist & Turn

MODULE	*Situation Analysis*
EXERCISE NAME	Keep, Toss, Twist & Turn
NUMBER OF EXERCISE	*6*
PREPARATION REQUIRED	*The room should be arranged in such a way as to allow parallel work of 4-5 sub-groups and the presentation of their results to the plenary.*
MATERIALS REQUIRED	*A4 sheets or paper for notes, pens, flip charts or large sheets (flip chart size), coloured markers.*
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	60-80 minutes
GROUP EXERCISE	Yes Minimum number of participants: 3 Maximum number of participants: more than 15

EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	The goal of the exercise is to facilitate an exchange between participants of key thoughts, feelings, new experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed during the training in the Situation Analysis module, thus enhancing the acquisition of learning outcomes in an experiential way. The skills are activated and/or further developed through this exercise are: - Critical Thinking - Self-awareness - Collaboration - Communication - Active Listening - Perception and Empathy - Creativity
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	The group is divided into sub-groups of 4-5 people. Gradually, they are asked to discuss certain topics. They record their key observations and, at the end, give a presentation on a large sheet (or on the board) to the plenary.
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	The trainer randomly divides the group of trainees into sub-groups of 4-5 people each. Each sub-group is provided with paper for notes, pens, a large sheet of flip-chart size (or a flip-chart if available for all sub-groups), and coloured markers. Additionally, the trainer informs the groups to assign one or more members as rapporteur(s) to present the results of the process to the plenary at the end. Once the sub-groups are formed and equipped with the necessary materials, the trainer proceeds to the first step of the exercise. **Step 1 (10 minutes)** The trainer asks the groups to discuss internally and respond to the question ***'What am I taking with me from the Situation Analysis training.'*** They encourage the group members to freely express whatever comes to mind without overanalysing it. This could include feelings, thoughts, plans, surprises, relationships, and friendships formed within the group, something they heard and remember, a new skill, a new mindset, anything. They are asked to take notes and create a list that includes everything expressed within their sub-group.

	Step 2 (10 minutes) Similar to the previous process, the trainer asks the sub-groups to have a structured discussion in response to the question ***'What am I leaving behind from the Situation Analysis training'*** This could include things I don't need, things I want to forget, or anything that is not useful moving forward. Again, this could include feelings, thoughts, processes, tangible or intangible elements of the training, with no limitations. **Step 3 (10 minutes)** Following the same spirit of the process, the trainer asks the sub-groups to discuss internally and record in their notes in response to the question ***'What would I change from the Situation Analysis training'***. **Step 4 (10 minutes)** Continuing with the same logic, the trainer asks the sub-groups to respond to the question ***'What will I use from now on from the Situation Analysis training'***. **Step 5 (15 minutes)** After completing the 4th step, the trainer asks the sub-groups to use the large sheets (or flipcharts), markers, and any other materials they have available to find a creative way to present the results of their discussions. This could be a drawing, a diagram, a short play, a structured dialogue between them, etc. **Step 6 (20 minutes)** All sub-groups present their results to the plenary in the way they have developed. The trainer facilitates the discussion between the sub-groups and encourages all members to share their impressions or thoughts. *(Optional)* At the end of the discussion, and while the group is in a circle, the trainer asks each member to express their main feeling or thought about how they are leaving the training in this specific module. It is important to ensure that each member expresses themselves very briefly, using no more than 2-3 words or phrases.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	N/A
SOURCES	N/A

1.13 Teaser

After covering the key takeaways from Situation Analysis, give your participants a brief, informal 5-minute introduction to the upcoming Problem-Solving module. Use this transition to help them connect the insights they gained from reflecting on past experiences and challenges with the practical tools and techniques they'll soon explore, such as Mind Mapping, the Opportunity Solution Tree, and Goal Breakdown.

Highlight how these tools can help them systematically address personal and professional challenges, and let them know if there's any preparation needed for the next session. This short introduction will ensure continuity, helping your participants see the link between analysing past situations and applying structured problem-solving approaches to shape their future actions.

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CHAPTER TWO

PROBLEM SOLVING

Co-funded by the European Union

Social Innovation Initiative

1 PROBLEM SOLVING

2.1 Introduction to the Module:

In this module, participants will learn problem-solving techniques to approach personal and professional challenges systematically. The aim is to help NEETs break down complex issues into manageable tasks, enabling them to develop clear, actionable solutions. They will be introduced to tools like Mind Mapping, the Solution Tree, Goal Breakdown, and Six Thinking Hats.

Each theoretical section will be accompanied by practical exercises, divided into both group activities and individual tasks, so that participants can immediately test out the methods, apply them to realistic situations, and reflect on what works best for them. The variety of exercises ensures that participants engage with problem-solving in multiple ways, strengthening creativity, teamwork, and independent thinking while preparing them for diverse real-world challenges.

2.2 MIND MAPPING

What Is Mind Mapping And How Does It Work?

Mind mapping is a visual tool that helps organise ideas and solve problems. It starts with a central idea or question, placed in the middle of the page. From there, you draw branches that represent main topics or categories related to the central idea. Each branch can have smaller sub-branches, breaking down these topics into more specific details or actions. You can use keywords, short phrases, or images to help represent ideas. The branches are connected with lines, showing how everything is linked. To create a mind map, follow these simple steps:

1. Write down your central idea in the middle of the page.
2. Draw branches out from the centre, each representing a main topic related to the central idea.
3. Add sub-branches to break these topics down into smaller parts.
4. Use colours, symbols, or images to make it visually interesting and easier to remember.
5. Connect related branches with lines to show how ideas link together.

Mind mapping helps to see the whole picture and find new ways of thinking about a problem or solution. It's a great way to brainstorm, plan, and understand complex ideas.

2.3 Why Mind Mapping Is Beneficial for Neets

Mind mapping is particularly beneficial for NEETs because it provides a clear visual structure that helps simplify complex problems. Many young people struggle with abstract thinking or feel overwhelmed by large challenges. By breaking a problem down into smaller, interconnected parts, mind mapping helps NEETs organise their thoughts and see clear steps to finding solutions. This visual format makes it easier for them to process information, as they can see how different aspects of the problem relate to each other. Mind mapping also promotes divergent thinking, encouraging them to consider multiple solutions rather than focusing on just one. For NEETs, who may feel limited in their options, this creative process allows them to approach problems with new perspectives. Additionally, the collaborative nature of mind mapping encourages active participation, allowing group members to contribute their ideas and build on each other's input, reinforcing a sense of shared learning and teamwork. Finally, because mind mapping is interactive and engaging, it makes information more memorable, helping NEETs retain what they've learned and improving their problem-solving and decision-making skills.

2.4 Online Mind Mapping Tools

There are several online tools available that make creating mind maps easier and more interactive. These platforms allow users to build, share, and collaborate on mind maps in real-time. Some popular options include MindMeister, Coggle, and Lucidchart, all of which offer user-friendly interfaces and various templates for brainstorming and problem-solving. These tools are especially useful for both individual and group work, providing an accessible way to visually organise ideas, explore connections, and work on complex tasks.

2.5 Opportunity Solution Tree

The Opportunity Solution Tree is a practical tool designed to help individuals shift from problem-focused thinking to solution-oriented action. After identifying the core problem, as discussed in the previous section using the Problem Tree, the Opportunity Solution Tree encourages participants to identify potential opportunities and break them down into specific, actionable steps. This tool helps to visualize how individuals can move forward by focusing on what is possible, rather than what is limiting them.
The goal of the Opportunity Solution Tree is to reframe challenges as opportunities for growth. Instead of viewing a problem as an insurmountable barrier, the Opportunity Solution Tree promotes a mindset shift: what can be done to overcome this problem? For example, if the problem is lack of work experience, this can be viewed as an opportunity to gain practical experience through internships, volunteering, or apprenticeships. The focus is on finding feasible solutions that can be translated into real, actionable steps. This approach helps participants move forward, even when facing obstacles, by showing that every problem has the potential for a positive outcome with the right actions.

2.6 How It Works

1. Start with the Problem: The Opportunity Solution Tree is often used after identifying the core problem through tools like the Problem Tree. It starts with the central problem (e.g., lack of skills, job insecurity) at the top.
2. Identify Opportunities: Next, the causes of the problem are translated into opportunities. For example, if the problem is a lack of work experience, an opportunity might be internships, volunteer work, or apprenticeships. These opportunities are what will help individuals break free from the problem.
3. Map Out Solutions: For each opportunity, specific actions are outlined to make the opportunity actionable. This is where the Solution Tree becomes actionable. For instance, to access an internship opportunity, the action steps might include researching local businesses, updating a CV, and sending applications.

4. Create a Roadmap: The final step is to develop a clear path for taking action. The Opportunity Solution Tree helps create a step-by-step roadmap of what needs to be done, which makes it easier to follow through with the actions.

2.7 Six Thinking Hats

A Tool for Group Problem-Solving

You may encounter complex problems that require input from multiple perspectives. “Six Thinking Hats” is an excellent tool for group problem-solving that helps participants explore issues from diverse angles, ensuring that all aspects are considered before reaching a conclusion. It encourages structured thinking by assigning different “hats” to the participants. Each hat represents a specific way of thinking, enabling the group to approach problems from different perspectives in a systematic yet flexible way. This method helps break free from conventional group discussions by giving each member a clear role to play during the conversation.

- White Hat: Focuses on facts, data, and information. What do we know? What information is missing?
- Red Hat: Focuses on emotions, feelings, and intuitions. What is our gut feeling about this issue?
- Black Hat: Looks at the risks and negative aspects. What could go wrong? What are the challenges we face?
- Yellow Hat: Focuses on positives and benefits. What’s working? What are the potential opportunities?
- Green Hat: Encourages creativity and new ideas. What solutions can we come up with? What if we think outside the box?
- Blue Hat: Manages the process. This hat keeps the conversation on track, ensuring that all perspectives are explored and that everyone’s voice is heard.

2.8 How to Use It in Group Settings

The Six Thinking Hats method is an effective tool for guiding group discussions and problem-solving with NEETs. It helps in structuring organised conversations where every participant has the opportunity to contribute, and no aspect of the problem is overlooked. It encourages balanced thinking, allowing participants to balance both emotion and logic in their decision-making, which is especially useful for NEETs who may face emotional and practical challenges. The Red Hat helps promote empathy by encouraging participants to consider the emotional aspects of their decisions, fostering understanding within the group. The Green Hat stimulates creative thinking, helping NEETs generate innovative solutions and explore new career paths. Furthermore, the method is inclusive, ensuring that all perspectives, regardless of background or experience, are heard and respected.

To use this method, start by presenting the problem you want to tackle (e.g., finding remote work or developing a career path). Then, assign hats to participants, or use them in turn to explore different aspects of the problem. Facilitate the discussion by guiding the group through each hat, encouraging them to think critically and express their thoughts. Finally, summarise the insights gained and guide the group towards actionable steps or decisions.

2.9 Goal Breakdown

After identifying and analysing the core problem (with the Problem Tree) and brainstorming potential solutions (using the Solution Tree), NEETs are often left with multiple viable options but unsure of how to move forward. Goal Breakdown provides the missing link between abstract solutions and practical action. By transforming large goals into smaller, more manageable tasks, it ensures that participants feel confident and equipped to take the next step toward their objective.
Rather than simply exploring solutions, Goal Breakdown creates concrete action plans, establishing clear tasks that are easy to follow and track. For NEETs who may feel overwhelmed or unsure of where to start, this tool offers a structured approach to progress that fosters clarity, motivation, and self-regulation.

2.10 How It Works

Goal Breakdown takes the insights and solutions generated by tools like the Solution Tree and turns them into detailed, actionable steps. Here's how it works in practice:

1. START WITH THE IDENTIFIED SOLUTION:
   After completing the Solution Tree, the next step is to decide on the most appropriate solution. For example, if a common problem identified by a NEET is lack of work experience, the solution might be to gain practical experience through internships or volunteer work.
2. BREAK THE SOLUTION INTO ACTIONABLE TASKS:
   Once the solution is identified, the next step is to break it down into clear, practical actions that can be performed to achieve it. For instance:
   If the solution is gaining work experience through internships, the tasks might include:
   - Research internship opportunities in local businesses or online platforms
   - Update the CV to reflect relevant skills and experiences
   - Write a cover letter tailored to each opportunity
   - Apply to a set number of internships each week
   - Prepare for interviews
3. PRIORITISE AND SET DEADLINES:
   Once tasks are identified, help NEETs determine which tasks should be done first. Some tasks may be more urgent or foundational. For instance, updating the CV might be the first task, followed by researching internship opportunities. Assign realistic deadlines for each task to keep progress on track, e.g.,
   - Week 1: Update CV and research 5 internship opportunities
   - Week 2: Write and submit 3 tailored applications
   - Ongoing: Apply for more opportunities each week
4. TRACKING PROGRESS:
   NEETs should regularly track their progress and reflect on the steps they've completed. This helps them stay focused and motivated, while also allowing them to adjust their plan if needed. For example, if they find that applying for internships is taking longer than expected, they can adjust the schedule or focus on fewer, more targeted opportunities.

2.11 Practical Exercises

1 Future Me Mind Map

PREPARATION REQUIRED	Prepare the classroom with enough table space for drawing; explain briefly the purpose of mind mapping in a simple, hands-on way.
MATERIALS REQUIRED	Large sheets of paper, coloured markers, sticky notes, pens/pencils
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	90 minutes
GROUP EXERCISE	No
MINIMUM NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	3
Maximum number of participants	20
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	This exercise helps participants visualise their future selves in a fun and creative way. It encourages reflection, goal setting, and planning for personal and professional development. Soft skills covered: Problem solving, Critical Thinking, Creativity
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	Participants create a colourful mind map representing their "Future Me," including goals, experiences, and personal milestones. The focus is on playful, visual representation to make planning engaging and inspiring rather than rigid or boring.
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	1. Introduce the exercise: explain that the goal is to imagine your "Future Me" in a creative, visual way. 2. Draw the central circle: participants write "Future Me" in the centre of the sheet. 3. Identify main goal areas: participants pick 3–5 important life domains (career, skills, experiences, personal growth, well-being) and create branches from the centre. 4. Add goals and milestones: along each branch, write specific goals, milestones, or dreams. 5. Make it playful: encourage colours, doodles, and simple symbols to represent goals (e.g., a plane for travel, a book for learning, a star for big milestones). 6. Use sticky notes: optional for adding flexible or evolving ideas. 7. Reflection: Discuss how the mind-mapping exercise helps participants explore their personal interests, strengths, and aspirations, giving them clarity about what they really want in life.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	Large paper sheets, coloured markers, pens, sticky notes
SOURCES	N/a

2 Opportunity Solution Tree Workshop

PREPARATION REQUIRED	Prepare a simple explanation of the Opportunity Solution Tree method. Print 5 possible workplace problems (see examples below). Set up tables for small groups and ensure there is space for drawing on flipcharts or large sheets of paper.
MATERIALS REQUIRED	Flipcharts or large sheets of paper, markers, post its in multiple colours, sticky notes, pens
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	120 minutes
GROUP EXERCISE	Yes; Minimum number of participants: 6; Maximum number of participants: 20
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	Participants will: ● Identify opportunities in real workplace problems. ● Break down problems into actionable steps. ● Practice problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity.
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	Participants work in small groups to select one of 5 real workplace problems and develop a full Opportunity Solution Tree. They will visually map the problem, opportunities, and actionable steps, then present their trees to the group. The exercise encourages creativity, collaboration, and practical problem-solving.
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	1. Introduce the Method: Explain the Opportunity Solution Tree: top = problem, middle = opportunities, bottom = actionable steps. Show a simple example. 2. Form Groups: 2–4 participants per group. 3. Select a Problem: Give 5 example problems, like: ● A small bar finds that their menu doesn't attract younger customers because they find the options boring or too traditional. ● A local bakery struggles with keeping their bread fresh throughout the day, which leads to waste and lower sales. ● A handicraft shop has high-quality local products, but few young customers know about them. ● A small café or souvenir shop experiences a significant drop in customers outside the tourist season. ● A small convenience store or food stall faces long waits during peak hours, causing frustration for customers and lost sales. 4. Draw the Tree: On flipchart: a. Write the central problem at the top. b. Draw 2–4 main branches for opportunities that could help solve the problem.

	5. Identify Opportunities: Brainstorm what can be done to address the problem. Write each opportunity on a branch. Encourage playful visuals: arrows, colours, simple icons. 6. Map Actionable Steps: For each opportunity, write 2–3 concrete actions on post its and stick them under the branch. Example: if the opportunity is "attract more teens," actions could be "create Instagram challenge," "offer workshop on weekends," "collaborate with schools." 7. Refine and Decorate: Use colours, simple drawings, or symbols to make it clear and engaging. 8. Present and Discuss: Each group presents its tree. Trainer highlights creativity, feasibility, and transferable skills. 9. Reflection: Discuss how the exercise links to real WBL projects and problem-solving skills.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	Flipcharts, markers, post its, sticky notes, pens
SOURCES	Adapted from Teresa Torres' Opportunity Solution Tree

3 Flip the Problem

PREPARATION REQUIRED	Prepare a list of common problems relevant to the group (e.g., job search, motivation, time management). Write these problems on a whiteboard or flip chart. Prepare flip charts or post it notes for participants to write their flipped problems and solutions.
MATERIALS REQUIRED	Whiteboard or flip chart Post it notes Markers Flip chart paper (if necessary for group work) Timer (optional)
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	60 minutes
GROUP EXERCISE	Yes; Minimum number of participants: 4 Maximum number of participants: 15
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	The goal of this exercise is to encourage participants to think critically by reversing a problem and viewing it from an entirely new perspective. This exercise encourages out-of-the-box thinking and helps participants understand the root causes of a problem while generating innovative solutions. Soft Skills Covered: Problem Solving: Participants identify creative solutions by thinking differently about a problem. Critical Thinking: The exercise encourages participants to analyse a problem from multiple perspectives.

	Creativity: By flipping a problem, participants will come up with new, innovative solutions they wouldn't have considered otherwise.
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	In this exercise, participants will flip a given problem around by asking "What would happen if we solved this problem in the opposite way?" This process helps participants examine challenges from unexpected angles, leading to innovative ideas for solving the original problem. After brainstorming flipped solutions, participants will return to the original problem and discuss how the new ideas can help solve it.
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE	1. Introduction: Explain the purpose of the exercise. Present a problem relevant to the group (e.g., "How can we improve NEET engagement in training programs?"). 2. Flipping the Problem: Ask participants to flip the problem by asking, "What would happen if we made the problem worse, or if we solved it in the opposite way?" For example, for improving NEET engagement, a flipped problem might be "How can we make NEETs completely disengage from training programs?" 3. Brainstorming: Give participants 5 minutes to brainstorm possible ideas for the flipped problem. Encourage wild, out-of-the-box ideas. Example for the flipped problem "How can we make NEETs disengage from training?" might include: • Make training programs uninteresting. • Set unreasonably high requirements for participation. • Remove all rewards or incentives. 4. Reversing the Ideas: Ask participants to revert the flipped ideas back to solutions for the original problem. For instance, "Make training programs uninteresting" becomes "Create engaging, dynamic, and interactive training programs that captivate NEETs' interest." 5. Group Sharing and Reflection: Have participants share their reversed solutions with the group. Discuss how these solutions could practically be applied to solve the original problem. What insights did the group gain from the exercise? How does flipping the problem offer new ideas?
MATERIALS TO BE USED	Whiteboard or flip charts (for writing down problems and solutions). Post-it notes (for individual brainstorming). Markers (for writing ideas on flip charts and post-its).
SOURCES	Adapted from the InFOCUS programme (University of Education Upper Austria), where reverse brainstorming ('flip the problem') was used with students and teachers to develop creative solutions for sustainability challenges.

4 The Paradox Exercise

PREPARATION REQUIRED	- Prepare a list of paradoxes (situations where two opposing ideas or statements are both true). - Write the paradoxes on a whiteboard or flip chart for easy reference.
MATERIALS REQUIRED	Whiteboard or flip chart Markers Post-it notes (optional, for group brainstorming)
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	45-60 minutes
GROUP EXERCISE	Yes; Minimum number of participants: 4 Maximum number of participants: 15
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	The goal of this exercise is to help participants navigate and find solutions to paradoxical situations. By reflecting on opposing ideas, participants will gain new insights and discover more balanced, creative solutions. Soft Skills Covered: Problem Solving: Helps identify and approach seemingly unsolvable problems with creativity. Critical Thinking: Encourages participants to reflect on complex and contradictory ideas. Creativity: Stimulates thinking by encouraging participants to find solutions to paradoxical challenges.
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	In this exercise, participants are presented with a paradoxical situation—two statements or ideas that seem contradictory but are both true. They are tasked with coming up with creative ways to solve the paradox. The exercise challenges them to think beyond conventional solutions and explore innovative ideas to tackle complex problems.
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE	1. Introduction: Explain the concept of a paradox: "A paradox is a situation where two opposing ideas are both true, yet they conflict with each other." Provide an example: "You need experience to get a job, but you need a job to get experience." 2. Present the Paradox: Present the paradoxical situation to the group, e.g., ● You need a job to gain experience, but you need experience to get a job. ● Companies want innovative project ideas from young people, but young people often feel they need company approval before sharing their ideas. ● Employers value teamwork skills, but you often need to show individual achievement to be recognised.

	• You need confidence to perform well in the workplace, but you need workplace experience to build confidence. • To learn how to solve problems, you need real challenges, but companies prefer to avoid giving newcomers high-risk tasks. • You need strong communication skills to get opportunities, but you need opportunities to practice and strengthen communication skills. 3. Brainstorm Possible Solutions: Ask participants to brainstorm solutions to the paradox. Encourage them to think creatively about how to overcome or address the contradiction. 4. Discuss and Find a Solution: After brainstorming, guide the participants to identify potential solutions or workarounds that resolve the paradox. Discuss how they could apply these solutions in real-world scenarios. 5. Group Reflection: Reflect on how paradoxical thinking can lead to better problem-solving and how they can apply this technique to real-life challenges they may face.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	- Whiteboard or flip chart (for presenting the paradoxes and writing down ideas) - Markers (for brainstorming and group work) - Post it notes (optional for individual brainstorming)
SOURCES	Simplified adaptation of Barry Johnson's Polarity Management framework (1992)

5 Six Thinking Hats

PREPARATION REQUIRED	Prepare a problem scenario relevant to the group (e.g., How can NEETs improve their chances of finding a job?). - Print out or display Six Thinking Hats (with colours and their meanings).
MATERIALS REQUIRED	• Whiteboard or flip chart • Markers • Six Thinking Hats (printed out or displayed on the wall) - Timer (optional)
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	90-120 minutes
GROUP EXERCISE	Yes, Minimum number of participants: 6 Maximum number of participants: 12
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	Objective: The goal of this exercise is to encourage participants to approach a problem from multiple perspectives, using the Six Thinking Hats method. It fosters balanced thinking, encourages creativity, and helps NEETs understand that problems can be viewed through different lenses.

	Soft Skills Covered: Problem Solving: Encourages creative problem-solving from various angles. Critical Thinking: Helps participants assess a problem from multiple perspectives. Creativity: Inspires creative solutions by focusing on different aspects of a problem.
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	The Six Thinking Hats is a problem-solving method that encourages participants to approach a challenge from six different perspectives: facts, emotions, risks, benefits, creativity, and process. Each participant will assume the role of one of the "hats" to explore the problem systematically. This method encourages creativity and balanced thinking while exploring multiple facets of a single issue.
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE	1. Introduction: Introduce the Six Thinking Hats method: "This exercise helps us approach problems from six different perspectives, making sure we consider all angles before jumping to conclusions." Display the Six Thinking Hats and explain their meanings: ● White Hat: Facts and data (objective) ● Red Hat: Emotions and intuition (subjective) ● Black Hat: Risks and negative aspects (critical) ● Yellow Hat: Positives and benefits (optimistic) ● Green Hat: Creativity and new ideas (innovative) ● Blue Hat: Process and organization (overview) 2. Present the Problem: Present a problem that NEETs can relate to (e.g., "How can NEETs improve their chances of finding a job?"). 3. Assign Hats: Assign one of the Six Thinking Hats to each participant. Each participant must approach the problem from the perspective of their assigned hat. 4. Group Discussion: Have each participant share their insights based on their assigned hat. For example: ● White Hat: What are the facts about the job market? ● Red Hat: How do you feel about finding a job? ● Black Hat: What are the risks or challenges in this process? ● Yellow Hat: What are the opportunities or positive aspects? ● Green Hat: What are some creative solutions to improve the job search process? ● Blue Hat: What processes can be put in place to make the job search easier and more efficient? 5. Reflection and Discussion:

	Discuss how looking at the problem from different perspectives helps balance emotions, facts, risks, and creativity in decision-making. Reflect on how this exercise encourages balanced thinking and generates a fuller understanding of the problem.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	Whiteboard or flip chart (for presenting the problem and writing down ideas). Markers (for writing down insights). Printouts or visual display of the Six Thinking Hats.
SOURCES	Adapted from Edward de Bono's *Six Thinking Hats* method (1985), a structured tool for exploring different perspectives in problem-solving.

6 Goal Breakdown – Storyboard

PREPARATION REQUIRED	Prepare a Canva template with boxes for each "scene" including clearly labelled areas for Milestone, Actionable Steps, Timeframe, and Visual, and a box for potential Obstacles & Solutions. Ensure participants have Canva accounts and know basic navigation (drag and drop, text boxes, shapes, icons).
MATERIALS REQUIRED	Computers or tablets with internet access, Canva accounts, prepared Canva template, markers or pens (optional if sketching by hand instead of Canva).
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	120 minutes
GROUP EXERCISE	No
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	The purpose of this exercise is to teach participants how to break down a personal goal into clear milestones, actionable steps, and realistic timeframes, while visualising progress. Participants will gain practical experience in goal breakdown, planning, and time management, and familiarise themselves with Canva tools, which will make it easier to create CVs, cover letters, and portfolios in the future. Additionally, participants will learn to anticipate potential obstacles and plan solutions, enhancing problem-solving and resilience. Soft skills covered: Problem solving, Critical Thinking, Creativity.
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	Participants select a personal goal (e.g., getting an internship, learning a skill, volunteering). They then create a "storyboard" where each scene represents a milestone. Each scene has four clearly labelled sections: Milestone, Actionable Steps, Timeframe, and Visual. The fifth and final scene is dedicated to Potential Obstacles & Solutions. The exercise encourages reflection, planning, and playful creativity while making goal-setting tangible and structured.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE	1. Introduce the exercise: Explain the concept of breaking down a goal into milestones, actionable steps, and timeframe. Show a completed example. 2. Choose a goal: Each participant selects a personal goal relevant to their learning or career development. 3. Open the Canva template: Participants are given a template with pre-made "scene boxes" with the four sections: Milestone, Actionable Steps, Timeframe, Visual. 4. Define milestones: In each scene, participants write the milestone for their journey toward the main goal. 5. Add actionable steps: Under each milestone, participants list the concrete steps needed to achieve it. 6. Set timeframes: Assign realistic deadlines for each milestone and step. 7. Visualise each scene: Use Canva icons, shapes, or simple stick figures to represent the milestone creatively. 8. Repeat for all milestones: Fill all scenes in chronological order until the main goal is reached. 9. Fifth scene: Potential Obstacles & Solutions: Participants list possible challenges that could affect achieving their goal and brainstorm solutions. Use visuals (icons, arrows, or simple sketches) to show how obstacles can be overcome. 10. Reflect: Review the storyboard to ensure milestones, steps, and timeframes are clear and achievable.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	Canva template Optional: printed handouts of template for those preferring to sketch by hand.
SOURCES	N/a

2.12 Closing/Reflection

At the end of this module, invite participants to share their main takeaways from the problem-solving techniques they practiced. This short reflection helps them consolidate learning and connect the tools to their own experiences.

2.13 Teaser for Next Module

The next module will focus on Planning and Leadership. Participants will learn how to organise their ideas, structure and plan project steps, and build leadership skills. This module runs over three sessions (7 hours each, 21 hours in total) and will help them turn problem-solving insights into actionable projects.

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CHAPTER THREE

PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP

Co-funded by the European Union

Social Innovation Initiative

2 PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP

3.1 Introduction

Shortly introduce yourself and your background. Explain that in this module, participants will get familiarised with essential skills that are useful for when one is an entrepreneur and leading a team.
Take them through the sub-chapters of the module and talk about them.

''During the next sessions we will get to work together on how to inspire your team and how to resolve conflicts in your team. We will also get to assess what kind of a leader you are and what makes a good leader. Are they bad tempered and distant or warm and remain calm during storms? What is company culture and how do you create it? Most importantly, how to you keep it?''

Ask the following question:

- Think back to your student years, your family members, your professors at university or any managers or colleagues you may have had. Was there anyone that always grabbed your attention? That you would trust their decisions or opinions?
  Write down why.

Ask the group to share what they wrote and take notes on a blackboard or flipboard
Find the connections between what the group has shared and introduce the following topic.

3.2 Leadership

You follow the below text to introduce leadership

Every group has a leader and you will often see that when one leader goes, another emerges. You will also find out that everyone has their own leadership style. Some people are naturally born leaders; those are called charismatic leaders. In the 1970s, management scholar Robert House developed his charismatic leadership theory, which describes leaders who have a natural leadership charisma. They are the born leaders who can move masses. Martin Luther King, Bill Clinton and even Hitler all had natural charisma in making people follow their vision. House described how individuals, "by force of their personal abilities are capable of having profound and extraordinary effects on followers." As a result, they evoke "commanding loyalty and devotion" from their followers and they inspire followers to accept and execute their will without hesitation or question or regard to one's self-interest.

Does that mean that if you were not born a charismatic leader that you cannot lead a team? Of course not

Luckily, these leaders and their traits have been studied and more leadership styles have emerged and we have multiple tools today to help us identify our own personal leadership as well as sources to help as improve certain areas if need be

You choose one or two of the below quizzes and prepare QR codes. Ask the participant to take the tests.
https://www.verywellmind.com/whats-your-leadership-style-3866929
https://www.mindtools.com/azr30oh/whats-your-leadership-style
https://www.teamazing.com/leadership-style-quiz/

Allow 10 minutes for the participants to take the test.

Ask them the following questions and ask them to share their responses

1. Do you agree with the results?
2. Would you describe yourself differently?
3. Bring to mind one or two examples that you showcased leadership qualities or your leadership style. It can be anything from a professional setting or a personal one.
4. Now bring to mind an example of where you feel you could have handled things differently. What do you acknowledge that you did 'wrong'. What were your following steps, if any?

Use the following text to introduce Organisational Structure.

> Naturally, who you are as leader, will be reflected in your organisational culture. If you are learning towards an Authoritarian Style, you will feel the need to monitor your team more closely whereas if you are a more of a democrat you will find yourself often asking your team for their suggestions and feedback.
> But let's start at the definitions; what is organisational culture exactly?

3.3 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture, in a nutshell 'it's how we work. It's who we are. It's how we respond'. It is like the vibe of a company. It's about the shared beliefs, habits, and attitudes of the people who work there, plus the values and rules the company stands by. This "vibe" shows up in how the company treats its team, how it deals with others, and how it does business. You can even notice it in their ads and social media posts and their branding overall.
Ask the following question to the group:

- Take some time to think of a few companies (that you have either have worked in, heard about or you just have a feeling about their organisational culture)
- Write down whether you would apply to these companies or not.
- If yes, why? If no, why?

Participants, share their responses to the group.
Trainer asks the following question:
Why do you think that setting up an organisational culture is important?

3.4 Organisational Culture: The Setting Up

You have these questions up where anyone can see them and divide the participants into 3 groups. Each group will be assigned one company and they have to set up the organisational structure of the company. They have 40 minutes to decide and 10 minutes to present the organizational structure of the company.

- Group 1: An environmental NGO that wants to promote cycling and recycling. (People taking bikes and cleaning the streets/fields)

- Group 2: An audit company that manages multi-millionaire clients
- Group 3: A bar in their city's centre, frequented by people aged up to 30 years old

Values & Beliefs
- What does your start-up stand for?
- Which 3 words best describe what's important to you
- How do you want your customers to feel when they interact with your business?

Behaviour & Attitude
- How should team members treat each other?
- How do you want to handle mistakes or disagreements?
- What behaviours should be rewarded (e.g. teamwork, new ideas, helping others)?

Communication & Style
- What language/tone will your start-up use (formal, casual, fun, supportive)?
- How will you make sure everyone feels listened to?
- How will you communicate with customers—professional emails, friendly posts, creative videos?

Environment & Traditions
- What kind of workplace vibe do you want (relaxed, energetic, structured)?
- Will you create any traditions (like celebrating wins, weekly check-ins, or creative brainstorming sessions)?
- How will you make the team feel motivated and included?

Participants share feedback and say what draws them to work for the made-up companies or not.

3.5 Conflict Resolution

Use the below text to introduce Conflict Resolution

> *Setting up an organisational culture does not mean that conflicts will not arise. It is, after all inevitable. How does a leader resolve conflict within the team? Do they take sides? Do they pretend they are Switzerland?*

Ask the participants to take 10 minutes to recall an incident where they watched someone resolving a conflict. What stood out to them? Participants share the incident they remember

3.6 So What Are the Benefits of Conflict Resolution?

- It boosts productivity
- It strengthens relationships
- It resolves conflict fast
- It improves team morale

Here are five essential skills to practice – whether in a leadership position or not, these are vital skills you should remember.

1. Active Listening
   Truly listen to what the other person is saying without interrupting. Show that you value their perspective by asking clarifying questions and reflecting their words back. This builds respect and helps both sides feel heard.
2. Clear Communication

Express your thoughts and feelings openly, without shutting down or avoiding the issue. Open communication not only resolves the current problem but also strengthens relationships for the future.

3. Avoiding Blame
Pointing fingers makes conflict worse. Instead, focus on the issue, not the person. Create a safe space where everyone can share their views equally and work towards a joint solution.
4. Staying Calm
Emotions can escalate disagreements. Take time to cool off before revisiting the issue. Approaching the discussion with a steady tone and clear head makes resolution easier.
5. Collaboration
Conflict isn't about winning—it's about finding common ground. Work together to develop solutions that meet everyone's needs. Collaboration builds trust and encourages teamwork

3.7 Planning

Analysis reveals what needs to be done, and problem-solving imagines how to do it. But the bridge between a promising idea and a tangible result is built through **planning and leadership**. These are the forces that convert strategy into execution, making sure that solutions are not just conceived but **successfully implemented**.
Planning provides the essential blueprint for this transition. It converts abstract solutions into a concrete sequence of objectives, tasks, resources, and deadlines. Without this structure, even the most brilliant ideas risk failure or obscurity. So, a plan is only a document without the human element to bring it to life. It's important to have a good plan, and it's crucial to be realistic about how it is going to be implemented. This is where leadership becomes a **paramount**. If you want to coordinate your own plan, you must know that leaders energize the blueprint: they mobilize people, align efforts, and foster an environment where every team member feels invested and empowered to contribute to the shared goal.

This module moves beyond theory, to practice. Participants will engage with essential tools for structuring and managing projects: from mapping timelines with **Gantt** charts and anticipating obstacles with **SWOT** and **risk matrices**, to defining **priorities** and implementing **monitoring systems**. More importantly, we highlight the importance of cultivating the leadership mindset required to use these tools effectively. We invite you to enable your collaboration skill, instil accountability and navigate the inevitable challenges of any project.

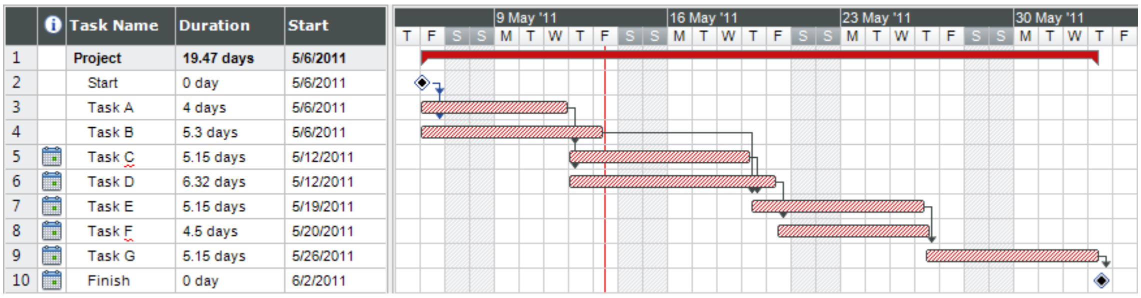
3.8 Planning and Leadership: From Vision to Reality

Planning and leadership, although closely connected, serve different purposes. Planning is the process of **setting clear objectives**, focusing on the necessary steps, and organizing resources to reach a goal efficiently. It gives structure and predictability, helping a team know what needs to be done and when. Leadership, however, goes beyond structure by inspiring people, building trust, and motivating them to move forward even when challenges arise. One could say that planning provides the map and the tools, while leadership gives navigation directions, guides for using the tools, and the willingness to embrace change along the way. Planning and leadership are skills which, although we will discuss them in detail here, will ultimately depend on everyone's perseverance to cultivate. After all, these are abilities that come with career advancement and life experience. Effective leaders act as architects of action, providing the framework and tools that enable a team to build something concrete from an abstract vision. This process hinges on three core leadership functions: **imposing structure on workflow**, **proactively managing risk**, and **maintaining strategic focus through prioritization**.

3.9 Structuring and Visualizing the Workflow: Gantt Chart

The project life cycle offers a robust framework for this, outlining five iterative stages: **Initiation** (defining the problem and objectives), **Planning** (mapping tasks, resources, and ownership), **Execution** (implementing activities), **Monitoring & Control** (tracking progress and adapting), and **Closure** (evaluating outcomes and capturing lessons). Each phase demands distinct leadership skills, from inspirational vision-setting in initiation to analytical rigor in monitoring and reflective mentorship in closure.

To make the planning phase tangible, visual tools are essential. The **Gantt chart**, a simple bar chart mapping tasks against a timeline, often including budget management, provides an instant overview of the entire project (revealing task durations, sequences, and critical dependencies). For example, in the case of organising a festival, the chart instantly highlights that progress cannot begin before the venue is booked and performers are confirmed. Accessible digital tools like **Trello, Asana or Google Sheets** are digital tools that can be used for this collaborative process. The leader's role is to facilitate the crucial debrief that follows, guiding the team to challenge the plan's assumptions and ensure collective ownership.



A Gantt chart created using MindView Business Edition. In this example there are seven tasks, labeled A through G. Some tasks can be done concurrently (A and B) while others cannot be done until their predecessor task is complete (C cannot begin until A is complete).

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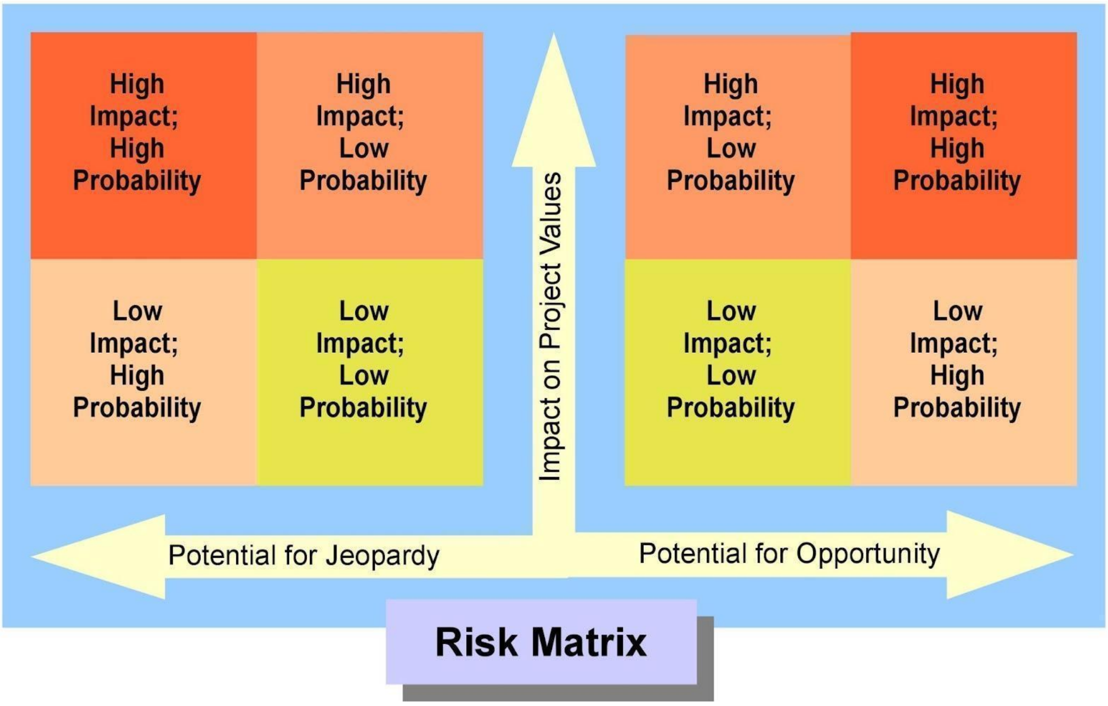
3.10 Anticipating Challenges: Swot and Risk Management

A perfect plan is a fallacy, and unforeseen obstacles are a guarantee. The difference between success and failure often lies not in the vision itself, but in a team's capacity to anticipate and navigate challenges. Leaders must integrate this **proactive mindset** into the planning process. The **SWOT** analysis is a foundational tool for this, as previously referenced in this training programme (chp. 1, pg. 6)

However, identification alone is insufficient. Risk management is the necessary next step. Using a **Risk Matrix**, teams plot potential risks on two axes—**likelihood and impact**—to prioritize them objectively and decide whether they would go through with an idea or not. This visual tool dictates strategy: high-probability, high-impact risks demand proactive mitigation plans, while high-impact, low-probability events require contingency plans. The leader's role is to cultivate a culture of resilience by using this exercise to foster a team's wide mindset that is prepared for uncertainty. The debrief of the exercise focuses on strategic questions such as: Can that Weakness be turned into an Opportunity?" or "Can our Strengths overpower our Weakness?" This transforms risk planning from a defence strategy into an empowering exercise in the collective problem-solving.



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3.11 The Art of Focus: Prioritization and Task Monitoring

With a structure defined and risks mapped, the **leader's focus shifts to maintaining momentum and strategic focus**. Without clear priorities, teams are easily overwhelmed by endless to-do lists, often mistaking mere urgency for importance and therefore getting distracted. Tools like the **Eisenhower Matrix** cut through this noise by categorizing tasks into four categories: **Urgent/Important** (do immediately), **Important/Not Urgent** (schedule strategically), **Urgent/Not Important** (delegate), and **Neither** (eliminate). This exposes the common error of spending time on pressing but trivial tasks while neglecting long-term, high-impact goals.

For project-specific scope, the **MoSCoW** method forces essential conversations, categorizing tasks as **Must-haves** (non-negotiable), **Should-haves** (important), **Could-haves** (desirable), and **Won't-haves** (explicitly excluded). In practice, this helps the team focus on what truly needs to be done first. For example, when developing a new app, Must-haves could be things like a secure login system or a working payment option, while features such as customizable themes or advanced analytics might fall under Could-haves. One of the biggest advantages of this approach is that it makes it much easier to define an MVP (Minimum Viable Product). Instead of trying to build everything at once, the team can deliver a basic but functional version of the product quickly (around 30 to 40 percent of the full vision) and then add new features in later updates. This reduces risks, brings faster feedback from users, and helps allocate resources more effectively. Still, even the best prioritization loses value without solid execution. That is why leaders must set clear milestones, measurable performance indicators, and maintain regular check-ins. Whether through digital tools like **Asana or Trello** (or something as simple as a physical board on the wall), keeping tasks visible ensures accountability and momentum across the project.

The final and critical step when it comes to planning and coordinating the implementation of an idea is the monitoring debrief, where the leader's role is to facilitate an honest retrospective on workload fairness, shifting priorities, and unforeseen obstacles, ensuring the plan remains a living, team-owned document rather than a rigid "imposition".

3.12 Conclusion

Ultimately, planning is not just an administrative task, but also the very essence of leadership in action. It is the process of translating vision into a shared roadmap, building a team's resilience for the journey ahead, and maintaining unwavering focus on the destination. While tools like Gantt charts, SWOT, and prioritization frameworks provide structure, their true power is unlocked by a **leader who uses them collaboratively to foster dialogue, build collective intelligence, and empower every team member**. Therefore, effective planning does more than ensure a project's success; it builds a more capable, confident, and cohesive team, ready to transform the next great idea into reality.

Practical Exercises

1. I Am the Leader, And This Is My Swot

EXERCISE NAME	**"I am the leader, and this is my SWOT" - Individual exercise**
PREPARATION REQUIRED	- Preparation of students. - You may review the concept of a SWOT analysis and prepare simple visual examples.
MATERIALS REQUIRED	- At least one piece of paper and pen/participant (the paper can be printed in the format of a SWOT analysis). - Flipchart or whiteboard for group explanation and debriefing.
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	40-50 (including debriefing).
GROUP EXERCISE	No.
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	- To help participants reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses as leaders. - To encourage awareness of external opportunities and threats that may affect their leadership growth.

	- To connect personal self-awareness with project planning and leadership development while acknowledging the external factors that contribute to their success/struggle.
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	This is an individual reflective exercise where each participant conducts a mini-SWOT analysis of themselves in the role of a leader. The goal is to cultivate self-awareness and identify areas for personal growth, as well as strategies to use strengths and opportunities while managing weaknesses and threats as independent impediments that have to be addressed.
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	1. Introduction (5-7 minutes) – You will briefly explain SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and show a simple example of a personal SWOT 2. Distribution of Materials (3 minutes) – Each participant receives a paper and a pen (optionally, the paper can be divided into the four SWOT quadrants). 3. Individual Reflection (20 minutes) – Participants fill in their personal SWOT, answering prompts such as: • Strengths: What leadership qualities do I already have? • Weaknesses: What areas do I struggle with when leading others? • Opportunities: What resources or situations could support my leadership growth? • Threats: What external factors could challenge me in a leadership role? Action Point (5 minutes) – Each participant writes one practical action they can take in the next month to improve their leadership (e.g., “I will practice delegating tasks in group work” or “I will attend a workshop on communication”). 4. Sharing (10 minutes) – Participants may share one element of their SWOT with the group, if they feel comfortable to do so. You will emphasise that this is voluntary and encourages a safe, supportive environment. 5. Debrief (5 minutes) – You will facilitate a discussion on what participants discovered about themselves and how SWOT can be a planning tool for both personal and project development. The focus can be put on appreciating the participants for being able to self-analyse and share their personality treats.
MATERIALS TO BE USED	PowerPoint slide or flipchart with a visual example of a personal SWOT (optional).

2. Being A Leader – A Timeline

EXERCISE NAME	**“Being a Leader – A Timeline” - Individual Exercise**

PREPARATION REQUIRED	-You will prepare 2–3 short examples of simple project timelines (e.g., organizing a one-day workshop, planning a school event, developing a mobile app). - You will review the project life cycle (initiation › planning › execution › monitoring › closure) to link with the exercise.
MATERIALS REQUIRED	- A4 worksheets (blank or pre-structured with 5 timeline boxes). - Pens, markers, sticky notes (optional). - Flipchart or slides for showing an example.
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	40-55 minutes (including debrief).
GROUP EXERCISE	No
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	- To help participants practice breaking down an idea into sequential steps. - To increase awareness of leadership responsibilities at each stage of a project. - To encourage reflection on personal challenges in leadership roles and strategies to overcome them.
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	This is an individual reflective exercise where participants imagine themselves as leaders of a small project or initiative. They must identify five concrete steps they would take to ensure success and reflect on which step would be most challenging for them as a leader.
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	1. Introduction (5-7 minutes) – You will explain that leadership is not only about vision but also about guiding a team step by step through the project timeline. Show a simple example of five project steps. 2. Scenario Selection (10 minutes) – Each participant chooses or is given a simple leadership scenario (e.g., planning a cultural event, organizing a trip, leading a school campaign, developing a mobile app). Here, you can set up an online platform for randomly choosing a scenario, or even a hat full of different small papers with scenarios on them. Such scenarios can be: • Organizing a One-Day Workshop Week 1 → Define topic, goals, target group Week 2 → Book venue, invite speakers, recruit participants Week 3 → Prepare materials (agenda, slides, handouts) Week 4 → Run workshop (delivery + feedback collection) • Planning a School Event Month 1 → Decide theme and objectives, form organizing team Month 2 → Secure approvals, budget, venue, logistics Month 3 → Promotion (posters, announcements, social media)

	Event Day → Execute program (activities, performances, awards) After Event → Evaluate, publish photos/report • Developing a Mobile App Month 1-2 → Planning and MVP design (must-have features only) Month 3-4 → MVP development (basic functional version) Month 5 → MVP launch (limited release, collect feedback) Month 6-8 → Updates (add new features, improve performance) • Individual Work (15 minutes) – Participants write down five concrete steps they would take as leaders to complete the project. • Example › Define objectives › Assign roles › Communicate with team › Monitor progress › Evaluate results. 3. Reflection (5 minutes) (optional) – Each participant highlights the step they would find most challenging and writes down a strategy to manage it (e.g., “Monitoring progress is difficult for me - I will set weekly check-ins with the team”). 4. Sharing (10-12 minutes) – A few participants share their timelines with the group. You will highlight diversity of approaches and reinforce that leadership requires adaptability, 5. Debrief (10 minutes) – You will summarise that leadership involves not only planning steps but also anticipating personal challenges and preparing strategies to deal with them. Questions about their thought process may help self-reflection and assessment.

3. Community Mapping with The Moscow Prioritasation

PREPARATION REQUIRED	- You will prepare a short introduction to Community Mapping and the MoSCoW method (Must have, Should have, Could have, Won’t have). - You will gather simple examples of “needs” or “gaps” in a community (e.g., lack of green spaces, limited youth activities, poor public transport). - Flipcharts are prepared either blank or with a simple outline of a community map.
MATERIALS REQUIRED	- Flipchart paper (one per group). - A4 paper sheets. - Coloured markers, sticky notes. - Tape for displaying group work.
TIME NEEDED FOR EXERCISE	50-70 minutes (including presentations and debriefing).

GROUP EXERCISE	Yes Minimum number of participants: 3-4 for one group. Maximum number of participants:6-7 for one group.
EXERCISE OBJECTIVES	- To encourage participants to think critically about resources and gaps in their local community. - To practice the use of the MoSCoW method for prioritising ideas. - To develop collaborative leadership skills, by facilitating discussions and making group decisions. - To link community analysis with practical project planning.
EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	Participants work in groups to draw a community map (a visual representation of their local community on a flipchart sheet, highlighting existing resources and identifying what is missing) The map should represent a real place, considering that the participants all belong from the same city/county. The purpose of the map is to highlight the aspects that are missing from their community, such as a coffee place, restaurant, cultural hub or school music. They then brainstorm possible project ideas to address the needs and use the MoSCoW method (on a A4 sheet) to prioritise which ideas are essential, and which can be set aside.
STEP BY STEP GUIDE	1. Introduction (10 min) – You will explain Community Mapping and the MoSCoW prioritisation framework, using simple examples provided above. 2. Group Formation (5-7 min) – Participants are divided into small groups of 3–7 equal groups. 3. Drawing the Map (15-20 min) – Each group creates a map of their community. They mark what already exists (resources, spaces, institutions, initiatives) and what is missing (needs, challenges). 4. Idea Generation (15 min) – Based on the identified gaps, the group writes down as many project ideas as possible. They don't have to be business ideas, charitable events or NGO activity can provide a pleasant diversity in presentations. 5. MoSCoW Analysis and Strategy Planning (20 min) – On A4 sheets, groups classify their project ideas into Must have / Should have / Could have / Won't have. They discuss and agree on prioritisation. Then, they create a brief implementation plan of their idea, with the following criteria: Name of the project: Where will it be implemented: Budget and Financing: Time span: Team of the project: Objective of the project 6. Group Presentations and voting (15–20 min) – Each group presents its community map and MoSCoW analysis. You will collect common themes on a flipchart for all to see. In the end, they all get to vote on the project they would implement, activating their prioritization skill even more.

	7. Debrief (10 min) – Open discussion: What common gaps appeared? How did groups prioritise differently? What leadership skills were needed during group decision-making?
MATERIALS TO BE USED	Visual examples of Community Mapping and MoSCoW provided by you.
SOURCES	European Youth Foundation (2018). Community Mapping Toolkit. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

CHAPTER FOUR
MENTOR'S HINTS

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Social
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Initiative

4. MENTOR'S HINTS

4.1 Introduction

Entrepreneurship starts with a spark: an idea, a need, a moment of clarity. The module Mentor Hints is designed to help young people transform that spark into a project by drawing on real advice from entrepreneurs who have been there. A mentor is not just an expert, but a guide: someone who shares lessons from success, failure, and creativity. The stories and tips in this section connect theory to practice. Most importantly, they show that entrepreneurship is accessible and open to anyone with a strong motivation and a real-world problem to solve.
Hints and activities
Help young people think entrepreneurially, act intentionally, and connect their ideas to real-world needs. These guiding principles are useful across stages of the project cycle.

4.2 Hint 1: Match the Opportunity to You

From entrepreneur:
"*Always trust your gut feeling. The best decisions feel right to your core.*" Arlette Sarkissians, founded Arlette Jewelry

Make the opportunity personal, and ask yourself:
"Is this an opportunity for me? What do I personally want to achieve? Is it also personally feasible?" Practical advice for entrepreneurs

Activity: Write down an idea and ask yourself these questions, to understand what personal knowledge supports the idea and if the current skills and resources you have make it a feasible idea.
Tips for trainers: Create a quiet and focused space where participants can reflect in depth and provide tools (e.g. phones, templates, etc.) to facilitate independent thinking and map out personal thoughts.

4.3 Hint 2: Start Small, But Think Big

From entrepreneur:
"Dream big. Start small. But most of all, start." Simon Sinek, author and inspirational speaker on business leadership

Activity: Invite participants to write down their "big dream" on one side of a page, then on the other side, list the smallest action they could take tomorrow toward it.
Tips for trainers: Create a group sharing circle where each participant presents their *first step* idea and receives constructive feedback.

Provide access to brainstorming tools (post-it notes, flipcharts, online mind-mapping apps).

4.4 Hint 3: Break Down Your Idea

From entrepreneur:
"*Be consistent and focused on what's i"Be consistent and focused on*

what's important. Work on healthy fundamentals, those win long-term" Miha Jagodic, founder of Bloq.it

Project cycle allows to make the idea manageable. Start by setting clear goals to make the project idea solid.
SMART goals are a powerful tool for project design, they help you turn vague ideas into a structured roadmap. The acronym stands for five essential qualities your goals should have: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. By using SMART criteria from the start, you gain clarity and track progress. What is project design? I What are SMART goals?

Activity: Take a project idea and rewrite its goal using the SMART framework.

- Specific: Focus on one clear goal and make sure it's tailored to your exact project, not a general intention.
- Measurable: Define how you'll track progress. Use numbers, deadlines, or indicators that show impact.
- Achievable: Make your goal challenging but realistic. It should be ambitious while staying within your project's reach.
- Relevant: Ensure the goal fits the project's context. It should align with your resources and priorities.
- Time-bound: Set a deadline. This keeps the goal focused and prevents endless drift.

Tips for trainers: Help participants with visual thinking elements (e.g. flipchart, sticky notes, templates).

4.5 Hint 4: Don't Fear Failure—Treat It As Data Normalize Failure And Learn From It

From entrepreneur:
""Business failures are valuable. When you experience failure as an entrepreneur, make a conscious effort to try to understand everything about how you failed and how the business failed. It'll help you succeed." Hendrith Vanlon Smith Jr., Managing Partner of Mayflower-Plymouth Capital LLC

Make failure a learning tool as project setbacks can be valuable lessons. To benefit from them, manage emotions, stay engaged in other activities, and treat failure as part of the process without losing sight of the effort already invested. Practical advice for entrepreneurs

Activity: Share personal experiences of failure, identifying what you learnt and what could be done differently next time.
Run a "failure swap" activity where each participant shares a time they failed at something and what they learned from it.
Tips for trainers: Guide participants in the reflection with questions such as: What didn't go as planned? What did I learn about myself or the process? Help turn stories of failure into stories of growth to change the mentality.

Use a "lessons learned" worksheet where participants list what went wrong in a hypothetical project and brainstorm improvements.

Foster a positive and supportive environment so participants feel safe sharing personal stories.

4.6 Hint 5: Know Your Customer Better Than They Know Themselves

From entrepreneur:
"You've got to start with the customer experience and work backwards to the technology." Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple

Activity: Run a role-play exercise where participants act as potential customers while others practice asking open-ended questions to uncover needs and pain points.
Tips for trainers: Provide simple interview templates participants can use during the role-play.
Encourage reflection after the exercise: Which questions led to the most useful insights? How did body language or tone affect the responses?

4.7 Hint 6: Build A Network Before You Need It

From entrepreneur:
""Never Eat Alone. You can't build a network of relationships when you need it. Begin to build your network right away, well before you need it." Keith Ferrazzi

Activity: Run a simulated networking event where participants practice introducing themselves and pitching their ideas in under 60 seconds.
Tips for trainers: Encourage participants to connect with one new person each week (online or in person) and track their progress in a networking journal.
Share a short guide on professional social media use (LinkedIn, relevant groups) to help them build an online presence effectively.

4.8 Entrepreneurial Hint 7: Curiosity Keeps Your Business Alive

From entrepreneur: *"I think curiosity is the most important thing. If you're curious about something, you'll find a way to make it happen.".* Daniella Pierson, founder of The Newsette and co-founder of Wondermind
Curiosity is one of the most vital traits to sustain a business. Entrepreneurs need to be aware of the world around them and inquiry about everything. This is where new ideas come from. Learning to let go of the old is also important. When new trends are emerging, an entrepreneur needs to be ahead of the game and come up with ways to improve things.

Activity 1: Ask participants to keep a "curiosity journal" where they write down daily questions or observations about the world around them.
Tips for trainers:
Offer prompts such as: What surprised me today? What did I notice that others overlooked?
Encourage participants to review their entries weekly to identify patterns or recurring themes.
Highlight how curiosity can fuel innovation by connecting observations to potential opportunities.

Activity 2: Run a trend-spotting activity where small groups research emerging trends in different industries and present opportunities they see.

Tips for trainers:
Suggest useful sources like industry blogs, newsletters, or social media hashtags.
Encourage participants to identify both risks and opportunities linked to the trends.
Facilitate group discussion on how these insights might be applied to their own projects or contexts.

Activity3: Facilitate a creative thinking session where participants brainstorm ways to improve existing products or services.
Tips for trainers: Use brainstorming techniques such as "SCAMPER" (Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, put to another use, Eliminate, Reverse).
Remind participants that no idea is too wild at the start—quantity over quality first.
End with a round of prioritization where participants select the most promising ideas to refine further.

4.9 Entrepreneurial Hint 8: Innovation Is the Living Force of Entrepreneurship

From entrepreneur: *You have to be nimble, you have to be flexible, and you have to be open to change.* Stacey Ferreira, an American entrepreneur and co-founder of Forge

Activity 1: Organise a reverse engineering exercise where participants take an existing product and break down its features to see how it could be improved.
Tips for trainers: Provide a simple product (physical or digital) that everyone can analyse.
Encourage participants to ask: What problem does this solve? What could be done differently?
Guide the discussion toward practical improvements rather than just criticism.

Activity 2: Run a creativity challenge where participants propose a new twist on a common product.
Tips for trainers: Frame the challenge with constraints (e.g., "make it sustainable," "adapt it for kids," "design it for a remote worker").
Encourage wild, divergent ideas before narrowing down to feasible options.
Have participants pitch their twist to the group for quick feedback.

Activity 3: Provide case studies of businesses that adapted quickly to change and discuss lessons learned.
Tips for trainers: Select case studies that are relatable to participants' industries or interests.
Facilitate group discussion with guiding questions like: What triggered the change? How did the business respond? What can we apply to our own context?
Encourage participants to identify parallels between the cases and their own challenges.

4.10 Entrepreneurial Hint 9: Continuous Learning Fuels Growth

From entrepreneur:
We need to accept that we won't always make the right decisions, that we'll screw up royally sometimes—understanding that failure is not the opposite of success, it's part of success, Arianna Huffington, founder of The Huffington Post and CEO of Thrive Global

Activity: Ask participants to research an inspirational entrepreneur from a provided list and present their key takeaways to the group.
Tips for trainers: Include entrepreneurs from diverse industries and backgrounds so participants can find someone relatable.
Encourage presentations to focus on lessons learned, not just success stories.
Facilitate discussion on how these takeaways can be applied to participants' own projects.

4.11 Entrepreneurial Hint 10: Passion Is Your Driving Force

From entrepreneur:
If you just work on stuff that you like and you're passionate about, you don't have to have a master plan with how things will play out. Mark Zuckerberg, co-founded the social media service Facebook

Activity 1: Lead a values and passions mapping exercise to help participants identify what truly motivates them.
Tips for trainers: Provide worksheets or visual mapping tools to connect values, interests, and motivations. Encourage reflection with guiding questions like: When have I felt most energized by my work? What values do I want to uphold in my projects? Highlight how aligning projects with values increases resilience and commitment.

Activity 2: Facilitate storytelling sessions where participants share personal experiences linked to their passions.
Tips for trainers: Create a supportive environment where everyone feels safe to share.
Use prompts such as: Tell us about a time you felt most proud of something you worked on.
Encourage active listening and help participants spot common threads across stories.

Activity 3: Encourage participants to set passion-driven goals for their project ideas.
Tips for trainers: Guide participants to turn broad passions into clear, actionable goals.
Use the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to structure goals. Reinforce that passion can be a compass, but goals provide the roadmap.

4.12 Entrepreneurial Hint 11: Teamwork Drives Creativity and Growth

From entrepreneur:
Don't try to do everything by yourself, but try to connect with people and resources. Having that discipline and perseverance is really important. Chieu Cao, Co-founder of Perkbox

Activity 1: Organise a team challenge where participants collaborate to solve a mock business problem.
Tips for trainers: Choose a realistic scenario that requires teamwork and diverse skills.
Observe group dynamics and give feedback on collaboration, not just the solution.
Debrief by asking: What worked well in our teamwork? What could we improve next time?

Activity 2: Facilitate a strengths mapping activity where team members identify their skills and how they complement each other.
Tips for trainers: Use tools such as sticky notes, skills matrices, or online collaboration boards.
Encourage participants to reflect on both technical and interpersonal strengths.

Discuss how diverse skills can be leveraged for stronger team performance.

Activity 3: Introduce techniques for effective collaboration, including communication styles, conflict resolution, and shared decision-making.
Tips for trainers: Provide short frameworks or models (e.g., assertive vs. passive communication, consensus-building methods).Use role-play to practice handling conflicts or making group decisions. Reinforce the idea that strong collaboration requires awareness, respect, and adaptability.

4.13 Success Stories: Entrepreneurial Insights

Inspiration from entrepreneurs who made it can be a powerful and stimulating tool. These three examples provide backstories and tips to encourage new entrepreneurs to start their journey. Use them as representative cases to motivate the participants during the training.
Ralf Wenzel: Founder & CEO of JOKR (2021)
Ralf Wenzel is an entrepreneur with over 20 years of experience building companies. He embraces technology as a practical tool for change and he has used it to create his start-ups, including JOKR.
In his interview he gives practical tips for founders and pushes them to create a positive impact in the world.
Nicola Leggo & Arlette Sarkissians: Co-founders of Now You're Clean (2021)
Nicola and Arlette are two roommates, who saw firsthand the lack of a service in NYC and decided to launch their own startup Now You're Clean. They explain in their interview how important it was for them to watch a community build around their business, as the most rewarding achievement. Amongst their top tips for someone looking to start a business lies the creation of a trustworthy and reliable team.
Miha Jagodic, Ricardo Carvalho & João Lopes: Co-founders of Bloq.it (2019)
Miha, Ricardo, and João are three young entrepreneurs who identified a major infrastructure gap and decided to build Bloq.it, a fast-growing tech scale-up. They were able to expand and create significant partnerships, such as DHL and Vinted, revolutionizing the delivery logistics system.
When interviewed, Miha explained that his most important resources are focus and consistency, as well as the team he chose to surround himself with.
Daniella Pierson: Founder of The Newsette & Wondermind (2014)
Daniella Pierson is a young entrepreneur and media innovator who started The Newsette while still in college, growing it into a $40 million business. She is a strong advocate for curiosity as a driving force in entrepreneurship, believing that asking questions and exploring ideas is key to business success. In interviews, she encourages founders to pursue what fascinates them, highlighting how curiosity fuels innovation, resilience, and positive impact.
Stacey Ferreira: Co-founder of Forge (2013)
Stacey Ferreira is an American entrepreneur who co-founded Forge, a platform aimed at helping students and young professionals develop careers in tech. Known for her adaptability and openness to change, she emphasizes the importance of staying nimble in business. In conversations with aspiring founders, she offers practical advice on embracing challenges, learning quickly, and using curiosity to drive innovation and growth.

4.14 Video Inspiration: Learn from Leading Voices

These short powerful talks offer practical advice and mindset shifts for aspiring entrepreneurs. Use them as reflection prompts or discussion starters in your training sessions.
6 Tips on Being a Successful Entrepreneur I John Mullins
Entrepreneurship professor John Mullins shares six counter-conventional mindsets that successful founders often embrace.
Key takeaways: say yes to new challenges; solve real-life problems; start with a niche market and grow from there; get paid upfront; use existing resources before investing in new ones; act boldly even when rules are unclear.
4 simple ways to have a great idea I Richard St. John
Richard St. John reveals how great ideas often come from humble, everyday actions. **Key takeaways**: listen actively; look around; ask questions; write things down.

4.15 Conclusion

Across the stories and activities in this module, a few patterns stand out: great ideas often begin with personal experience or identification of a gap, and strong execution depends on surrounding yourself with the right people. All founders emphasized the value of building trustworthy teams, staying focused under pressure, and solving problems with clarity and purpose. Whether aiming to create large-scale impact or building a sense of community at a smaller scale, successful entrepreneurs act with intention and adapt as they go.

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