Technical sheet for mentors

7. BALANCE BEAM

Mentorvention Phase	Dimension	Duration (mins)	Number of participants (min/max)
Foundation Meeting	**Self-awareness** **Goal Setting & Planning**	30	1
Learning-2-Learn dimension elements	- Evaluating own strengths - Evaluating own limitations - Identifying effective strategies		
Tags	Resilience, stressor, counseling, work/life balance		

The aim of the activity
In this tool, the mentee writes different aspects of her life on a balance beam: activities that require effort and/or cause stress as well as activities that offer support and reduce stress. The beam represents the resilience of the mentee. With this exercise, the mentee can explore if she is resilient enough to take on another stressor (in this case, language learning) and what she can do to find support.

| Preparation |
|---|
| Print the activity tool **Balance Beam**.
Follow the instructions in the Application Section |

Application

The mentee will be guided through the activity by the mentor. Use the guiding questions to help the mentee explore her resilience and how to prepare to add a new stressor (language learning):
 	
1. Present and explain the first picture of a beam. The beam represents the mentee's capacity and resilience. On top of the beam, there are weights. The weights put pressure on the beam. These are things in her life that might cause stress or might require a lot of effort (e.g. work, social obligations, finances...).
2. Ask the mentee to think about what her stressors might be and draw them on her beam. If it causes a lot of stress or takes a lot of effort, draw a big weight. If the stress or effort is less, draw a smaller weight.
3. Present and explain the second picture of a beam. Below the beam, there are pillars. The pillars offer support and will prevent the beam from breaking.
4. Ask the mentee to think about what her pillars might be and draw them below the beam. If it offers a lot of support, draw a big pillar. If it offers little support, draw a smaller pillar.
5. This creates a visual image of how her life is balanced between stressors and support. Give the mentee some time to reflect on the image for a moment.
6. Discuss the balance beam with her, following these guiding questions present in the handout:
    a. Why did you draw these weights/pillars?
    b. Do you think you can add another weight to the beam without it breaking?
    c. If you look at this, do you think you can manage to add language learning to the beam?
    d. Will you need an extra pillar to support the beam in that case? If so, what would the label say?

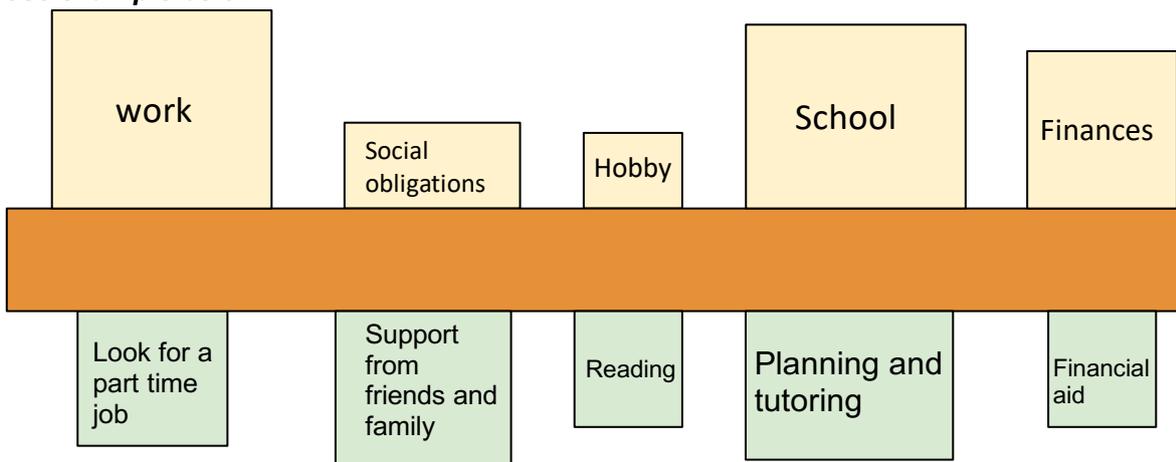| 🔗 Direct link to the activity handout on the learning platform	Learn more
https://upsim.aidlearn.eu/en/	This tool is based on 'De Balkmetafoor'. It is available in Dutch and French at: https://www.balkmetafoor.be/

Activity tool

1. The beam represents your capacity and resilience.
2. Think about things in your life that might cause stress or take a lot of effort (like work, social obligations, finances…). We call them weights. Add them on top of the beam. If it causes you a lot of stress or takes a lot of effort, draw a bigger one. If the stress or effort is reduced, draw a smaller one.

See example below:

| work | Social obligations | Hobby | School | Finances |
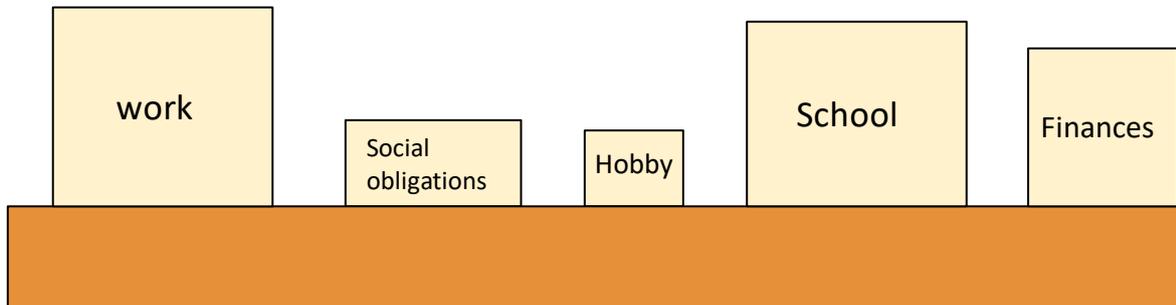
3. Think about things in your life that offer support and prevent your beam from breaking. We call them pillars. Draw them on the bottom of your beam. If it offers a lot of support, draw it bigger. If it offers little support, draw it smaller.

See example below:

| work | Social obligations | Hobby | School | Finances |
| Look for a part time job | Support from friends and family | Reading | Planning and tutoring | Financial aid |

4. Reflect about your beam for a moment. What does it tell you?
5. Use the guided questions in the handout to better understand how you can add language learning to your beam.

Balance Beam

Why did you draw these weights/pillars?

_____

_____

Do you think you can add another weight to the beam without it breaking? Why or why not

_____

_____

If you look at this, do you think you can manage to add language learning to the beam?

_____

_____

Will you need an extra pillar to support the beam in that case? If so, what would the label say?

_____

_____