

360 min (4 sessions, 90 min each)

Personal development activities improve awareness and identity, develop and further discover the personal talents and potential, enforce the personal skills and strengths and facilitate employability. Furthermore, they can enhance the quality of life and contribute to the realisation of dreams and future perspectives. Especially young people who are trying to find their way from school to university or work are in their most important phase of self-discovery and in the peak of their personal development. In this special phase of life, we can support and empower them by understanding their strengths, weaknesses and aspirations that are important to know in taking decisions for long term goals.

Personal development is based on three stages: the first stage is designed to analyse the strengths and weaknesses; the second stage is about setting goals and the third stage aims at finding out personal objectives.

In this chapter, we give examples of how to facilitate the journey of personal development based on these three stages.

## Activity 1

### MATERIAL

- Paper
- Pens

### Optional: background music

Introducing the topic

90 min

It can either be done in a big group or small groups. The individuals are asked to work a lot on their own as the focus lies on the self-discovery and reflecting on oneself.

1. Your pathway:

20 min

Drawing your past in form of a path with various symbols and elements (visualizing milestones of life).

Guiding questions:

- How was your childhood, how did you grow up?
- Which milestones/changes in life do you discover?
- Which changes led you to somewhere else?
- What was actually planned to be realised and what did not turn out to be true?

This activity allows the participants to reflect on their own background, on what they have already done, on the milestones that shaped their personality and on how the future could be like for them personally.

15 min

The participants present the picture to each other in a small group of five. They discuss the following questions:

- How was this activity for you?
- Was it difficult to find out the milestones?
- Did you have any feelings or emotions and when?
- What are you proud of, and what do you find like your biggest mistakes, failures that strongly affected your potential for development.

10 min

- Afterwards, the facilitator explains the importance of knowing where you come from, your background and personal experience referring to Pierre Bourdieu and the Habitus.
- **2. Reflecting personal strengths and competences**
- 25 min
- The participants are asked to write ten competences they feel they are the best in.
- Guiding questions:
  - What can I do well?
  - What are my strengths?
  - What experiences have I done so far with what I can?
  - What has been good to me so far?
  - What do others appreciate about me?
  - In which situations did I realise that I could not reach my goal

Tips/Characteristics:

- Contactability
- Organisational skills
- Adaptability
- Planning skills
- Team skills
- Analytical thinking
- Criticism
- Creativity
- Open-mindedness spontaneity
- Learning flexibility
- Carefulness and thoroughness
- Reliability
- Risk-taking
- Self-initiative
- Resilience and perseverance
- Self-discipline and punctuality
- Self-confidence
- Determination of assertiveness and perseverance

The second step is to order the competences from 1 to 10, from the most to the least important. The third step is reflection on the top three competences. At the end, participants are asked to use these three competences in the next activities. They write them down forming a sentence starting with "I am...." (each on a sheet of paper).

Tips: Take pictures of the person and paper "I am good at..."

The pictures can be put on the wall for the rest of the week.

### **3. How can you use your competences?**

15 min

In this round, the participants are asked to build an inner and outer circle (“onion structure”) standing in front of each other. In several rounds, the participants will start a conversation with another person depending on a given question.

It helps them to learn how to articulate their own strengths, to continue the process of self-discovery and to talk about it more naturally.

Questions for the rounds, 2-3 min talking each:

1. What is your top 1 competence?
2. What kind of personal weakness(es) do you recognize?
3. How do you want to use your competence(s) gained before?
4. What would be your dream to do in the future, what kind of activities would you like to live for or do?

5 min

Wrapping up and summarizing the lessons learned in this workshop.

## **Activity 2**

*Discovering the own values, vision and target*

90 min

### **Introduction**

5 min

Thinking of your personal development as well as developing an activity or idea, you need to think of your

1. Values
2. Motivation
3. Vision and Target

It’s a lifelong learning process as it keeps on developing. The more you know these three points and the more you reflect them, the higher the chance to reach your goals. You always need to reflect your values, motivation and vision and to re-think what you do to be satisfied with what you do.

### **1. Values**

30 min

Our values directly influence our actions. It is hard to carry out an activity permanently that is incompatible with one's own values.

Of course, not everything in life is 100% suitable. It is important to be aware of your values and your own actions and to actively bring into line your values and actions. Compromises are good if they are deliberately taken.

Example: If one of your values is family-oriented, that's a very strong value. If your activity or green business idea is related to traveling a lot then conflicts are preprogrammed. When the conflict is clear, solutions can be found. Of course, that means an honest review of the concept.

#### Template 1: Sun of Values

*Please enter all values that are important to you personally and in your professional life into the sun rays. Ask yourself in a quiet moment about these values.*

*If you named your main values in the rays of sun, please choose the 5 ones that are important to you and somehow linked to the activity/ idea you have in mind. The question you may ask yourself is: Which of these values are particularly important to you in the performance of your planned activity?*

For example: 1 is the most important to 5 important but the other 4 even more (in the bracket you find some explanations).

Example of such a hierarchy:

##### 1. Family orientation

(a "super value" for you that needs to be considered regardless of the activity or business planned)

##### 2. Freedom to discover new things

(for example a value you discovered that motivated you to think about starting your planned activity or your own business)

##### 3. Friendship

(A value that you can easily incorporate into your business idea, since you want to realise it with friends)

##### 4. Having no stress in the morning

(You know that you really want to start slowly in the morning)

##### 5. Reliability

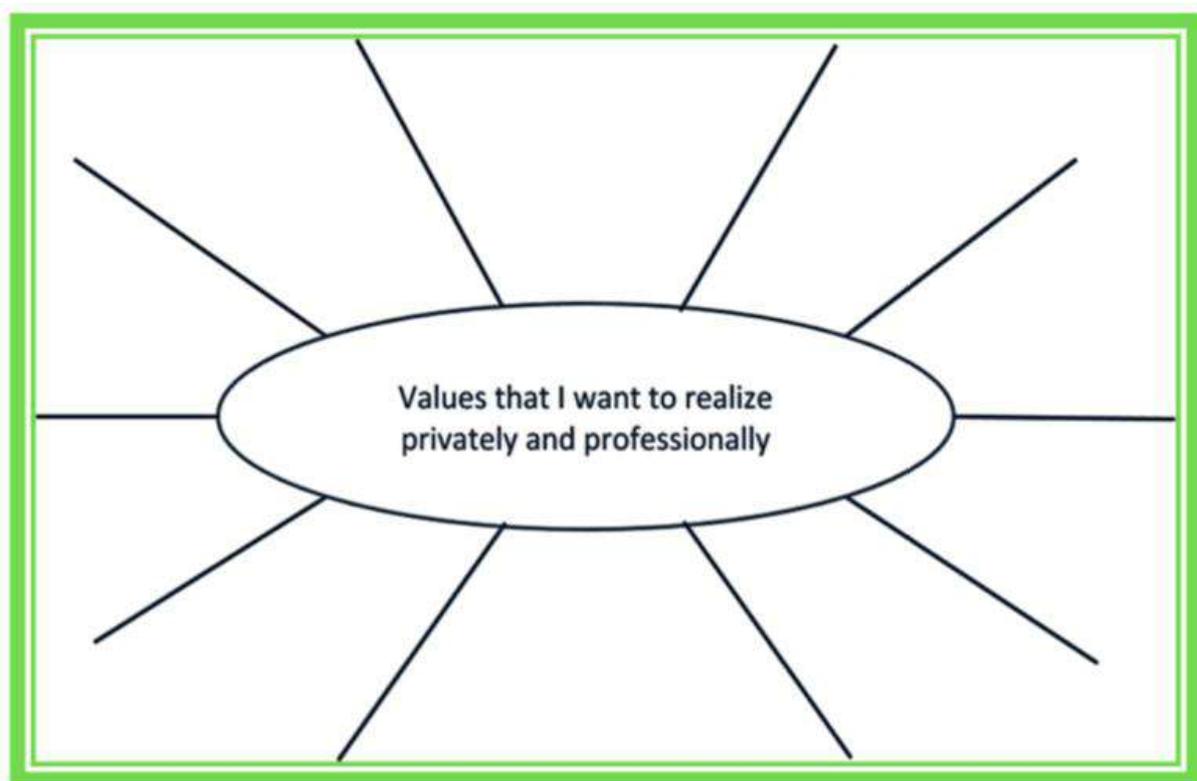
(An important value that you still want to work on. You also want others to live it)

#### Template 2: Values fulfilment

*In the columns above you entered your 5 values in the order of the hierarchy. In the lines you have the percentages from 1 to 100. Assign each value a percentage of fulfilment in your professional context. The line that emerges points out where there is great agreement and thus energy and where there is less agreement and thus conflicts can arise. Now you can work on improving the percentage of fulfilment.*

*You can find the number of the percentage of fulfilment via your somatic marker. Your somatic marker is the first impression that arises when you ask yourself a question. For example, if you ask yourself how much the value of family orientation is viable for you in a professional context, an immediate inner response comes to mind. Immediately a feeling arises that you can measure and assign to a percentage between 1 and 100. You can trust in this inner intuition!*

So this exercise brings to light, that we are always in an inner check of the reality around us and the values we follow on the long term. We check if we are in an inner congruence with the activities we do and experiences we have and the expectations we have on our behaviour and action. Only if you come to the point, that most of the times you find an overlapping of your expectations to what you do and experience in real life, in this case your business has the chance to grow. Being in congruence with your inner values is a crucial point.



## **2. Vision, Motivation and Targets**

20 min

If you plan something concrete for the future you should know exactly what vision, motivation and goals you are pursuing. Only if you know where you want to go and why, you have the

chance to arrive on the desired place. Sounds easy? It is! But only if you are aware of the questions and ask yourself over and over again. The power of motivation is a crucial factor for success. The motivation to come closer to a vision and achieve concrete goals can be the decisive driver for successful entrepreneurship.

To come closer to concrete steps please write down and answer the following questions:

1. What do I want to move?
2. Why would I like to move it?
3. What is my vision that I derive from it?
4. What is the next concrete goal that I want to achieve?

10 min

Once you answered these questions please work out your Vision. *Find a symbol of your vision and draw it on a sheet of paper.*

Questions for personal reflection:

*What is my life concept so far, what is my life vision? What will be in ten years?*

*What kind of work do I like to do?*

*Where will I live in the future?*

*Will I have children? If yes, how many?*

*What experiences will I have had with myself so far with the implementation of my life vision or with the concept that I follow?*

*The participants are invited to develop their personal strategies that they want to implement for their future and find a symbol that could represent it.*

10min

Once we have the Vision, we come to our next step: What is your Motivation? What moves you?

**Task:** Ask them to look at their painted pathways (first exercise) and reflect on what moved them in their past, which milestones did they like and/or dislike. What is inspiring them in life generally? They have to think about the hobbies, things that make them happy. Did they ever have a feeling of fulfilment? Tell them to capture these moments and try to define what their motivation is.

15 min

## DISCUSSION TOGETHER

Many times, we need to be grounded and outcome oriented and that's why we need targets that are tangible and measurable. In this way of thinking, after the past workshop, ask the participants if they can clearly name their *target*?

You can ask how they felt like when doing the exercises, if they found new aspects or discovered themselves in a new way.

## Activity 3

"Empowerment parkour stations"/ 3 stations with small groups 90 min

The group will be split up in 4 smaller groups that will rotate from station to station. One group will spend 25 minutes at one station and then rotate to the next station (circular rotation system according to the facilitator's instructions). Between the stations, there is a 5-minute break.

Thus, each group will have covered the same contents by the end of the workshop just in a different sequence.

### 1- Your own Action Plan

The goal of this station is to give space to discuss the personal goals and milestones.

Distributing the action plan (Template 4): Short introduction:

"If you are interested in creating change with an initiative or start-up, it is so important to build your project on a strong fundament regarding the highlights we went through:

- Passion
- Inspiration
- Strong and fast decisions
- Clear *Values* and congruence with the on-going process
- A clear and strong ***Vision, Motivation*** and ***Target***.

This action plan enables you to reflect upon setting your targets. This involves setting new, concrete and measurable goals for yourself (remember the "SMART"rule). The action plan template provides clear guidance on identifying these. "

Afterwards, the participants have time to fill out the plan and try to find difficult and/or interesting points they want to share with the others.

### Guiding questions:

How was it filling out the plan? (easy/difficult/...)

When did you find it clear to yourself what to write and when did you feel more puzzled?

How do you perceive your future plan in general? Anything else you want to discuss/share with the group? **Timing:**

Introducing the Action Plan: 5 minutes

Reading and filling out the plan: 7 minutes

Discussion in group: 13 minutes

## 2 - Outdoor education

The goal of this station is to find out if you trust in yourself and in your fellows, to stimulate and test trusting abilities towards the group and finally to encourage the proximity between the members of the group.

### 1. Run as Fast as You Can:

Creating two rows of people facing each other and putting their hands up when the running person is getting closer. How fast you will run is a question of how closely connected you are with your team.

### 2. Trust Fall:

One person at a time stands on a higher platform with their back turned to the group, who are standing below, thereby representing full trust on others and willingness to take full part in the program. The others are creating a corridor facing each other and locking arms. The participants are arranged in couples, standing very close side by side creating a safety net for the person on the platform. When the person standing on the platform is ready he or she asks the group "Are you ready?". When the group replies "Yes" it means that they are ready to catch that person in their arms. At this point the one on the platform throws oneself backwards in the arms of the others maintaining a straight posture. Note: It's important that the person who falls, as well as the people catching him, take off glasses, watches, rings etc. that can hurt others when falling. It's also important that the person falling should stay as straight as possible when falling and cross his/her arms over their shoulders. If you doubt in the physical strength of any participant, please make sure that he/she is not taking part in the activity or he/she is the participant falling from the platform, as otherwise it may lead to a mishap. A safety check is very important for this activity!

Materials: Some kind of platform (not too high, around 1,5 - 2 m), Enough people to catch whoever falls (min 8 people).

Reflection: Possible questions for the reflection are "How did you feel falling in the arms of people you don't really know?"; "How can you apply it to your life?"; "What was difficult?"; "What did you learn?".

### 3. Floating (magic) stick

The group splits into two teams which have to make balance between each other using a bamboo/paper/metal (should be light material) stick using the index fingers. The team has to lift the stick up and down in between the team and keep it stable in the air for (let's say) 10 sec. Then, the team is asked to lay the stick down on the floor at the same time from end to end. The goal is to have a group with good communication, coordination and common goal. The facilitator of the team could intervene in the exercise and give tips to the team or just observe. There is a short discussion about the team tension and what was the biggest struggle in the task. After the discussion, the team is asked to repeat the exercise again and try to avoid the initial mistakes.

## Timing:

Preparation: 5 min. Method duration: 8 min. Group discussion: 7 min. Second experiment: 5 min.

## Activity 4

*Leaving the comfort zone*

90 min

*Choose one of the following two options for this workshop:*

**Option 1:** 70 min

**From personal to professional development** 15 min

Break the group into teams of two (have them pick a partner that they know the least about). Let them think about what kind of job they would like to have in the future and ask them to imagine an interview situation for this job.

10 min

Introduce the most important principles in an interview. Collect the ideas by the group and brainstorm together.

Principle 1: Practice

Principle 2: Confidence

Principle 3: Sleep

Principle 4: Information

Principle 5: Attire

Principle 6: Friendliness

20 min

Have them interview each other for about 10 minutes each. They need to get to know what each other likes about their job, past jobs, family life, hobbies, favourite sport, etc.

25 min

After the interviews, reassemble the teams and have each team member introduce their partner to the entire group.

**Option 2:** 70 min

### **Leaving the comfort zone as a self-improvement strategy**

*This activity is only for groups that show a good group dynamic and strong trust in each other.*

10 min Instruction:

The comfort zone is the behavioural space where you feel most relaxed. It is represented by your habits, routines, patterns that you follow in your everyday life. It is a safe space that provides a state of mental security, reduces stress and gives you a good feeling. That is why it is so difficult to get out of this zone. Once you step out, you are sometimes lost and you don't know what to expect next. It is not bad to stay in the comfort zone but the more you leave it, the more you learn – about yourself and about others. It can stimulate a strong self-improvement and lead you to new discoveries and dimensions.

In order to leave your comfort zone, you need to be brave enough to face what frightens you. It's a challenge and often requires a lot of efforts. The more you gain, the easier it becomes. So, you basically need to dare facing your unknown side.

First, you need to **analyse** who you are, what has shaped your live and which habits don't benefit you and which ones do.

Then, it is important to be in touch with other people to understand the proximity and the differences between your self-perception and the perception that others have towards you.

There is no better method to understand this than **giving feedback**. It is one of the most difficult things in life that challenge us and pull us out of our comfort zone. It also gives us a better perspective on life events as it redounds to more critical thinking.

60 min

#### **Activity:**

In this activity, the group is asked to give feedback to each other according to the following rules. The guiding question is:

“What kind of picture do you have of me? How do you perceive me?”

The group is set in a circle and gets prepared. It is a sensitive procedure that requires the trust and respect between the participants.

#### **Rules:**

1. We give feedback only if the person wants to receive it;
2. Each person can decide if and how she/he receives the feedback (e.g. by 1 or more persons);

3. There is no wrong and right;
4. Each one sticks to what she/he really means.

Tips of formulating:

- a. I perceived it in this way...
- b. I felt that...c. I saw that...

Depending on the group size, one person can receive a few feedbacks. Afterwards, the person shares which perceptions she/he can agree with and which feedbacks were rather new to him/her.

### **Calm down**

20 min

After working intensively on your own personality, there is a strong need to calm down or “come back to reality”. To get the full benefit of the new insights, some “introspection time” might be needed.

Invite the participants to lie on the floor or get in a comfortable position. Fulfilling this requirement, you can ask them to reflect on what they have just learned. After a few minutes, say a keyword or short phrase and have them reflect on it for a couple of minutes. Repeat it one or two more times, then split into small groups and have them share what they believe are the most important points of their personal development and how they can use it in their future in the best way.

Guiding questions:

What is moving you right now? What is “working” in your head?