

Annex 11: Role Playing Activity

Module 9 activity

Learning Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the social entrepreneur's feelings and fears • Identify ways to handle fears
Background Information
<p>This is an experiential activity that requires the participants to share their experience and insights. The participants form groups and each group represents one of the social entrepreneur's most common fears. Through role playing and a 'diary writing' exercise they can put themselves in the situation, feel and think as if they were there. Then, they are allowed to reflect on what this meant for them, coming back from the role to their real self. This exercise allows the participant to role play a situation in which maybe he/she is going through at the moment, reflect on it and discuss with the group possible solutions to deal with that fear.</p>
Duration
90 minutes
Room Organisation
<p>The room must have space for moving chairs. There will be interchanging from a big circle to smaller groups, according to the number of people in each group.</p>
Support material
<p>Flip chart or board. Paper and pen or pencil.</p>
Exercise 'Scenario'
<p>John (33 years old) cannot make a decision. He is on a non-paid leave from the public sector and the date of his return seems terrifying. He still remembers his first impressions from the first week of his employment in the public service he worked. He was a newcomer excited to work and make a difference. It did not take him long to realize that things were not as he had expected them. Especially during the last years of recession, the downsizing has increased both the workload and</p>

the dissatisfaction. It was evident to him that, 8 years after his appointment his eagerness had vanished. And he made the big decision to take a three-year non-paid leave. It was a risky decision, as he just had his first baby, and all the expenses had to be covered by his wife's salary. Along with a group of 5 friends they created a social enterprise about forest preservation activities.

His daily work life changed completely. He worked in an intense and different way. Frequent meetings, contacting stakeholders, stress about the results, positive energy, impact, fun, optimism mixed with pessimism, some successes and more failures, and at the end of the day no profits for the first 15 months. Until they eventually got their first loyal customers, that allowed them to share a small amount of money each month. This brought feelings of happiness to the group, John was enjoying every minute of it, found meaning in his work life and felt he was constantly improving his skills.

Now, John's monthly income is significantly lower than the salary he would get in the public sector. Although the potential of the social enterprise is good, uncertainty is always there and the risk exists. Moreover, his wife is expecting their second child. In four months, he has to decide whether he will return to his previous position or not. The thought makes his stomach tight, but in his mind he knows that there is no room for even one month of unemployment, if things go wrong, as the expenses are increasing.

Instructions

1. The exercise starts by brainstorming the fears that a social entrepreneur might have and writing the list on the board (financial doubts, confidence issues, lack of skills, lack of support, etc)
2. After the list is complete, the trainer asks the participants to group the fears, form 3-4 groups and give a name to each group (example: economical fears, psychological fears, social fears).
3. The trainer asks the participants to divide into the different groups representing each fear. For example, we might have the group "economic fear" where we have 6 people gathering. When all participants are gathered in each fear, the trainer asks them to divide in 2 sub-groups within the fear: one representing the entrepreneur (John) experiencing this fear and one representing the entrepreneur (John) fighting this fear.
4. The trainer reads the "scenario" explaining that the participants are now playing a new 'role', they are not themselves anymore. As they listen to the story, they imagine being in the new 'role', they feel, speak and act from the position of the new 'role': one of John being afraid, and one of John fighting the fear.
5. The trainer asks the participants to write a diary on behalf of the 'role' they are in. What is John feeling? What would he write in his diary?
6. One's diary is a unique opportunity to express all the inner voices of an individual. Therefore, the trainer should encourage the participants to express feelings and listen to

all the different voices, without excluding any of them.

7. Each sub-group reads their diary to the others. After each letter, the trainer could ask the others to share their feelings on what they heard.
8. Afterwards, the trainer asks them to mix and form small groups again (preferably, no two people representing the same role should sit together). “Stand up, move around a little, find another group. Take off your role and be yourself again. How did you feel? What did you experience/understand?” (Leave some time for discussion)
9. The trainer asks the groups to talk about what they found useful when dealing with the fears. Are there any feelings, thoughts, resources that could help the entrepreneur in this process? Write your thoughts on a piece of paper, to share them with the whole group.
10. The groups open up into a big circle (whole group). Each small group shares their report and the trainer sums up with theory about the skills a social entrepreneur needs.