



BUILT
to **LAST**

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Organisational Sustainability for
Youth Work 2026

Toolkit.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

EYF

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1. About us

FEMYSO – The Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations is a pan-European network of 30 Muslim youth and student organisations across 22 European Countries. We are the only Muslim organisation which represents the interests of Muslim youth and Muslims at large with EU, Council of Europe and UN institutions. As the voice of Muslim Youth in Europe, FEMYSO is regularly consulted on issues pertaining to Muslim Youth.

FEMYSO's network provides a platform for like-minded young people to come together, share their experiences, ideas, and best practices. Through FEMYSO trainings and support, many projects and campaigns were launched locally, nationally, and continentally, on issues such as mental health, sustainability, active citizenship, and tackling Islamophobia. FEMYSO is committed to developing and empowering the Muslim Youth, and working to build a more diverse, cohesive and vibrant Europe.

This document was produced by FEMYSO with the financial support of the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe.



FEMYSO



2. Organisational Sustainability in Youth Work – International Activity

On July 2025, FEMYSO hosted a dynamic 5-day training aimed at empowering Muslim Youth across Europe to strengthen the governance and long-term impact of their organisations, gathering 35 participants across the Council of Europe Member States to Verona, Italy. Comprehensive training sessions were provided across key competency areas, equipping the participants with the tools necessary to create sustainable organisational structures and develop a strategic plan which address both short- and long-term goals.

2.1 About this Toolkit

The toolkit was developed from the training materials of the International Activity. It provides insights into essentials of organisational sustainability, guiding you in creating sustainable organisational structures while offering practical tools for key areas – strategic planning, project management, marketing, branding, finances, fundraising and human resources.

2.2 Why is organisational sustainability important for youth organisations?

Organisational sustainability refers to organisation's capacity to maintain its operations and adapt to challenges, ensuring long-term impact. For youth organisations, this means being able to deliver consistent, high-quality services to their communities, while also being prepared to manage, evolve and thrive amid changing circumstances.

Long-term strategic planning, formal governance frameworks and clear decision-making processes are needed for organisations to operate sustainably and scale their impact, providing continuous support to young people. Without these foundations, organisations are forced into a reactive mode limiting their ability to grow, innovate, and build lasting impact.

2.3 How can FEMYSO support your organisation?

FEMYSO provides a wide range of support to both our Member Organisations (MOs) and individuals, connecting them to a diverse and vast network of experts and providing trainings in media, advocacy, leadership and more. We also design tailored trainings based on organisation's specific challenges, guiding in creating sustainable youth organisational.

Our support includes:

- Tailored training programmes;
- Consultation sessions
- Access to resources and training materials
- Access to network of experts

3. Approach & Methodology

FEMYSO adopts non-formal education (NFE) approach in its trainings to equip Muslim youth with skills and competencies and empower their personal growth and active engagement beyond formal education systems. By utilising this method, FEMYSO offers structured programmes with defined objectives and learning outcomes, emphasising voluntary and participatory role of the learners through the process.

To sum up, NFE is:

- Voluntary and based on the needs and inputs of the participants
- Educational structured to improve specific competencies of the participants
- Encouraging participants' self-reflection and sharing experiences from their contexts
- Interactive utilising varying methodologies such as role-plays, simulations and group learning

Recommended readings:

- [Manual for Facilitators – Council of Europe](#)
- [Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People – Council of Europe](#)
- [Non-Formal Learning Handbook for Volunteers and Volunteering Organisations – ICYE](#)

4. Core Organisational Competencies

4.1. Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a process of setting long-term goals, determining the steps to achieve them in the most effective manner and allocating the resources needed. It helps organisations to set priorities, stay aligned with their vision and mission, and respond effectively to both internal and external challenges. Strategic planning ensures that an organisation can move to a clear and purposeful direction while remaining flexible in a changing environment. Tools such as SWOT, PESTEL and Stakeholder Analysis can support the development of a strong, realistic organisational strategy.

Keep in mind that SWOT, PESTEL and Stakeholder Analysis are tools used to assess the internal and external realities of an organisation. The results must be analysed and incorporated to the strategic planning process, using the gathered data to set priorities, strategy and long- and short-term goals.

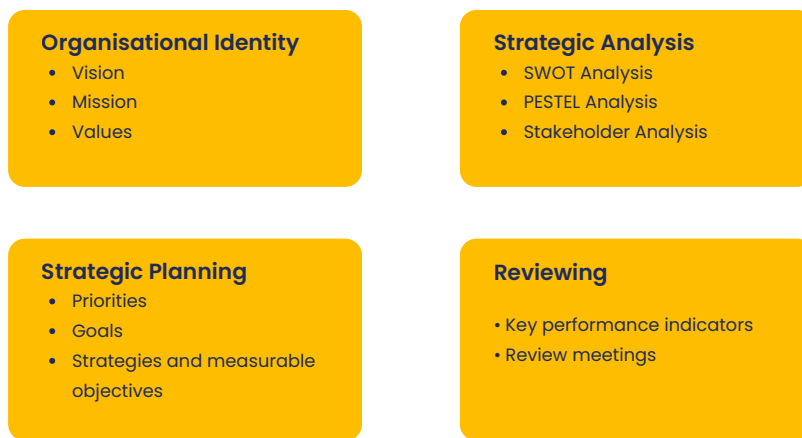
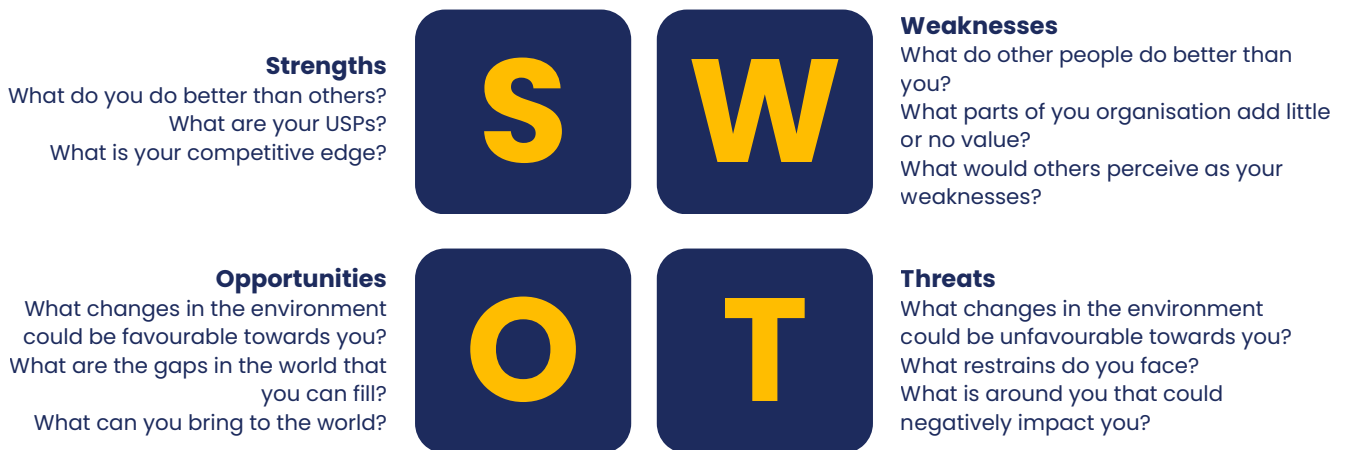


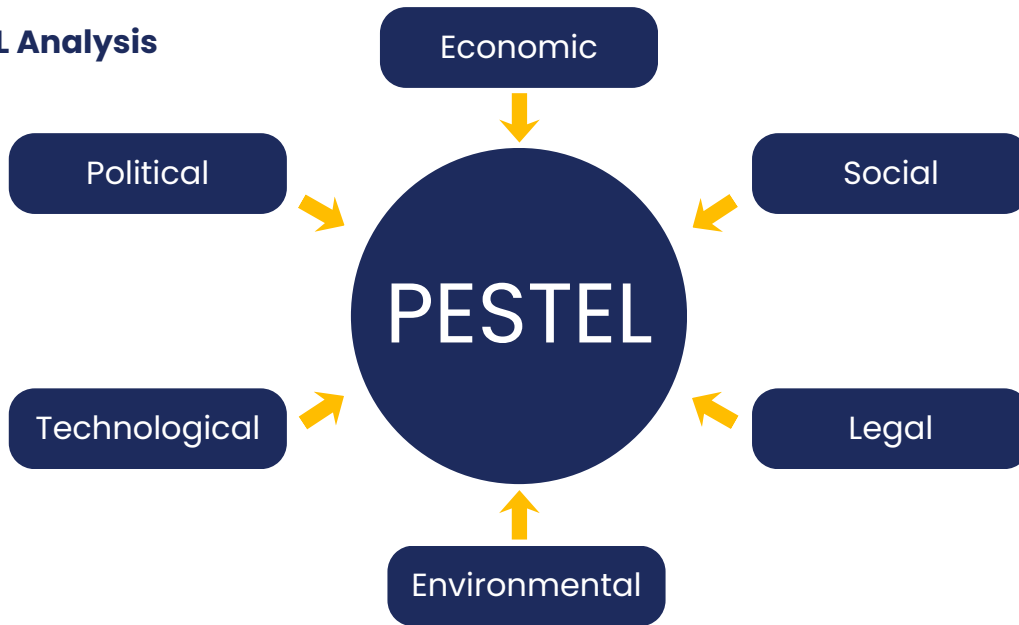
Figure 1: Strategy Process

4.1.1. SWOT Analysis



SWOT analysis is a tool that helps identify organisation’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It provides a clear picture of organisations current situation and helps guide strategic planning and decision-making processes. The insights from SWOT analysis can be turned into actions by directing resources to strengths and opportunities while assessing weaknesses and mitigating threats.

4.1.2. PESTEL Analysis



PESTEL analysis is a tool used to evaluate the external factors that can impact an organisation. It includes several aspects such as political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors. PESTEL analysis helps organisations identify what external forces can impact them directly. Monitoring and responding to dynamic external changes can ensure the long-term sustainability of an organisation.

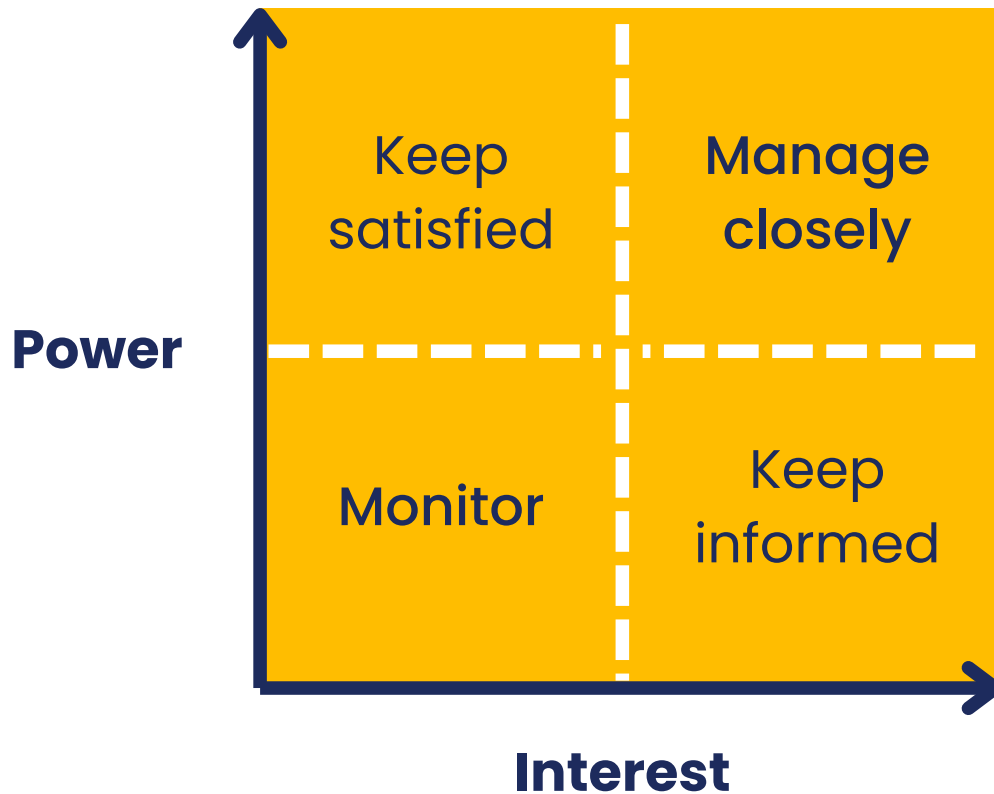
4.1.3. Stakeholder Engagement Framework

WHO	HOW
<p>Grassroots engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your organisation’s ultimate strength Collective power Future leaders Lived experience and insights Impact and legitimacy <p>Institutional engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation and voice Building bridges Impacting policies Access to resources Protecting rights 	<p>Analyse</p> <p>Plan</p> <p>Engage</p> <p>Monitor & Adapt</p>

Figure 2: Stakeholder Engagement Framework

A stakeholder is any individual, group, or organisation that has an interest in, can affect, or can be affected by your organisation's actions, objectives, or policies. The primary stakeholders of youth organisations are the young people the organisation serves and represents.

4.1.4. Power-Interest Matrix



Power-Interest Matrix is a simple, visual tool to categorise stakeholders, prioritise and ensure efficient use of resources. Strategic stakeholder mapping gives you a visual picture of everyone connected to your organisation and understand their level of interest and influence, helping you to focus your energy for maximum impact and build stronger relationships.

- Power - ability to influence outcomes or decisions
- Interest - level of concern, involvement, or stake in your work.

Recommended readings:

- Beekun, R. I. (2006). Strategic planning and implementation for Islamic organizations. IIIT.
- Bryson, J. M. (2018). Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement. John Wiley & Sons.

4.2. Project Management



Figure 3: The five stages of project management

Project is a temporary effort with a defined beginning and end, undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result. Project management refers to the process of planning and managing projects while applying knowledge, tools and process to meet the project goals within specific constraints such as time, budget and scope.

4.2.1. Gantt chart

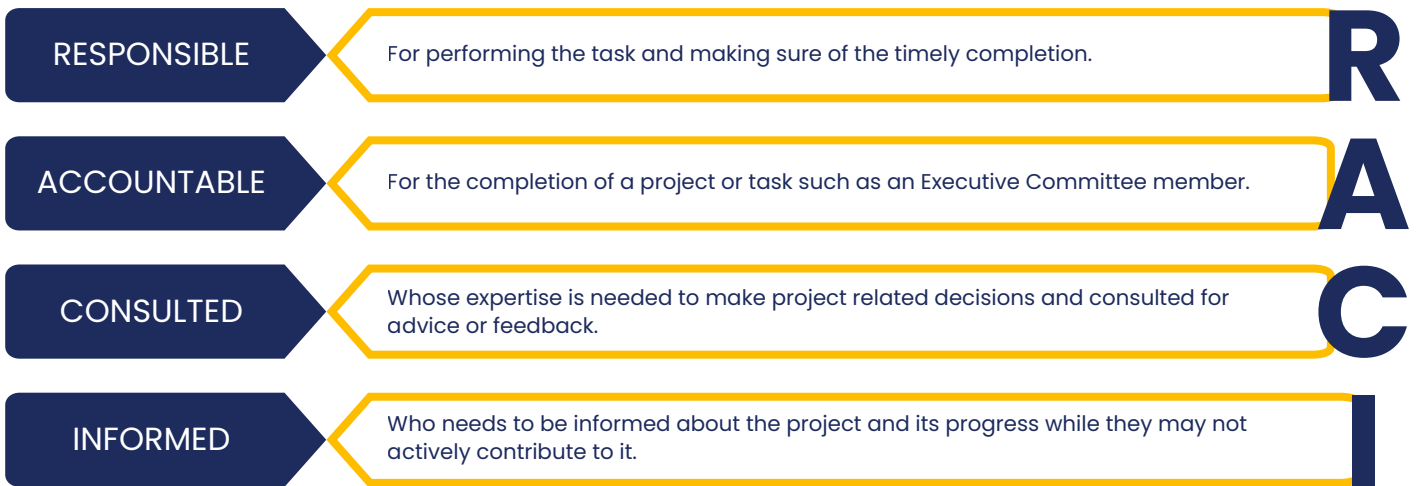


Gantt chart is a project management tool used to spread the project tasks across a timeline. The chart helps to visualise the entire project while showcasing when tasks are expected to be completed and by whom. A Gantt chart consist of a vertical list of project tasks and a horizontal timeline.

How to use a Gantt chart:

1. Identify and define all project tasks and break them to subtasks
2. Assign the tasks to those responsible
3. Schedule the tasks on a timeline while sequencing dependent tasks
4. Monitor progress and mark milestones

4.2.2. RACI



RACI stands for Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed. It is a visual tool designed to divide project responsibilities, clarify roles and expectations and communicate it to those involved in the project.

How to use RACI

1. Define project tasks
2. Identify stakeholders
3. Assign each RACI roles
4. Share with the team

4.2.3. Monitoring and Measuring impact

Monitoring and measuring impact are part of the project management phases. Setting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) early on the project management process is essential to measure performance and success of the project. Measuring and monitoring KPIs helps to track progress, identify areas of improvement and adjust decision making process based on data.

- Make informed decisions
- Engage with and better understand your stakeholders
- Determine if the project is going to the right direction
- Accountability and transparency
- Use for evaluating and reporting

4.2.4. SMART indicators

When developing indicators use SMART framework to identify quality indicators.

S

Create a clear, concise goal

M

Ensure you can measure progress

A

Ensure you can achieve the goal

R

Does the goal align with you business?

T

Make sure you goal has a deadline

Context example:

Your organisation runs a 6-month life-skills and mentorship program for vulnerable youth age 14–19.

The following would not be a SMART Indicator:

"Youth will improve their life skills."

On the other hand, the following would be a SMART Indicator:

"By the end of the 6-month mentorship program (Time-bound), at least 70% of participating youth aged 14–19 (Specific: who) will demonstrate a 20% improvement (Measurable & Achievable: quantity) in their communication and problem-solving skills (Specific & Relevant: what), as assessed through pre- and post-program standardised life-skills assessment tools (Measurable)."

Resources:

- [Google Project Management Course – David McLachlan](#)



4.3. Human resources

Human resources (HR) deals with organisations' employees or volunteers and plays an important role in fostering a positive and inclusive organisational culture. Youth lead organisations face several challenges such as limited human resources, high turnover, and lack of HR policies. HR is present in every phase of volunteer life cycle, making HR management vital for sustainable youth organisations.

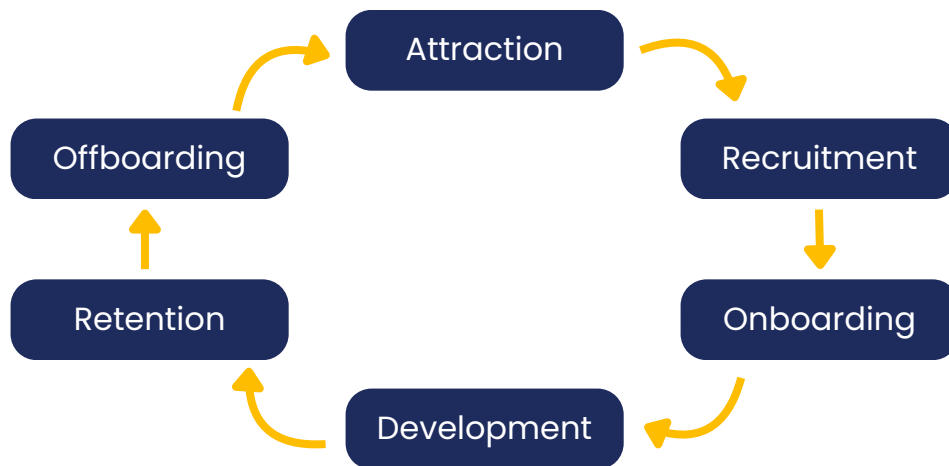


Figure 4: Volunteer life cycle

4.3.1. Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of identifying, attracting and selecting talents to fill a certain position in your organisation. Recruitment process starts with clarity of why recruit (to fill a gap in expertise, new needs etc). This then helps in creating a clear job description for the desired role. Attracting the right talent to the right position is essential in organisations success. There are several ways an organisation can attract talent: organisational branding, online visibility, social media, grassroots engagement and word of mouth. There are a few things to keep in mind during the recruitment process.

Recruitment checklist

- Identify gaps and needs of the organisation
- Create job descriptions
- Identify internal talents
- Conduct interviews (have at least 2 interviewers)
- Consider diversity and gender balance of recruitments

4.3.2. Onboarding & Offboarding

After recruitment, the onboarding process begins, which is essential in integrating a volunteer into the organisation. This includes alignment with the organisation's vision and mission, understanding of organisational culture, structure and policies, and understanding their specific role and how it contributes to the organisation's mission. A strong onboarding contributes to volunteer retention and clarifies expectations.

Offboarding is the process of transitioning a volunteer out of the organisation. Offboarding is as important as onboarding and thus, developing an offboarding policy is essential in organisational sustainability. Successful offboarding ensures documentation and knowledge transfer, contributing to lasting organisational memory.

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a black cover and white pages. The page is titled "Onboarding checklist" in bold black text. Below the title is a list of five items, each preceded by a yellow checkmark in a blue square box.

- Signing Code of Conduct
- Clear job description and expectations
- Organisational and departmental inductions
- Providing opportunities & talent development
- Mentorship and trainings

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a black cover and white pages. The page is titled "Offboarding checklist" in bold black text. Below the title is a list of five items, each preceded by a yellow checkmark in a blue square box.

- Develop offboarding policy
- Ensure knowledge transfer
- Recognition and appreciation
- Clear communication of the process
- Exit interview



4.3.4. HR Policies

Beyond attracting and retaining talent, HR also deals with policies and procedures, safeguarding the organisation and ensuring compliance. HR policies are written guidelines that articulate the organisation's principles, expectations, and procedures concerning its people. Policies are the backbone of good HR, providing guidelines such as how to deal with disputes and what is the Code of Conduct.



4.4. Finances & Fundraising

Figure 1.1: Plan-Do-Review



Financial planning ensures transparency, accountability, and sustainability across all organisation's activities. It provides clear systems for managing funds from budgeting to spending to finally reporting and reviewing so that every resource supports the organisation's mission. A financial management guideline outlines end-to-end procedures, including budgeting, reimbursement, and project approval. For every initiative, begin with a Project Proposal Form (PPF) including the budget component. Then through a discussion with the Executive Committee, review the proposals and set priorities.

4.4.1. Budgeting

Organisations exist to achieve certain objectives. Therefore, it is important for every organisation to have a strategic planning document, outlining long-term goals and breaking them down to clear activities that will be financed. The strategic plan defines organisational priorities and therefore the operational budget. The budget describes the amount of money that the organisation plans to raise and spend for a specific purpose over a specific period of time that usually is a fiscal year. Below you will find an example of how you can link your objectives to your activities:

Figure 3.3: The 8 steps



After listing your activities break down the practical tasks you are going to perform, detailing the resources and the timeframe:

Table 3.4: Example project breakdown sheet

Project breakdown sheet				
Project title:		MTI Metalwork Dept - Rural skills training project		
Ref.	Objective level:	Description of objective, activity or task	Resources and quantities needed	Timeframe
	Objective:	<i>Equip rural unemployed people with metalwork skills to improve employment opportunities</i>		
A	Activity:	Recruit and train one metalwork skills trainer		
1	TASK	Advertise the new post	Job advertisement in national newspaper - 1 advert entry for 2 weeks	Complete before Month 1
2	TASK	Appoint trainer	Metalwork trainer salary, 12 months, full time post	Month 1 to 12
			Employer's taxes, 12% of gross salary	Month 1 to 12
			Medical insurance premium, 20% of gross salary	Month 1
3	TASK	Provide induction and technical training to new trainer	Technical training course (5 days)	Month 2
			Meals/accommodation (5 days)	Month 2
			Travel to/from training - 2 bus trips	Month 2
			Per diem allowance (5 days)	Month 2
B	Activity:	Deliver 4 metalwork skills workshops in regional locations, for 18 trainees each		



From here write down the actual cost of each activity based on experience and research:

Table 3.5: Budget worksheet - example

BUDGET WORKSHEET: Rural Skills Training Project
Project period: 1 January to 31 December [year]

						Currency: USD			
Line ref.	Description	Unit Type	No. Units	No. times	Unit Cost	Total	Notes	Account code	
A	Recruit and train one metalwork skills trainer					15,195			
A1	Job advertisement in newspaper	Entry	1	2	250	250	1 advert entry for 2 weeks	4020	
A2	Metalwork trainer salary	Month	12	1	888	10,650	1 x half-time post	4030	
A3	Employer's taxes	Month	12	1	107	1,278	Approx. 12% of salary	4030	
A4	Medical insurance	Year	1	1	2,130	2,130	20% of gross salary	4030	
A5	Technical training course fee	Person	1	1	850	850	5 days, includes meals/accommodation	4010	
A6	Per diem allowance	Day	5	1	5	25		4040	
A7	Travel to/from training centre	Trip	2	1	6	12	Bus fare	4040	
B	Deliver 4 metalwork skills workshops (5 days duration) in regional locations, for 18 trainees each					41,140			
B1	Fuel for mobile training vehicle	Kilometer	500	4	0.50	1,000	Estimate based on previous experience	5010	
B2	Insurance for vehicle	Lumpsum	1	1	3,580	3,580	50% as shared with Building Trades Dept	5020	
B3	Vehicle maintenance/repairs	Quarter	4	1	1,800	7,200	50% as shared with Building Trades Dept	5030	
B4	Publicity on community radio	Slot	5	6	40	1,200	5 slots per week for 6 weeks	3050	
B5	Guest tutor's fees	Day	5	4	180	3,600	One guest tutor per day, per workshop	6010	
B6	Lunch and refreshments	Person	20	4	12	960	18 trainees plus 2 trainers, per workshop	6020	
B7	Workshop supplies/raw materials	Lumpsum	1	4	1,780	7,120	As per supplier quotation	6030	
B8	Protective clothing	Person	20	4	35	2,800	18 trainees plus 2 spares as contingency	6030	
B9	Tools set for trainees	Set	18	4	190	13,680	As per supplier quotation	6030	
C	Provide one-to-one post-training support to 40 trainees					5,210			

Project budgeting ensures that costs are aligned with available funds, while financial reporting tracks progress and supports accountability. Project teams are responsible for preparing the budget, tracking the costs and creating the final financial report, making sure that each transaction is supported by valid invoices.



4.4.2. Fundraising

The fundraising process consists of four steps:

- Define the objective of your fundraising campaign and its role within the organisation's overall mission.
- Create a fundraising deck: introduces the organisation's mission, work, previous similar projects, budget and a clear request to the funders. (What are you requesting and what are they going to get from it?).
- Perform a stakeholder map of all the opportunities and funders you have access to. You may be able to categorise the results in the following four groups: Grassroot (local community, volunteers, alumni etc..), Institutional (public and private institutions such as governments, NGOs etc..), Corporations and High net worth individuals.
- Action, action, action. While strategy and planning are important, the outreach activity where you are building the network and testing different alternatives is essential part of the learning process, helping you to gain experiences and improve your fundraising efforts.

Trust is a central component of the fundraising process, which is why it is important to make sure that when you receive the funds:

1. You ensure transparency by preparing financial reports on how the funds have been used.
2. You keep in touch with your donors, updating them on the status of your project and send them the narrative report of the project.

In support of building trust, developing an internal financial policy is a practical tool that creates consistency across projects by defining who approves budgets, how reimbursements are handled, and what documentation is required. Strong internal systems not only safeguard funds but also build credibility with funders, members, and partners.

Recommended Reading:

- Mango. (2015). Mango Financial Management Essentials: A Handbook for NGOs.



4.5. Marketing & Branding

Marketing and branding begin with understanding who your audience is and how to best reach them. For a youth organisation, this means communicating confidently with your community and with the wider public. Branding defines who you are —your identity, values, and voice— while marketing is how you share that identity through campaigns, stories, and activities. Together, they shape how people see you, what they expect from you, and how they feel when they interact with your organisation.

4.5.1. Communications strategy

Communications strategy defines how your organisation communicates with its audience. Choose channels that make sense for your audiences—social media, newsletters, local events, or local press. Social media builds visibility, newsletters nurture connection, and events strengthen relationships. Set clear KPIs (engagement, event attendance, volunteer sign-ups etc.) and review analytics regularly to learn what resonates with your audience.

Try this: Keep a simple monthly tracker of engagement and feedback to spot what works.
Remember: Good communication is two-ways: invite dialogue so people feel represented and heard.

4.5.2. Branding

Your brand is your organisation’s personality shaping how people recognise and experience you. It includes visuals (logo, colours, typography) and deeper elements (values, story, tone). Every interaction from a flyer to a post shapes perception.

Examples in Practice:

- **Zohran Mamdani:** authenticity and issue-based storytelling that connects values to action.
- **Patagonia:** ethics aligned with behaviour, showing how purpose builds loyalty.

Try this: Ask members to describe your organisation in three words and compare to how you want to be seen.

Remember: Consistency builds credibility and reduces the risk of misrepresentation.

4.5.3. Marketing

Marketing brings the brand to life. Plan campaigns around clear goals (recruitment, attendance, partnerships) and choose the right channels for each audience. Keep messages values-driven and genuine so they come across authentic and feel relatable.

Try this: Before launching a campaign ask: does this reflect our voice, values, and community?

Remember: Focus on shared values and positive impact. How you tell your story shapes how others perceive your community.

4.5.4. Brand Guidelines

Brand guidelines define organisation’s brand, ensuring consistency across all platforms. They should cover:

- Core identity: mission, values, key messages, elevator pitch.
- Visuals: logo usage, colour palette, typography, imagery style, accessibility checks (contrast/legibility).
- Voice and tone: preferred language, do/don’t lists, inclusive wording, examples for posts, flyers, and press notes.
- Applications: social media templates, posters, partnership lockups, photography and consent, hashtags.
- Governance: who approves, file storage/naming, update cycle.



Figure 5: FEMYSO patterns

Try this: Create one “model page” for each channel (Instagram post, event flyer, email header) ready to be duplicated.

Remember: Keep a lightweight version (2–3 pages) for volunteers and partners. Review annually to stay aligned with your values.

Recommended readings:

- Kosteljik, E., & Alsem, K. J. (2020). Brand positioning: Connecting marketing strategy and communications. Routledge.
- Sarkar, C., & Kotler, P. (2020). Brand activism: From purpose to action. Idea Bite Press.
- Smith, P. R. (2019). SOSTAC Guide to Your Perfect Digital Marketing Plan (vol. 6).



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