

**AFLATOUN**

Social & Financial Education

ages  
**16-24+**

# Afla **YOUTH**

## manual



**Social and  
financial skills**

# Lesson 6.1 Learning to make decisions



## Lesson outcomes

By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Identify decision-making skills
- Recognise and handle external and internal expectations in decision-making
- Describe structured decision-making processes using different decision-making models



## Strategies

- **Start:** Brainstorming circle
- **Learn:** External and internal influences on decision-making and application of decision-making models
- **Reflect:** Personal reflection



## Materials

- Flipchart, markers, and pens
- Sticky notes
- Handout 6.1.1: Decision-making models
- Handout 6.1.2: Case studies



## Duration

90 minutes



## Key words

- Decision-making models
- External and internal influences on decision-making
- Decision-making skills



## Information for the facilitator

Decision-making is a fundamental activity in both personal and professional contexts and is essential for effective problem-solving and planning, but it requires practice and learning. This lesson encourages learners to trust their decision-making ability, fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership, and helps them understand the importance of aligning decisions with personal values and ethical considerations, promoting integrity and reasoning.

## Start |15 minutes|

### Brainstorming circle

1. Ask participants to sit in a big circle, then explain that each learner must share one example of decisions they make in their daily lives in a clockwise order (for example, deciding which route to take to reach the programme's venue). Mention that during this exercise, they can't repeat their responses; if a participant has already shared their idea, they will need to think of another example.
2. Conclude this exercise until every learner has participated and reinforce that decision-making is integral to daily life. We always make decisions from when we wake up to when we go to sleep. Some decisions are easy to make, but others can be more complex, considering the elements at stake. Therefore, share that the next activity seeks to identify strategies to lead them to more thoughtful and effective choices.

## Learn |55 minutes|

### External and internal influences on decision-making (35 minutes)

1. Start by sharing that decision-making comprehends the process of choosing a specific action from different options. It involves analysing a problem, opportunity, or situation, collecting relevant information, evaluating possible solutions or options, and selecting the one based on set criteria or preferences to reach thoughtful and effective decisions.
2. Ask learners what they understand by an effective decision, and then highlight that an effective decision is made through a thoughtful, systematic process, leading to a desired outcome. It considers all relevant information, ensuring that they are well informed and prepared, considers the potential impacts, aligns with the decision-maker's values and goals and is executed promptly.
3. Distribute a sticky note to each learner and ask them to register three skills involved in decision-making. Give them five minutes to reflect and register them.
4. After five minutes, ask learners to share the skills they wrote and register them on a flipchart, without repeating them. Encourage them to explain why that skill is important in a decision-making process.
5. Make sure the following skills are addressed:
  - Critical and analytical thinking
  - Problem-solving
  - Research
  - Evaluation
  - Prioritisation
  - Communication
  - Flexibility
  - Risk assessment
  - Time management
  - Negotiation
  - Reflection
6. Invite learners to work in pairs and ask them to fill out the following table. Give them ten minutes to do so. If needed, clarify that by external influences, we refer to all of the factors outside of the individual that impact their choices, for example, family, friends, political situation, etc. Internal

influence refers to all the factors within the individual that affect their choices, such as personal beliefs, emotions, personality traits, etc.

External influences on decision-making, specifying their impact	Internal influences on decision-making, specifying their impact

7. After ten minutes, bring participants back to the group and ask them to work in groups of four (it is recommended to stay with their partner and gather with another pair) and discuss the following questions. Give them ten minutes to do so.
  - Are these factors positive or negative? How can you classify an external or internal influence as positive or negative?
  - What strategies can be applied to handle and balance external influences in decision-making effectively?
  - What strategies can be applied to handle and balance internal influences in decision-making effectively?
8. After ten minutes, bring participants back to the group and ask a representative of each team to share their conclusions. Then, highlight that both external and internal influences can positively or negatively affect decision-making. For example, responsible friends seeking a healthy lifestyle can encourage an individual to study hard and exercise regularly. On the other hand, low self-esteem can cloud judgment and lead an individual to quit a job the first time they receive feedback from their manager. Therefore, it is important to apply strategies such as the following to manage and balance the impact of these influences.
  - Analysis of different perspectives
  - Staying informed
  - Setting boundaries
  - Reflecting on one's values
  - Developing emotional intelligence (the ability to recognise, understand, manage and influence one's own emotions and the emotions of others)
  - Overcoming deviation from rationality in judgement and decision-making
  - Trusting oneself

**Application of decision-making models (20 minutes)**

1. Explain that next, they will explore different models to help them make more effective decisions.
2. Encourage learners to work in teams of four. Then, allocate a decision-making model (since we only have three, these can be repeated among groups) and a case study to each team (Handout 6.1.1: Decision-making models and Handout 6.1.2: Case studies).
3. Explain that each group must go through the case study and apply the model based on the shared information, adding additional details if needed to the case.
4. After fifteen minutes, bring participants back to the group and ask a representative of each team to explain the model and how it has been applied to the given scenario (since some models can be repeated among the teams if they have already been described, encourage learners to share the name of the model).
5. After each team presents, open a discussion around the following questions:
  - Is taking decisions easy? Why?

- How can these models help us make more effective and thoughtful decisions?
  - Are there good or bad decisions? How can you differentiate between them?
6. Finalise by sharing that making decisions is not always easy, as it involves evaluating different elements, considering potential outcomes, and, in most cases, dealing with uncertainty and conflicting priorities. Decisions are rarely good or bad; instead, they are complex and can have a range of positive and negative consequences. Therefore, tools like the ones presented today can help individuals make more informed and balanced decisions aligning with their goals and values.

#### **Adaptation**

If participants have a low literacy level, you can read each group's case study and add icons or simple drawings to each decision-making model to ensure its understanding. It is also recommended to group participants with a low literacy level with learners with a high literacy level to promote peer-to-peer support.

## **Reflect [15 minutes]**

### **Personal reflection**

1. This lesson explores the skills involved in decision-making, the influence of external and internal factors on decisions, and the various models that can assist in the decision-making process. Invite learners to analyse how they usually make decisions by answering the following questions individually and encourage them to register one or two strategies they could apply to their personal or professional lives to improve their decision-making process.
  - What steps do you usually take when making a decision?
  - Do you analyse different options before making a decision, or do you usually go with the first option or idea that came to your mind?
  - Who or what influences your decisions the most (for example, friends, family, social media etc.)?
  - Do you frequently seek advice from others before making decisions? If this is the case, from whom?
  - How do your emotions impact your decisions?
  - Do you tend to reflect on the consequences of your decisions once you have made them?
2. After five minutes, bring participants back to the group and invite a few volunteers to share their conclusions.

#### **Adaptation**

If participants have a low literacy level, dictate the questions and encourage them to discuss them in pairs.

# Financial skills

Afla Youth  
Sample



# 1 Personal financial management

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## Overall outcome

Participants will develop a comprehensive understanding of personal finance management. They will be able to assess their financial status, generate and manage income, categorise and control expenses, create and adjust budgets, understand and apply saving, lending, borrowing, investing, and insurance concepts, and effectively plan for financial stability and growth. They will be equipped with practical skills and knowledge to make informed financial decisions and achieve their financial goals.

# Lesson 1.1 Mapping my financial standing



## Lesson Outcomes

By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Map their current financial status
- Set personal financial goals
- Sketch an action plan to achieve personal financial goals



## Strategies

- **Start:** Drawing/metaphor
- **Learn:** Analysis worksheet
- **Reflect:** Golden circle rule and planning worksheet



## Materials

- Large sheets of paper and markers (various colours)
- Small size sticky notes
- Handout 1.1.1: Personal financial analysis worksheet (one copy for each participant)
- Handout 1.1.2: Personal financial planning worksheet (one copy for each participant)



## Duration

90 minutes



## Key words

- Consumption
- Consumers
- Resources
- Sources
- Household
- Financial health



## Information for the facilitator

Understanding and mapping one's financial standing is a crucial first step for youth in managing their finances effectively. By comprehensively mapping their financial

status, participants understand how resources flow in and out of their lives—who contributes to these resources and how they are consumed. This exercise is not just about personal insight; it also allows participants to see how they can contribute to their family's resources and, on a broader scale, to the economy.

This initial mapping serves as the foundation for setting meaningful financial goals. Once participants clearly understand their current financial situation, they can move forward to set achievable goals that align with their personal and family needs. The activities in this lesson are designed to guide participants through this process step by step. By mapping their financial situation, they are better equipped to draft a set of specific, realistic financial goals using the provided planning worksheet.

To further strengthen their determination and clarity in goal-setting, the lesson introduces the Golden Circle Rule. This powerful tool connects their “What” (the goals they want to achieve) to their “Why” (the core motivations driving these goals) and outlines the “How” (the actions and resources needed to achieve them). This activity ties together the entire lesson and provides participants with a deep understanding of the motivations and aspirations behind their financial goals; by linking their goals to a strong “Why,” participants are more likely to stay committed to their plans and make meaningful progress towards achieving them. The Golden Circle activity ultimately empowers participants to take control of their financial futures with purpose and clarity.

## Start [30 minutes]

### How does my house look?

#### Part I

1. Start by briefly explaining why it's important to understand where our resources come from and how they are used—at personal, family, community, and country levels.
2. Briefly explain the terms:
 

**Income** is the money you receive or earn, such as from a job, business, gifts, or investments. It adds to your financial resources.

**Expense** is the money you spend, such as on food, transport, rent, or school supplies. It reduces your financial resources.

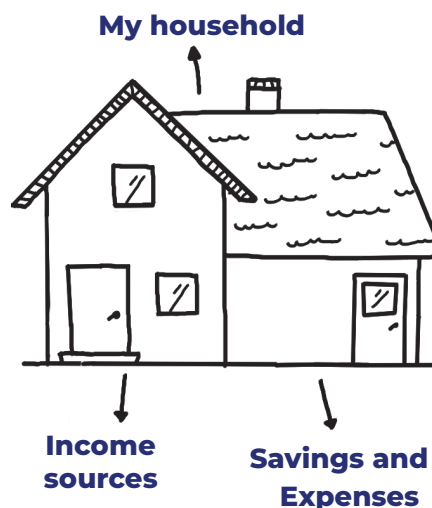
In simple terms:

**Income = money in**

**Expense = money out**
3. Give each participant a large sheet of paper, markers, and sticky notes. Explain that they will draw a big “House” to show their household's flow and use of resources.
4. Guide participants step by step:
 

**Step 1:**

  - Draw a house with a main door, a side door, and a shelf or cupboard inside.



**Step 2:**

- Explain that the house represents their household. The main door represents income sources, the side door shows expenses, and the shelf or cupboard represents savings.

**Step 3:**

- Write down all sources of household income (e.g., salaries, business income, government aid, homegrown crops) on sticky notes. Place these near the main door with an arrow pointing inward.
- To show who contributes the most to these income sources, draw characters at the main door. Taller characters represent more significant contributions.

**Step 4:**

- Write down how resources are used (e.g., rent, groceries, utilities) on sticky notes. Place these near the side door with an arrow pointing outward.
- Draw characters at the side door to show who consumes these resources.

**Step 5:**

- Write down any savings or unspent resources and place these around the shelf.
  - If some savings or investments grow over time, represent these by drawing plants near the main door.
5. Ask participants to pair up and share their drawings.
  6. Encourage them to discuss:
    - The balance between income and expenses.
    - Whether the main door figures (contributors) are strong enough to support the side door figures (expenses).

**Note**

Regularly check on each participant to ensure they follow the step-by-step instructions. Only move to the next step once everyone is ready. If the sticky notes take up too much space, participants can use a pen to note down resource consumption and other details. If any participant feels uncomfortable sharing, respect their choice and do not insist.

**Part II:  
(Optional)**

1. Wrap-up pair discussions: After a two-minute discussion, ask participants to return to their desks.
2. Draw four windows: Instruct participants to draw four windows on their house, each with a different coloured marker. Then, use sticky notes or a pen to add details to each window:
  - **Red window (challenges):** Areas of financial stress, like high debt or not enough income.
  - **Green window (strengths):** Stable areas like steady income or savings.
  - **Orange window (threats):** Potential risks, like an upcoming rent increase or a breadwinner nearing retirement.
  - **Blue window (opportunities):** Chances for improvement, like a family member starting a new job, selling homemade goods, or finding online work.
3. Encourage participants to think carefully about what each window represents and how it affects their household's financial health.
4. Have participants rejoin their previous partner to discuss the windows they identified and brainstorm ways to address the "red" windows (challenges) and make the most of the "blue" windows (opportunities).

- Bring everyone back together for a final discussion. Invite a few volunteers to share key insights or thoughts from their pair discussions.

## Learn [30 minutes]

### My financial situation

- Participants are to return to their drawing stations and open up their drawings.
- Instruct participants to zoom in on the character that represents them in their drawing. Encourage them to think about their financial situation regarding how much they contribute, consume, and their savings.
- Hand out worksheet 1.1.1: Personal financial analysis worksheet. Refer participants to Box 1.1 in the worksheet and ask them to fill it out, reflecting on their financial status.
- Once they have completed the worksheet, have participants pair up and exchange their filled-out sheets. Ask each pair to focus on:
  - The balance between their consumption, contribution, and savings
  - Any important issues that came up during their financial analysis
- Bring everyone together in a circle to recap the key insights from the activity. Emphasise the importance of understanding financial health in achieving personal and career goals.
- Briefly explain that financial health refers to the state of your personal finances—how well you manage your money to meet current needs, handle emergencies, and plan for the future. In short, financial health means having control, security, and confidence in your money matters.

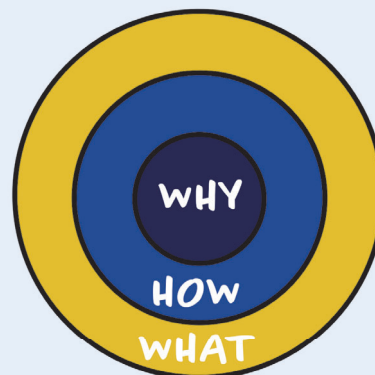
#### Note

If any participant feels uncomfortable sharing their financial details, please respect their privacy and refrain from insisting.

## Reflect [30 minutes]

### Financial Goals and journey through the circles of Golden Circle Rule

- Give each participant a sheet of chart paper and markers.
- Explain that participants will set their personal financial goals using the Golden Circle concept created by Simon Sinek. This method involves three circles.
- Ask participants to draw three concentric circles on their paper. Label the outer circle as “What,” the middle circle as “How,” and the innermost circle as “Why.”
- Have participants consider their future financial goals, such as saving for something specific, investing, advancing in their career, or buying a major item (e.g.,



- “I want to study abroad next year”). They should write these goals in the outermost circle, the “What” circle. Encourage them to be specific and realistic.
5. Next, ask participants to reflect on why these goals are important to them. What is their core motivation or purpose for achieving these goals? (e.g., to gain independence, fulfil a dream, or advance their career). They should write these motivations in the innermost “Why” circle, thinking deeply about their values and long-term aspirations.
  6. Instruct participants to think of what actions they need to take and what resources they will need to achieve their goals (e.g., creating a savings plan or finding a part-time job). They should write these actions and resources in the middle “How” circle.
  7. Once the Golden Circles are complete, have participants form pairs or small groups to share their circles. Encourage them to discuss:
    - **The goals they've set** (What)
    - **Their motivations** (Why)
    - **The actions and resources needed** (How)
  8. Provide each participant with the Handout 1.1.2: Personal financial planning worksheet”. Ask them to complete the worksheet, reflecting on their financial goals and the Golden Circle activity.
  9. After completing the worksheet, ask participants to form pairs or small groups to discuss their action plans.
  10. Facilitate a brief group discussion, encouraging participants to share any insights or strategies they discovered during the exercise.

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**Employability skills**



# Preparing for the future workplace

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## Overall outcome

This module will help participants prepare for the future workplace by identifying their rights and responsibilities as employees, using strategies to enhance productivity and manage challenges effectively, and recognising the importance of networking and an innovative mindset in driving their personal and professional success.

# Lesson 4.3 Networking and innovative thinking



## Lesson outcomes

By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

1. Recognise the importance of networking in the job search and professional development process
2. Define the importance of innovative thinking in driving personal and organisational success
3. Demonstrate skills for building professional relationships and fostering an innovative mindset



## Strategies

- **Start:** Cubing
- **Learn:** Developing a fictional character and career coaching
- **Reflect:** Final reflections



## Materials

- Pen, pencil, and markers
- Dice or small pieces of paper with numbers 1 to 6 written down
- Flipchart
- Plastic or paper ball



## Duration

90 minutes



## Key words

- Networking
- Innovative thinking



## Information for the facilitator

To facilitate the lesson, it is important to understand the following concepts:

**Networking** is the process of building and maintaining relationships with individuals, often within a professional context, to exchange information, advice, and opportunities.

It means developing connections with others who share similar interests, careers, or industries and can occur in formal settings such as conferences or informal settings like social gatherings.

**Innovative thinking** refers to the ability to think creatively and differently to generate new ideas, approaches, and solutions. It involves challenging conventional thinking, exploring possibilities beyond traditional boundaries, and applying fresh perspectives to solve problems or create value.

## Start [20 minutes]

### Cubing

1. Start by sharing that in the last lesson, they identified the possible challenges they can experience in the future workplace and the different strategies that can be implemented to manage them successfully.
2. Mention that today, they will explore two key components essential for success in the future workplace. Before you reveal them, encourage them to guess which components these might be.
3. If they don't guess, share these key elements: innovative thinking and networking.
4. Next, present the following lines of analysis and explain that, as done in one of the initial lessons, they will conduct the cubing exercise.

#### Cubing

- **Describe it:** Look at the subject closely or focus on it in your imagination and describe what you see, including colours, shapes, or sizes.
- **Compare it:** What is it similar to? What is it different from?
- **Associate it:** What does it make you think of? What comes into your mind? It can be similar things or different things, places, or people. Just let your mind go and see your associations with this subject.
- **Apply it:** How can it be used?
- **Analyse it:** Explain how it is made or which elements conform. You don't have to know - you can make it up.
- **Argue for or against it:** Go ahead and take a stand. Use any reason you want - logical, silly, or anywhere in between.



5. If needed, a group of six learners can be assembled to do a demonstration. Give them the subject "cars." The first participant rolls the dice (if you don't have a dice, provide each group with small pieces of paper with numbers 1 to 6 written down. Ask the participants to put the paper head down). They then answer depending on the prompt written on the side of the cube facing upwards.
6. Next, divide the learners into groups of six, give each a cube, and have them play the cube game for networking first and then for innovative thinking. Give them ten minutes for both terms.
7. Then, bring participants back to the group and encourage volunteers to share their answers for each of the six lines of analysis.
8. Finally, share the following definitions and clarify they will be able to dive into these concepts throughout this lesson and identify skills for building professional relationships and fostering an innovative mindset.
  - **Networking** is the process of building and maintaining relationships with individuals, often within a professional context, to exchange information, advice, and opportunities. It refers to connections with others who share similar interests, careers, or industries and can occur in formal settings such as conferences or informal settings like social gatherings.
  - **Innovative thinking** refers to the ability to think creatively and differently to generate new ideas, approaches, and solutions. It involves challenging conventional thinking, exploring possibilities beyond traditional boundaries, and applying fresh perspectives to solve problems or create value.

## Learn |50 minutes|

### Developing a fictional character (30 minutes)

1. Next, ask learners to work in teams of three, give each group a flipchart and some markers, and allocate one of the following tasks to each group. Give them ten minutes to discuss and create their assigned character. Clarify that they should trace the silhouette of this fictional character and register the required points.
  - An employee with strong networking skills. Define his name, age, education, behaviour and attitude, skills and weaknesses, and the impact his networking skills have on himself, his team, and the organisation or company he works for.
  - An employee with strong innovative thinking. Define her name, age, education, behaviour and attitude, skills and weaknesses, and the impact her innovative thinking has on herself, her team, and the organisation or company she works for.
  - A graduate with weak networking skills who just graduated from university and is seeking to land a job. Define his name, age, education, behaviour and attitude, skills and weaknesses, and the impact his lack of networking skills has on himself, his team, his friends or family, and his possibilities of landing a job.
  - A graduate with a lack of innovative thinking who just graduated from university and is seeking to land a job. Define her name, age, education, behaviour and attitude, skills and weaknesses, and the impact her actions have on herself, her team, her friends or family, and her possibilities of landing a job.



2. After ten minutes, bring participants back to the group and encourage a representative of each team to present their fictional character.
3. Finalise by sharing the following points:
  - Networking and innovative thinking are invaluable assets in an employability journey. Since they both open doors to new opportunities, promote career growth, and stimulate problem-solving.
  - Implementing networking and innovative thinking benefits not only the confidence and personal development of the individual but also the people around them (working team and family members) and the organisations in which they work, leading to overall growth and success.
  - A networked and innovative individual can provide inspiration, support, and fresh ideas to a team, stimulating collaboration and collective success.

#### **Adaptation**

If learners have low literacy skills, grouping them with peers with higher literacy skills is advisable to encourage peer-to-peer support.

#### **Career coaching (20 minutes)**

1. Invite learners to stand up in a wide circle.
2. Explain that you will mention different situations and pass a ball for them to suggest concrete strategies for gaining networking or innovative thinking skills, depending on the needs. Reinforce that these are not questions with fixed answers. They need to brainstorm and consider possible recommendations for each of the following situations. Ask one learner to write the given recommendations on a flipchart.

- A shy employee who wants to improve their networking skills.
- A graduate with limited exposure and experience in the work field who wants to gain networking skills.
- An employee with more than ten years of experience working in the same company who wants to gain an innovative mindset.
- A graduate with a fixed mindset who regularly implements familiar routines and established methods and wants to gain an innovative mindset.
- A graduate living in a remote location who wants to gain networking skills.
- An employee focused on efficiency and productivity rather than exploring new ideas that need an innovative mindset.

3. Ensure everyone has a chance to share at least one or two recommendations.
4. Review the given recommendations with the group and make sure the following points are addressed.

Strategies to develop networking skills	Strategies to develop an innovative mindset
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Build authentic relationships, showing genuine interest in others' experiences and needs.</li> <li>■ Attend events related to your industry, such as conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.</li> <li>■ Use social media such as LinkedIn or Twitter to connect with professionals in your field, engage in discussions, and join relevant groups or online communities.</li> <li>■ Develop a concise and engaging introduction about yourself, highlighting your skills, interests, and goals.</li> <li>■ Be a connector by introducing people in your network who might benefit from knowing each other.</li> <li>■ Seek out mentorship and guidance to build relationships with more experienced professionals to learn new skills, gain insights into your industry, and make connections that can lead to new opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Nurture curiosity by asking questions and seeking to understand the why and how behind things.</li> <li>■ Embrace lifelong learning by seeking new knowledge through courses, books, podcasts, or other resources.</li> <li>■ Engage with people from different backgrounds and fields to acquire different perspectives.</li> <li>■ Try new approaches and experiment even when there is a possibility of failure. Learning from failure is a key part of innovation.</li> <li>■ Challenge existing norms and practices.</li> <li>■ Practice problem-solving through real-world challenges or simple materials such as puzzles.</li> </ul>

## Reflect [20 minutes]

### Final reflections

1. To close the lesson, invite learners to answer the following questions individually on a piece of paper. Give them ten minutes to do so.
  - How confident do you feel in your networking skills?
  - How strong is your innovative mindset?
  - Mention two concrete actions you could implement to gain or reinforce your networking skills.
  - Mention two concrete actions you could implement to strengthen your innovative thinking.
2. Then, bring participants back to the group and ask each learner to share one of their responses to the previous points.

### Adaptation

If learners have a low literacy level, you can ask the questions individually and encourage them to share their answers with a partner.

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**Entrepreneurial  
skills**



# Generation of ideas and validation

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## Overall outcome

By the end of this module, participants will have developed a solid foundation in the key steps of the entrepreneurial journey, including problem identification, idea generation, and understanding market dynamics. They will enhance their entrepreneurial mindset, creativity, and critical thinking skills, gaining the ability to identify and evaluate opportunities, generate viable business ideas, and create customer-centric solutions. Through practical exercises, participants will apply these concepts in collaborative settings, preparing them to tailor their entrepreneurial ventures to meet specific market and customer needs.

# Lesson 2.1 Spotting entrepreneurial opportunities



## Lesson outcomes

By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Recognise everyday challenges as opportunities for entrepreneurship
- Look at problems to see if they can be solved with creative, innovative, and sustainable ideas



## Strategies

- **Start:** Problems are opportunities
- **Learn:** Global and community mapping
- **Reflect:** What can we improve?



## Materials

- Pens, markers of various colours
- Sticky notes
- Note pads and flipcharts
- Handout 2.1.1: Problem description worksheet (one copy for each group)



## Duration

90 minutes



## Key words

- Problem Identification
- Entrepreneurial opportunities
- Opportunity assessment
- Industrial sectors
- Market potential
- Goods vs services
- Products



## Information for the facilitator

For young entrepreneurs, simply launching a product or service isn't enough. Instead, they must observe their surroundings, identify problems or unmet needs, and create innovative solutions to address those challenges. This is the essence of a solution-based approach, where the focus is on solving real problems with targeted solutions that meet genuine demands. Modern entrepreneurship begins with identifying a

problem and offering not just goods or services but innovative solutions that resonate with the market.

This lesson and its activities also help participants understand that not every problem is worth solving from a business perspective. Facilitators should highlight critical factors like market demand, scalability, resource availability, and the competitive landscape. These considerations ensure that the solutions participants develop are viable and impactful.

The purpose of the learn activity is to help participants identify and analyse opportunities within various economic sectors by mapping out potential problems or challenges. The intention is to connect this activity with the subsequent tasks by encouraging participants to think critically about how these sector-specific challenges can be transformed into entrepreneurial opportunities.

## Start [20 minutes]

### Build something that someone needs: Problems are opportunities<sup>1</sup>

1. Ask participants to form pairs.
2. Give each pair two minutes to list common problems they or people around them face—at home, in their village or town, or even in the training room (like broken chairs, poor lighting, rubbish, or no internet). Personal examples are welcome too.
3. After two minutes, ask each pair to join another pair and make a group of four.
4. Share two short stories of real entrepreneurs who turned problems into business ideas:
  - **Greenish (Egypt – MENA region):** Greenish is a social enterprise that teaches young people how to protect the environment through clean-up events, recycling activities, and eco-education. The founder noticed two problems: first, schools weren't teaching enough about caring for the environment; second, plastic waste was everywhere in the streets. She turned this into a business by running fun, hands-on workshops and selling eco-friendly products that help communities learn to live more sustainably.
  - **Wecyclers (Nigeria – Africa):** Wecyclers is a business that collects recyclable waste from homes using bicycles and small vehicles. Families earn small rewards like cash or phone credit for the rubbish they give. The founder saw that many low-income neighbourhoods had no waste collection and were full of rubbish, which caused illness and flooding. He turned this into a business that cleans the streets, improves health, and creates jobs through recycling.

#### Note to facilitators

You can replace the above two examples to share local businesses that are more familiar to your participants.

5. Ask the groups to go back to their list of problems. Now they should choose one problem and discuss for three minutes how it could be turned into a business idea.

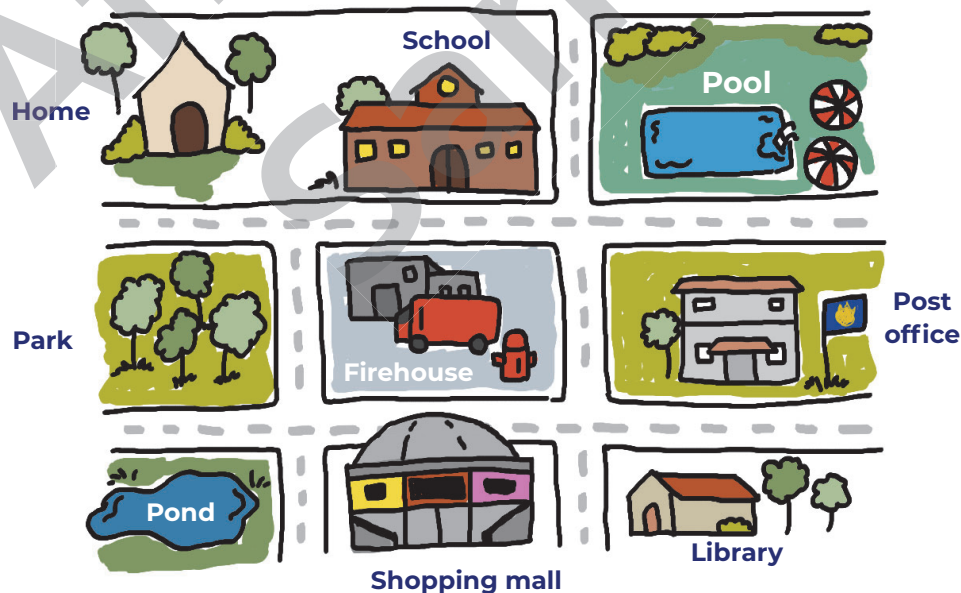
<sup>1</sup> Source: Saying by Paul Graham

6. Invite a few groups to share:
  - Which problem they chose
  - Why they chose it
  - How it could be a business opportunity
7. End the activity by saying that “a core skill of an entrepreneur is the ability to spot problems or unmet needs and turn them into business opportunities.” Entrepreneurs should always be on the lookout for issues and address them with creative ideas, innovative, and sustainable solutions.

## Learn |45 minutes|

### Identifying opportunities through global and community mapping

1. Arrange the training room with stations that represent key economic sectors, such as Technology/IT, Health, Education, Green Economy, and a sector relevant to your local context (e.g., Agriculture, Tourism). Place an empty chart paper (titled for the respective sector name) and a marker at each station.
2. Divide participants into small groups of 5 to 7 members.
3. Instruct each group to rotate between the sector stations, discussing and recording potential problems or challenges in each sector on the chart paper provided. As each new group arrives at a station, they will add their ideas to the list of identified problems on the chart paper.
4. Instruct groups to take their seats at their designated tables or spaces. Make sure each group is settled before proceeding.
5. Provide chart papers, markers, and sticky notes to each group and ask them to create a visual representation of their community.
6. Ask each group to draw a map of their community on a large sheet of paper. They should include key landmarks like schools, parks, businesses, hospitals, and other important locations. Encourage them to discuss and add elements that are significant to the daily life of their community. They can also write the name of their community at the top of the chart paper.



7. Once the map is ready, ask each group to write community problems on sticky notes. One sticky note for each problem. For example: no playgrounds, poor healthcare, no jobs, broken roads, or pollution. They should place the sticky notes on the part of the map where the problem happens.

8. Next, ask groups to sort the problems into themes like health, education, environment, roads, or social issues. They can use different coloured markers or sticky notes to show the different categories.
9. As the activity progresses, guide participants in connecting the findings of the first activity with this one. This approach will help participants see the broader economic landscape and fosters a holistic view of problem-solving.
10. Then, each group will present their map. They will explain the problems they found and how they grouped them. Encourage the group to think deeply about what causes these problems and how they affect the community. Invite other groups to ask questions or add more ideas.
11. Close the activity by repeating the main message: to build strong business ideas, we must first understand what the community needs. Knowing about different sectors—like health, education, or technology—helps entrepreneurs see the gaps and come up with smart, useful ideas. This knowledge can help turn global ideas into local solutions that really work.

## Reflect |25 minutes|

### What can we improve?

1. Have everyone sit in a circle. Begin by discussing how identifying problems that can be turned into entrepreneurial opportunities requires sharp observation and careful evaluation.
2. Briefly introduce the following factors that are crucial when assessing a problem for its potential as a business opportunity:
  - **Market demand:** Is there a real need for a solution to your identified problem, and are people willing to pay for it?
  - **Customer pain points:** How significant is the problem for the target audience? The bigger the pain, the more welcome the solution.
  - **Scalability:** Can the solution grow over time, allowing for increased revenue without a matching increase in costs?
  - **Resource availability:** Do you have the necessary resources—money, people, materials—to solve the problem?
  - **Sustainability:** Is the solution viable in the long term, considering environmental, economic, and social factors?
  - **Competitive advantage:** Does your solution offer something unique in a market that might already be crowded?
  - **Legal and ethical considerations:** Does the solution comply with laws and ethical standards?
  - **Technological feasibility:** Can current technology provide a solution, or is innovation needed?
  - **Economic viability:** Will the solution be profitable after considering costs and potential revenue?
  - **Sociocultural fit:** Does the solution align with the values and practices of the target audience?
  - **Timing:** Is the market ready for your solution, or is it too early or too late?
  - **Risk assessment:** What are the risks involved, and can they be managed?
  - **Expertise and knowledge:** Do you or your team have the skills needed, or will you need to learn or hire talent?
3. Provide a copy of the Handout 2.1.1: Problem description worksheet to each group. Ask them to fill it out based on the problem they have identified, using the factors discussed.
4. Wrap up by emphasising that clearly describing and understanding the identified problem from all angles is the first crucial step in the entrepreneurial journey.

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**Resource toolkit**

## Entrepreneurship track

# 6. Innovation laboratory



### Lesson outcomes

By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

1. Practice different innovation methodologies like design thinking and rapid prototyping
2. Apply these methodologies in a practical workshop to devise solutions to common problems encountered by entrepreneurs
3. Gain insights from innovation experts on turning creative ideas into viable business propositions



### Materials

- Handout 6.1: Design thinking overview (one copy for each group)
- Handout 6.2: Rapid prototyping tools (one copy for each group)
- Sticky notes, markers, large sheets of paper for brainstorming
- Handout 6.3: Innovation canvas template (one for each group)
- Handout 6.4: Feedback survey
- Materials for prototyping: Cardboard, markers, sticky notes, scissors, glue, and coloured paper



### Keywords

- Design thinking
- Rapid prototyping
- Innovation
- Problem-solving
- Creativity
- Business propositions
- Feedback loop



### Information for the facilitator

This workshop is designed to introduce young entrepreneurs to design thinking and rapid prototyping as practical tools for solving real-world business problems. As a facilitator, guide participants to empathise with users, define clear challenges, generate creative ideas, and build simple prototypes to test their solutions. Encourage collaboration, hands-on learning, and continuous feedback. Throughout the session, help participants connect these methods to their own entrepreneurial journeys. Close the workshop with a brief reflection to help them identify key takeaways and how they plan to apply these tools in future.

Event agenda		
Activity	Description and handout usage	Time
<b>Registration and welcome</b>	Participants register, receive materials, and network briefly, setting a welcoming tone.	15 minutes
<b>Introduction to design thinking and rapid prototyping</b>	Overview of innovation methodologies, with a focus on design thinking and rapid prototyping. Key concepts are introduced using Handout 6.1: Design thinking overview.	20 minutes
<b>Hands-on activity: Design thinking application</b>	A practical application of design thinking where participants work in teams to empathise, define, and ideate on real-world business challenges using the Innovation canvas.	45 minutes
<b>Coffee break:</b> A short break for participants to recharge and network informally.		10 minutes
<b>Hands-on activity: Rapid prototyping session</b>	Participants quickly create prototypes based on their design thinking session ideas using simplified prototyping materials.	45 minutes
<b>Expert panel: From ideas to execution</b>	Innovation experts share insights on executing ideas. This panel includes a Q&A session where participants can ask questions and gain practical guidance.	50 minutes
<b>Closing remarks and feedback collection</b>	Wrap-up with a summary of key takeaways. Participants complete Handout 6.4: Feedback survey to evaluate the event and provide feedback for future improvement.	15 minutes

## Starting the workshop

1. To initiate the “Innovation laboratory” workshop, ensure that all necessary materials are organised and readily available. This includes Handout 6.1: Design thinking overview, Handout 6.2: Rapid prototyping tools, Handout 6.3: Innovation canvas template, Handout 6.4: Feedback survey, and prototyping materials like sticky notes, markers, and various creative supplies.
2. Set up the workshop space to allow for both interactive discussions and hands-on group activities, with designated areas for talks and collaboration.
3. As participants arrive, facilitate registration, and a brief welcome session where they can get acquainted with each other and settle into the environment. During the welcome, outline the workshop objectives and agenda and give a brief introduction to the key methodologies—design thinking and rapid prototyping—so participants know what to expect from the day.

## Conducting the workshop

1. Begin with an introductory session on design thinking and rapid prototyping, using Handout 6.1: Design thinking overview, to explain fundamental concepts. This foundation helps participants understand the purpose and flow of the upcoming activities. Following this, move into a practical application of design thinking. Participants work in groups, applying the Innovation canvas to empathise, define, and ideate solutions to real-world business challenges, giving them a tangible experience with these innovation techniques. After this session, a short coffee break allows participants to network informally and recharge.
2. After the break, transition into a hands-on rapid prototyping session, where participants create physical models based on their design thinking ideas. Using simple materials, they quickly bring their concepts to life and practice iterative development.
3. The workshop then progresses to an expert panel session, where invited industry professionals share insights on moving ideas from concept to execution. This Q&A provides participants with valuable, practical knowledge on overcoming common challenges and understanding industry standards in innovation.

## Concluding the workshop

1. To conclude the workshop, conduct a closing session that summarises the main takeaways, focusing on how participants can implement design thinking and prototyping techniques in their entrepreneurial projects.
2. Distribute Handout 6.4: Feedback survey, and encourage participants to share their thoughts on the workshop's effectiveness and areas for improvement.
3. Finally, invite participants to connect, building a support network to foster ongoing collaboration and application of the workshop learnings. This final interaction reinforces the workshop's insights and establishes a collaborative community focused on innovation and entrepreneurial growth.

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**Stichting Aflatoun International**

**IJsaanpad 9-11 | 1076 CV Amsterdam | The Netherlands**