



Guiding a 9

Conversations group

*The route to the story of a new
business*

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Welcome to 9 Conversations!

This booklet will help you set up and run a 9 Conversations programme in your local area.

You do not have to be a teacher to be a programme guide. It may help if you have some experience or knowledge about running a business in the local area. It would be really helpful if you are happy to learn more as you go along, at the same time as facilitating the programme yourself.

1. What? Why? Who and How?

What?

As a group guide, you are going to design and facilitate an inspiring experience. You will help a group of committed people to find out more about how small business works in your local area. They will use this to tell the story of their new business idea.

It could be that the new business will only open in a year or two. That is fine.

It could be that the participant realises that running a business in their new country is not practical. This is a positive result.

It could be that a meeting arranged as part of the programme results in a job offer rather than a new business. This is also a positive result.

Why?

Many people new to your country already have business experience. Or they may have gained many new skills on their way to your country. They may find it easier to start a business than to get a job.

Who?

You will aim for a group of 4-10 people. These should be refugees who have been in your country for at least two years and who

- Can speak the local language at a basic level (A2, CEFR scale)
- Want to find out about running a business in your country
- Are strongly committed to attending the 9-week programme
- Are strongly committed to helping their programme colleagues

- Are prepared to set up and attend meetings in the local area
- Have an internet-enabled phone that lets them download apps, take pictures and videos

You may find that others are interested in joining the programme, but you should give priority to those who meet the above criteria.

How?

You will help your group find out more about how business works in your local area.

You will support the group in building their Business Model Canvas. I.e. the story of their business.

You will help them to build their business model canvas by supporting them in meeting local people who can help.

2. Group guide skills

You do not need to know everything. So, what do you need to be able to do?

You need to

- be able to listen
- be able to answer practical questions
- have a basic knowledge about how business works in your local area.
- have an idea about how to get more information about your local area
- be ready to ask many questions

Practical skills you need include

- Help participants decide which self-evaluation levels they have reached using the [9 Conversations tool](#).
- Being prepared to come with suggestions for reaching higher levels on the self-assessment.
- Helping your participants talk about different aspects of their business by asking good questions (by using the session notes – chapter 7)
- Some technical issues, such as ‘export’, ‘import’ and ‘save’ in the Euro Skills Profile, making and sharing short videos on a phone.
- Deciding if the participants have met the requirements for the different 9 Conversations badges (Chapter 8).

If you want to, you may also be developing your own business idea at the same time as the 9 Conversations participants.

3. Getting ready

Why do you want to do this?

Perhaps you were part of an earlier 9 Conversations programme or maybe you have already set up your own business and want to help others. It is possible to run a 9 Conversations programme using just this guide and a lot of enthusiasm.

Before you start you will need to do a few things one or two months in advance. These include:

Location

Try to find a place that is cheap or free to use. Public libraries are often free, but you could ask at schools and churches too. It could even be someone's home.

Make sure that you have some **paper, sticky notes, and pens** for use during the meetings.

Local case study

Use your local knowledge to find someone who would be willing to talk to the new program group about their business. They should be able to say something about some of the main sectors of the Business Model Canvas (see chapter 4). You can help them do this by asking relevant [questions](#). You could invite them to visit your group or get them to record a short interview with you.

Form a group

The best option is to meet a group of likely participants face to face and tell them about the programme. You can also do standard advertising with a poster. Places to advertise the programme include:

- language schools,
- libraries,
- supermarket noticeboards
- local Facebook groups
- refugee aid groups
- second-hand shops

You could use this [template poster](#) originally made in [Visme](#).

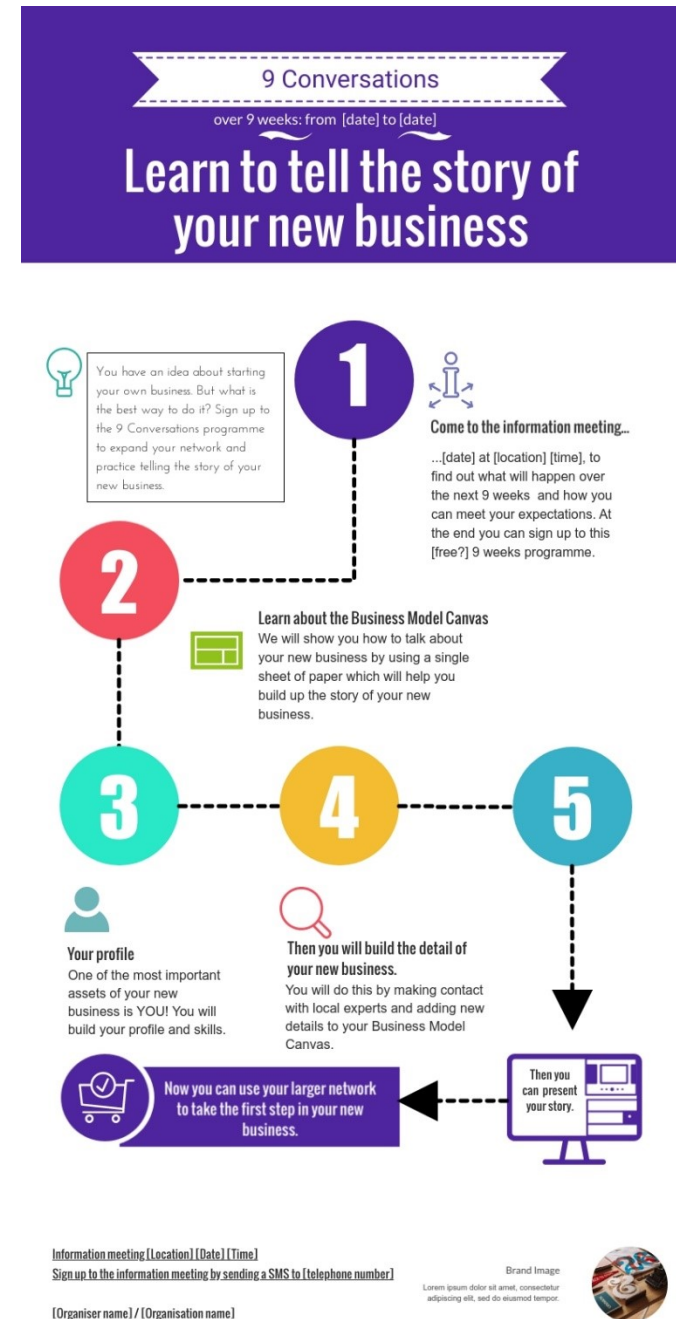


Figure 1 Poster for information meeting

Also think about what you can do to encourage different types of participants such as a mix of genders, nationalities, age, religions and so on.

Tools

Get to know the tools you need to use to lead this programme.

- [Euroskills profile](#)
- [Self-assessment tool](#)
- [Programme web page](#)
- [BMC template](#)
- This guide

You should also be able to help participants access the internet, and make videos on their phones.

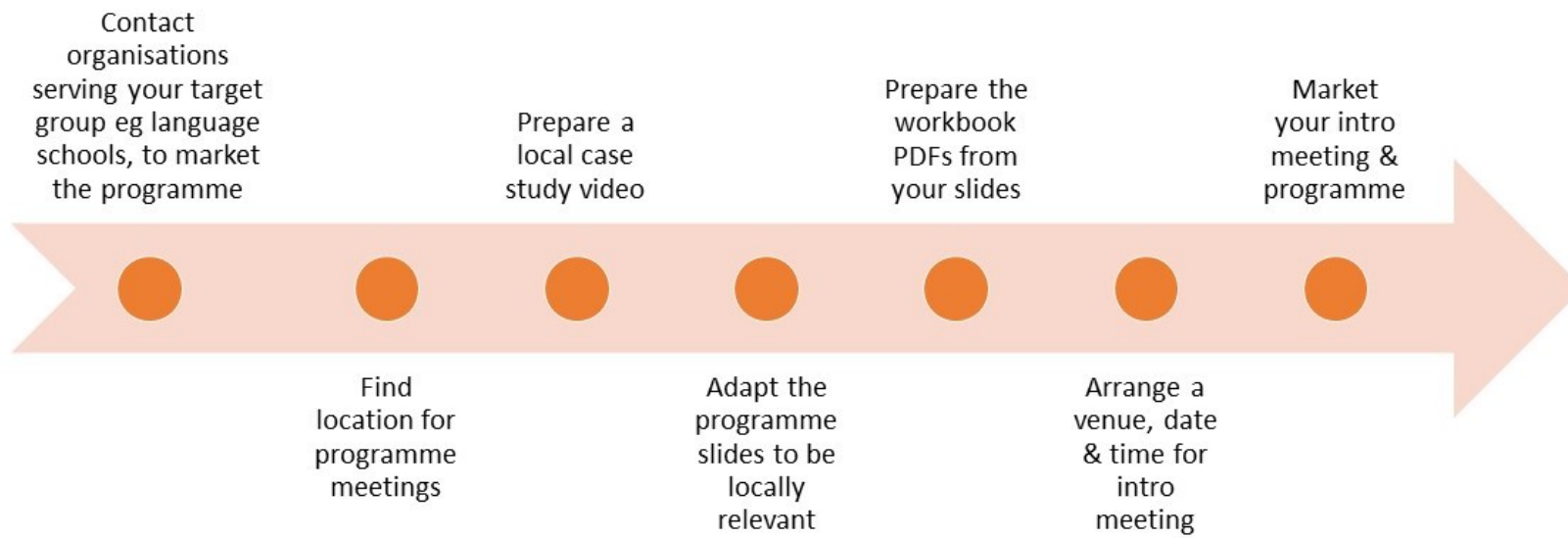


Figure 2 Preparing the programme

4. What is the Business Model Canvas?

The business model canvas (BMC) is a one-page picture of a business idea that helps tell the story of that business. If you can tell the story of your business idea using the BMC, then you are probably ready to go to the next stage of making more detailed plans and arrangements such as a business plan and a cash-flow forecast.

The 9 Conversations programme is all about helping a group of people build their business story using the BMC. They will do this

by contacting relevant people and organisations to find out more.
An example of an unfilled BMC is shown below.

The Business Model Canvas

Designed for:

Designed by:

Date:

Version:

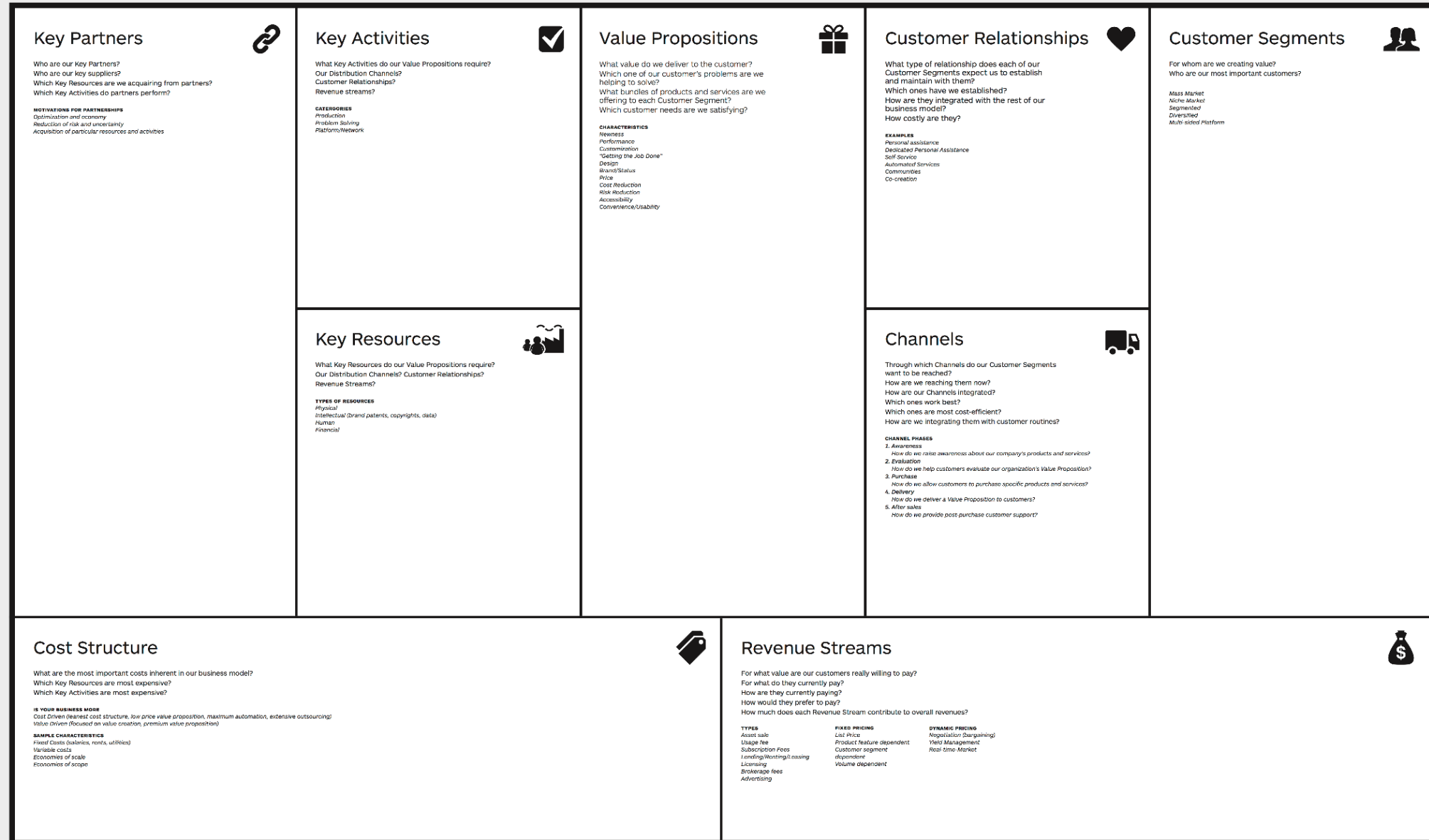


Figure 3 Business Model Canvas Template

Here is an example of how to tell your business story by using the BMC. This is about a [tapas restaurant](#).

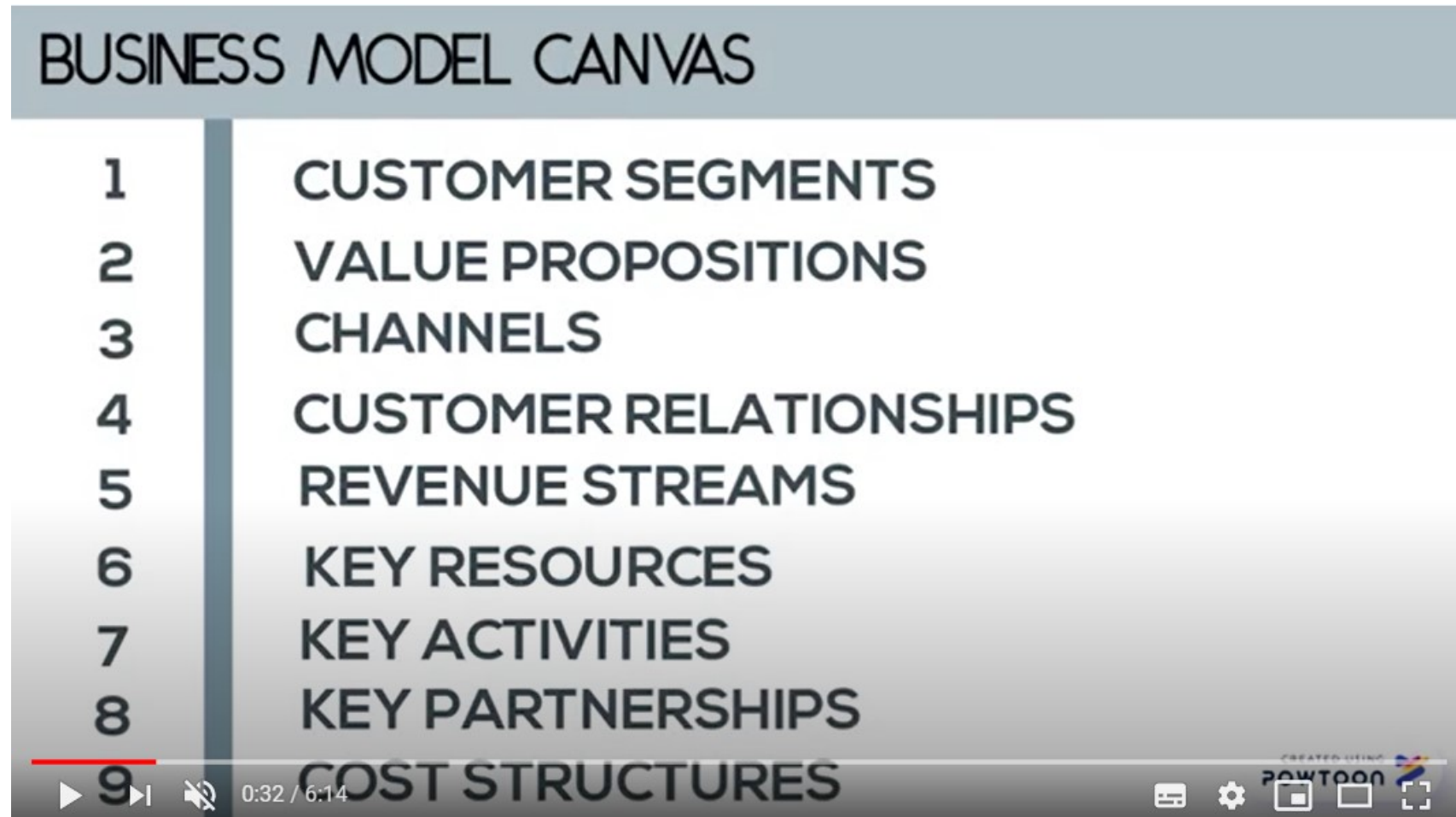


Figure 4 YouTube video using BMC to describe a restaurant business

5. A typical session

You will lead nine meetings of your group and help them to build their own business model canvas (BMC).

Each of the nine steps has a different aim but each of the meetings will follow more or less the same pattern.

Remember that you are there to **guide** and **support**.

The **main aim** of each meeting is to help the programme group to build their own BMC picture by

- Finding out more about one specific sector of the BMC
- Planning to meet people who can help them
- Helping the group share what they learned from their last meetings
- Listening to two or three members talk in more depth for 5 - 15 minutes about their BMC after which the group gives feedback and asks questions.

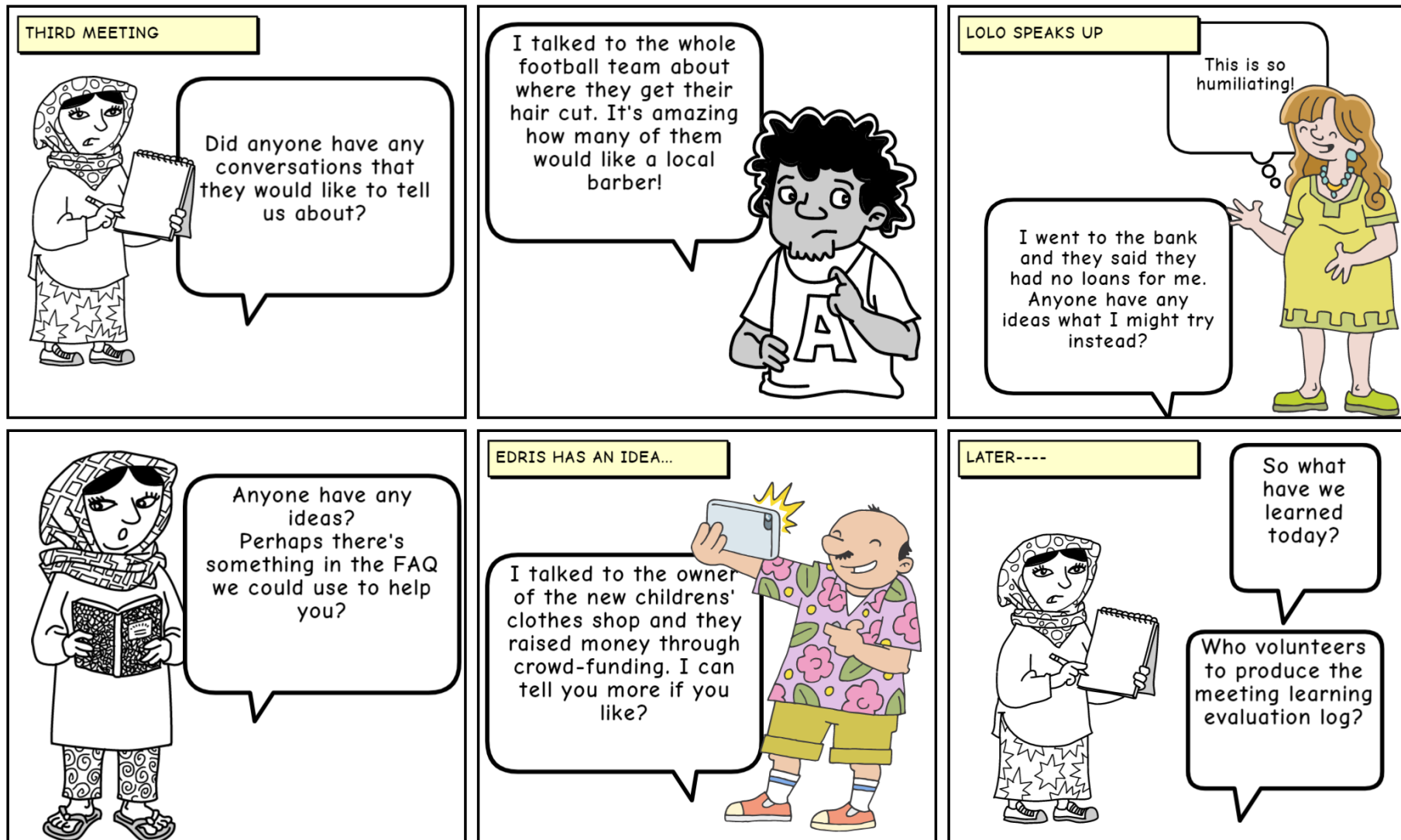
The facilitator notes in the slides will help you to ask the most relevant questions for each session or to pass on the questions for others in your group to ask.

Things that you do in the session include:

- Finding out what the group has done since the last meeting (unless this is the first meeting).
- Helping the group to use the tools such as their phones, the EU Skills profile or the self-assessment tool.
- Helping group members to add detail to their canvas
- Making sure that a member of the group makes a record of the meeting.
- Encouraging and helping group members to fill in their learning logs.
- Checking off badge achievements
- Suggesting relevant people and organisations for specific members of the group to visit before the next meeting.
- Helping the group to decide which of them gets to have their business idea in the spotlight in each session.

- Supporting the group to give useful feedback, especially to those in the spotlight.

The cartoon below shows possible moments from a typical session.



This comic was created at www.MakeBeliefsComix.com. Go there and make one now!

Figure 6 Moments from a 9 Conversations meeting

6. The 9 Steps

By the end of the programme your group should be able to tell the story of their planned business using the BMC as a guide.

The 9 Steps curriculum document tells you in detail how to go through each of the nine meetings. Steps 4-7 can be done in any order. You might for example decide that Step 8 about how to tell the story of your business should be at an earlier stage, perhaps meeting three.

You, as the guide, will have some specific tasks that the group has to do in each session. For example, in Step 4 the main focus should be on being able to talk about the Value Proposition of each business idea. See the [programme materials here](#).

A typical meeting timeline is shown below

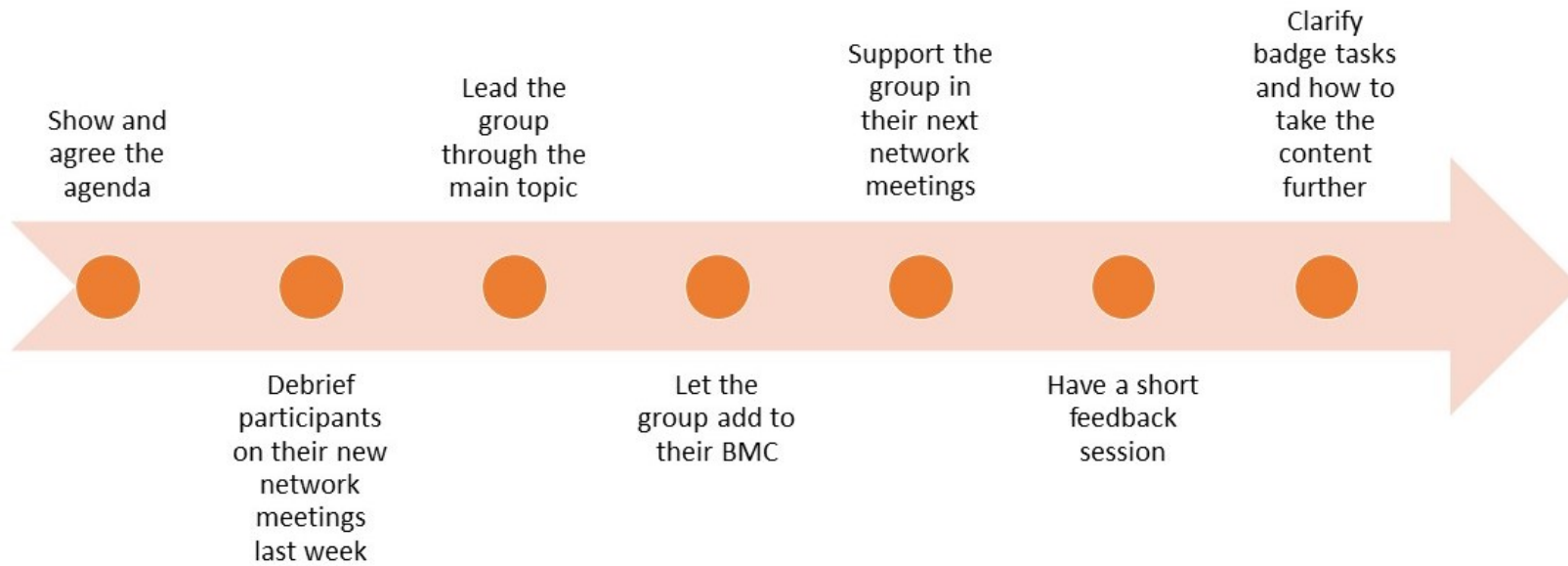


Figure 7 Meeting timeline

7. Slides and session notes

We have prepared slides and notes to help you run each 9 Conversations session. The session notes can be found under each of the presentation slides.

For each of the nine meetings we have prepared a slide presentation with notes to help you run the session.

We recommend that you make a few changes to adapt the slides to your local situation, for example by using a local video case study.








You can then save the slides as a PDF document (*Print/one slide per page with speaker notes and then print to PDF*). You can choose to print out the PDF as a workbook for your group or give it to them as a digital document. You can add interactive text

boxes on selected pages of the PDF by using a free online tool such as [PDFEscape.com](https://pdfescape.com).

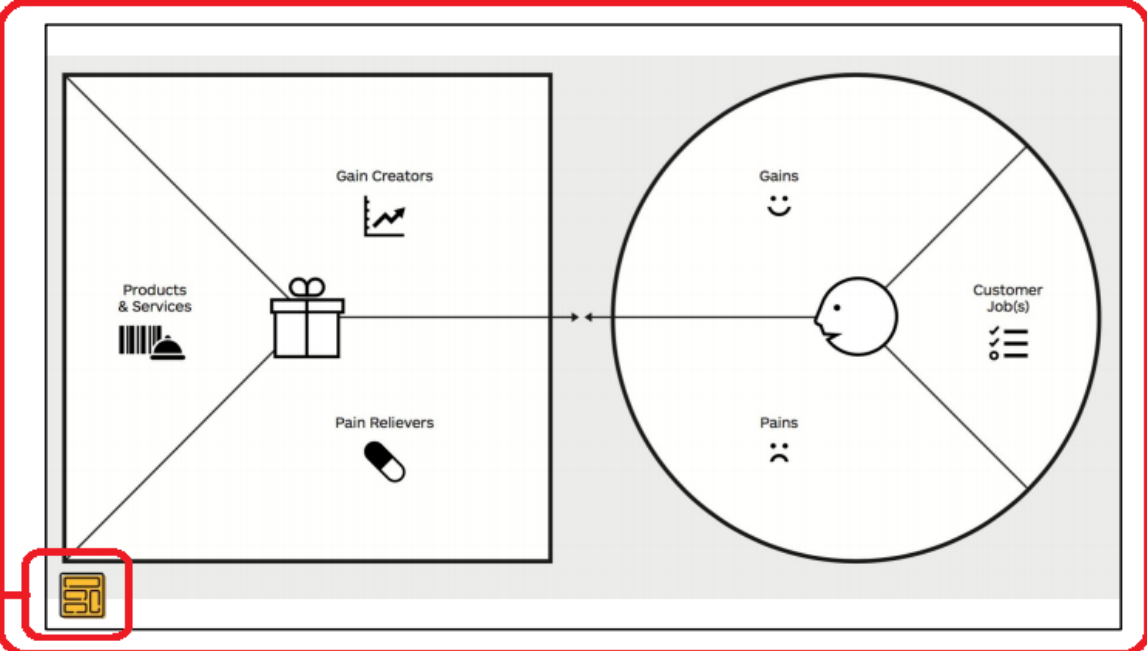
The slides have some common features to help you.

- A common set of icons to describe the process
- A time indicator for how long to spend on the slide
- Information on what should be happening in the meeting for this slide
- Whether or not the slide is a key slide when time is short

The icons include...

									
Overview	Information	Add to BMC	Use the app	Discussion	Task	External meeting	Arrange meeting	Reflection	Badge

Slide



Process icon

Speaker notes

SESSION GUIDANCE NOTES

20 minutes
Key slide
Complete one VPC for each type of customer
Tell the group about how your customers and value proposition are a good fit.
Add one or two of the most important VPCs to your BMC

Space for participant notes











A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for participant notes.

Figure 8 Features of a typical slide

8. Badges

Your group participants might want to be able to show what they have achieved to others outside the group. Therefore the 9 Conversations programme lets you give badges when your participants complete different parts of the programme, and a final programme badge if they finish it all.

As the group guide, you may have to decide when each participant has done enough to win a badge.

Step	Badge
Step 1: Introducing the BMC	
Step 2: Your skills	
Step 3: Your local area	
Step 4: The Value Proposition Canvas	
Step 5: Customer channels	
Step 6: Key activities, partners and resources	
Step 7: Cost structure and revenue streams	
Step 8: Story telling	
Step 9: The pitch	
9 Conversations – the full badge	

How to administer the badges

You can set up the badges in your digital course platform such as Moodle or Lifter for Wordpress. We have produced a technical guide for this option. [\[Link\]](#)

You can also award badges in a less formal way by using this template. [\[Google link\]](#) Do not work in this template. Instead, copy it, name the file and then you are free to use it as you wish.

9. What next?

Once the programme has ended, there are a few extra things that you can do.

Help us to make the programme better by completing this [survey](#).

Arrange to contact the group after six months for a reunion to find out what they are doing now.

Help group members who are ready to go to the next stage of starting their business to get in touch with other organisations for detailed support.

Appendix 1: Record keeping

As facilitator of the group your job will be easier if you keep some records, but first a word about data.

Data: People have a right to know that their personal information will not be misused. You should make sure that the information you collect to run the programme is only the information, which is necessary, that it is kept secure and that you delete it once the programme is over.

Attendance: You will need to keep a record of who comes to each session.

External Contacts: Use a simple Customer Relations Management (CRM) layout to collate the new connections in the group. See sample [here](#).

Meetings: Have a participant volunteer to document each meeting.

Badge activities: Keep track of who has done what. You can use a document or set up badges if you are using a digital course platform such as WordPress Lifter.

Endpiece

Acknowledgements, sources

Illustration p.20 <https://flic.kr/p/FNhaGG>

Find out more about the project at <https://m9c.idi.ntnu.no/>

The 9 Steps curriculum document can be found [here](#).

The editable slides for the course can be found [here](#).

Guide to badge implementation. [\[Link\]](#)

Useful links

How to use the BMC canvas as a facilitator

https://www.plays-in-business.com/canvas-modeling-what-is-it/#Rules_To_Use_Canvases

<https://gamestorming.com/mapping-business-models/>

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Erasmus+