



Co-funded by
the European Union

MODULE 2

Building Financial Independence

Learner workbook

FIRE Training Programme · 4 hours

Build the core money skills that make independence possible: understand your money, budget and save, earn from your skills, and turn your hopes into a realistic plan.



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Italian National Agency Erasmus+ INDIRE. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. Project 2025-1-IT02-KA210-ADU-000354693



Co-funded by
the European Union

Your name (or a nickname)	
Start date	
Group or tutor	

How to use this workbook

- Do each exercise after the lesson it belongs to. Tick each step when you finish it.
- Your answers are yours. You do not have to show them to anyone.
- You can use made-up names and numbers. You never need to use your real situation.
- If something feels too hard, take a break. Help is listed at the end of this workbook.

What is in this workbook

Code	Title	Lesson	Time	How
EX 2.1	Read the numbers	L2.1	20 min	Individual
EX 2.2	Your money story	L2.1	15 min	Group
EX 2.3	Build a 50/30/20 budget	L2.2	22 min	Pairs
EX 2.4	What gets in the way	L2.2	15 min	Group
EX 2.5	From skills to income	L2.3	22 min	Pairs
EX 2.6	Barriers and bridges	L2.3	15 min	Group
EX 2.7	Make it SMART	L2.4	22 min	Individual
EX 2.8	Picture your independence	L2.4	15 min	Group



Read the numbers

Time	20 min
How	Individual
What you make	A short overview of Sara's income and costs, with one worrying number and one suggested change.

Turn a messy money picture into a clear one. Then decide what it shows about this person's independence.

The situation

Sara earns €1,250 a month and receives €180 in child benefit. Her rent is €620, bills are about €210, food around €300 and transport €60. She pays €90 a month on a credit card and spends about €150 on subscriptions, treats and eating out. She has no savings and often runs out of money before the end of the month.

Goals

- Add up income and costs
- Separate needs from wants
- Judge what the numbers show

Step by step

Step 1 — Income (4 min)

- ☐ List Sara's sources of income
- ☐ Add up her total monthly income

Step 2 — Costs (6 min)

- ☐ List all her costs
- ☐ Mark each one as a need or a want

Step 3 — What is left (4 min)

- ☐ Take her costs away from her income
- ☐ Work out roughly what is left at the end of the month

Step 4 — Judge (6 min)

- ☐ Circle the one number that worries you most



- ☐ Name one change that would most improve her position

Your notes

Good to know

- Her income and costs both come to €1,430, so nothing is left for savings.

Check your work

- ☐ I added up her income correctly
- ☐ I separated needs from wants
- ☐ I worked out what is left
- ☐ I suggested one realistic change



Your money story

Time	15 min
How	Group

How we feel about money shapes how we manage it. There are no right answers, only honest ones. Share only what you wish to.

Private: only you see your answers

This reflection is private. Write only what you want to. Nobody will collect or read it.

1. What did you learn about money growing up, and from whom?

2. When do you feel most, and least, in control of money?

3. What is one belief about money you would like to change?



Build a 50/30/20 budget

Time	22 min
How	Pairs
What you make	Nadia's 50/30/20 plan with one recommended change.

Apply the 50/30/20 method to a real set of numbers. Then decide if the plan is realistic and what you would change.

The situation

Nadia takes home €1,600 a month. Her rent and bills come to €880, and food and transport another €360. She spends about €240 on eating out, clothes and subscriptions, and saves nothing. She would like to start an emergency fund, but says 'there is never anything left at the end of the month'.

Goals

- Calculate a 50/30/20 split
- Sort costs into needs, wants and savings
- Suggest a realistic first saving step

Step by step

Step 1 — Calculate (5 min)

- ☐ Work out 50%, 30% and 20% of €1,600

Step 2 — Sort (6 min)

- ☐ Place each of Nadia's costs under needs, wants or savings
- ☐ Add up each group

Step 3 — Compare (5 min)

- ☐ Check whether her needs fit within 50%
- ☐ Notice any money that is not accounted for

Step 4 — Recommend (6 min)

- ☐ Decide what she could adjust if her needs do not fit
- ☐ Recommend one change to help her start saving



Your notes

Good to know

- Her needs are €1,240, more than 50%. An adjusted split is fine.
- Her costs add up to €1,480, so €120 a month goes somewhere untracked.

Check your work

- ☐ I calculated €800, €480 and €320
- ☐ I sorted every cost
- ☐ I noticed that €120 a month is not accounted for
- ☐ My recommendation is realistic



What gets in the way

Time	15 min
How	Group

Budgets fail for human reasons, not maths reasons. Naming the real obstacles together makes them easier to overcome. Share only what you wish to.

Private: only you see your answers

This reflection is private. Write only what you want to. Nobody will collect or read it.

1. What has stopped you from sticking to a budget before?**2. Which costs are hardest to predict or control?****3. What is one small, realistic change you could make this week?**

From skills to income

Time	22 min
How	Pairs
What you make	A skills list for Carla, with one paid route, one training idea and a first step.

Help an imagined person see the value of her experience. Then link it to realistic routes to earning and training.

The situation

Carla, 44, has not had a paid job for twelve years. In that time she raised three children, managed the family's tight budget, cared for an elderly parent, organised events at her children's school, and speaks Portuguese, Spanish and some English. She says she 'hasn't done anything' and would not know where to start looking for work.

Goals

- Name skills built through unpaid work
- Link skills to paid work
- Suggest a first practical step

Step by step

Step 1 — List (6 min)

- ☐ List every skill Carla has built, paid or unpaid

Step 2 — Link (6 min)

- ☐ For each skill, note where it is useful to an employer

Step 3 — Choose (5 min)

- ☐ Pick one skill she could be paid for now
- ☐ Pick one worth developing with short training

Step 4 — First step (5 min)

- ☐ Suggest the first practical step she could take



Your notes

Good to know

- Look at the table 'From home life to working life' for ideas.

Check your work

- ☐ I listed at least five skills
- ☐ I linked each skill to work
- ☐ My first step is small and practical



Barriers and bridges

Time	15 min
How	Group

The obstacles to earning are often practical and shared by many. Talking them through helps you see solutions. Share only what you wish to.

Private: only you see your answers

This reflection is private. Write only what you want to. Nobody will collect or read it.

1. What stands between you and the income you want?**2. Which barriers are practical, and which are about confidence?****3. Who or what could help you take the very next step?**

Make it SMART

Time	22 min
How	Individual
What you make	Lúcia's SMART goal with a monthly amount and a first step.

Take a vague goal and rebuild it as a SMART goal. Then plan the first month to reach it.

The situation

Lúcia says her goal is to 'finally have some savings so I'm not so dependent'. She takes home about €1,400 a month and has about €120 left after essentials and wants. She has never managed to save before because, she says, the goal always felt too big and too vague to start.

Goals

- Rewrite a vague goal as a SMART goal
- Break it into a monthly amount
- Plan a first step

Step by step

Step 1 — Make it clear (6 min)

- ☐ Rewrite Lúcia's goal so it is Specific and Measurable

Step 2 — Add a deadline (5 min)

- ☐ Add a realistic, Time-bound deadline
- ☐ Break the target into a monthly amount

Step 3 — Find the money (5 min)

- ☐ Name where the money comes from each month

Step 4 — Start (6 min)

- ☐ Write the very first step she takes this week



Your notes

Good to know

- Saving less than the full €120 leaves room for surprises and makes the goal more achievable.

Check your work

- ☐ The goal has a number and a deadline
- ☐ The monthly amount fits within her €120
- ☐ The first step is small and clear



Picture your independence

Time	15 min
How	Group

Goals pull us forward when they are tied to a life we really want. Picture that life clearly. Share only what you wish to.

Private: only you see your answers

This reflection is private. Write only what you want to. Nobody will collect or read it.

1. What would a financially independent day look like for you?

2. What would change if money was no longer used to control you?

3. What is the very first goal you are willing to commit to?



Where to get help

These services are free and confidential. You can call them for yourself or for someone you support.

Country	Phone / web	Service	Cost and hours
Italy	1522	1522 Anti-violence and stalking helpline	free · 24/7
Italy	direcontrolaviolenza.it	D.i.Re – national network of anti-violence centres	free
Italy	inps.it	Reddito di Libertà (freedom income)	
Italy	normattiva.it	State-paid legal aid (patrocinio a spese dello Stato)	free
Italy	02 2327 2327	Telefono Amico Italia	24/7
Germany	116 016	Violence against Women Support Hotline (Hilfetelefon)	free · 24/7
Germany	116 006	Opfer-Telefon (WEISSER RING) – victims of crime helpline	free
Germany	frauenhaus-suche.de	Women's shelter search (Frauenhaus-Suche)	
Germany	frauen-gegen-gewalt.de	Women's counselling centres (bff)	free
Germany	0800 111 0 111	TelefonSeelsorge (crisis line)	free · 24/7
Germany	vz-schuldnerberatung.de	Recognised debt advice (Schuldnerberatung)	
Germany	service.justiz.de	Legal advice for people on low income (Beratungshilfe)	
Germany	migrationsberatung.org	Migration advice for adults (MBE)	free
Portugal	800 202 148	Information Service for Victims of Domestic Violence	free · 24/7
Portugal	116 006	APAV Victim Support Line	free
Portugal	800 202 148	National Network for Victims of Domestic Violence (RNAVVD)	free · 24/7
Portugal	gov.pt	Legal aid (proteção jurídica)	free
Portugal	gov.pt	Bank Customer Support Network (RACE)	free
Portugal	213 544 545	SOS Voz Amiga (listening line)	



Country	Phone / web	Service	Cost and hours
Portugal	808 24 24 24	SNS 24 psychological counselling (option 4)	24/7
Portugal	808 257 257	Migrant Support Line (AIMA)	
Across the EU	112	112 European emergency number	free · 24/7
Across the EU	116 006	Helpline for victims of crime (where available)	

In an emergency, call 112.

fire.elnlab.eu

