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YOUNG MONEY MATTERS

youth toolkit



TOOLKIT PART OF THE PROJECT

1

WELCOME TO

YOUNG MONEY
\$ MATTERS \$



Money is part of everyday life...

but nobody really teaches us how to deal with it.



This toolkit was created to help you:

- understand your relationship with money,
- identify your financial difficulties,
- and take your first realistic steps toward better financial balance.

This is not a test, not a judgment, and not a lecture.

There are no right or wrong answers here — only honest reflections.

You can use this toolkit:

- alone, at your own pace, OR
- together with a youth worker, facilitator, or counsellor.

TAKE A PEN. TAKE A BREATH.
LET'S START FROM WHERE YOU REALLY ARE.

+ 2

MY RELATIONSHIP
WITH MONEY

MONEY & ME



For most of us, money showed up in our lives before we understood it.

We learned about money from what we saw at home, from what we lacked, from what we compared, from what we avoided talking about.

Rarely from calm conversations.

So when we talk about money, we are not only talking about numbers.

We are talking about feelings, habits, pressure, hopes, and sometimes fear.

Before plans and strategies, it helps to pause and look honestly at your own story with money.

Take a moment. There is no rush.

COMPLETE THE SENTENCES BELOW IN THE FIRST WAY THAT FEELS TRUE TO YOU:

Money, for me, usually means

When I think about money, I usually feel

The hardest thing about money in my life right now is

NOW LET'S CHECK IN WITH THE PRESENT MOMENT...

RATE YOUR

RELATIONSHIP WITH MONEY

ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 10, HOW FINANCIALLY SECURE
DO YOU FEEL RIGHT NOW?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NOT VERY					EXTREMELY				



This number does not define you.
It does not measure your value, your intelligence, or your
future.

It simply shows where you are starting from today.
And that is enough.

3

UNDERSTANDING MY
FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

WHERE AM I NOW?



Across Europe, many young people say the same thing:

“I know money matters, but I often deal with it only when I really have to.”

Research on young people’s financial behaviour in the EU shows that most financial difficulties don’t come from big mistakes, but from small, repeated decisions made under pressure — stress, emotions, or the feeling of needing to “keep up”.

For many young people, money is not something they plan carefully.

It is something they react to.

That’s not a personal failure.

It’s the reality of growing up in a fast, digital, comparison-driven world.



COMMON FINANCIAL CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Below are some of the most common financial challenges identified among young people in Europe.

Read them slowly and notice what feels familiar.



IMPULSIVE SPENDING

Buying quickly, often online, especially when feeling tired, stressed, or bored. Research shows that many young people spend emotionally, not because they want to waste money, but because spending brings short-term relief.



LACK OF PLANNING

Not because planning is impossible, but because the future often feels uncertain. When life feels unstable, planning can feel pointless — so money decisions stay focused on “now”.



SMALL DEBTS THAT GROW

Subscriptions, buy-now-pay-later services, small loans. Individually they seem harmless. Together, they slowly create pressure.



SOCIAL PRESSURE

Spending to belong, to keep up, or to avoid feeling “less than”. Social media makes other people’s lives look easier and richer — even when they are not.

REFLECTION

(NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS)

Which of these challenges feels closest to my experience right now?

When does this usually show up in my life?
(for example: end of the month, stressful periods, social situations)



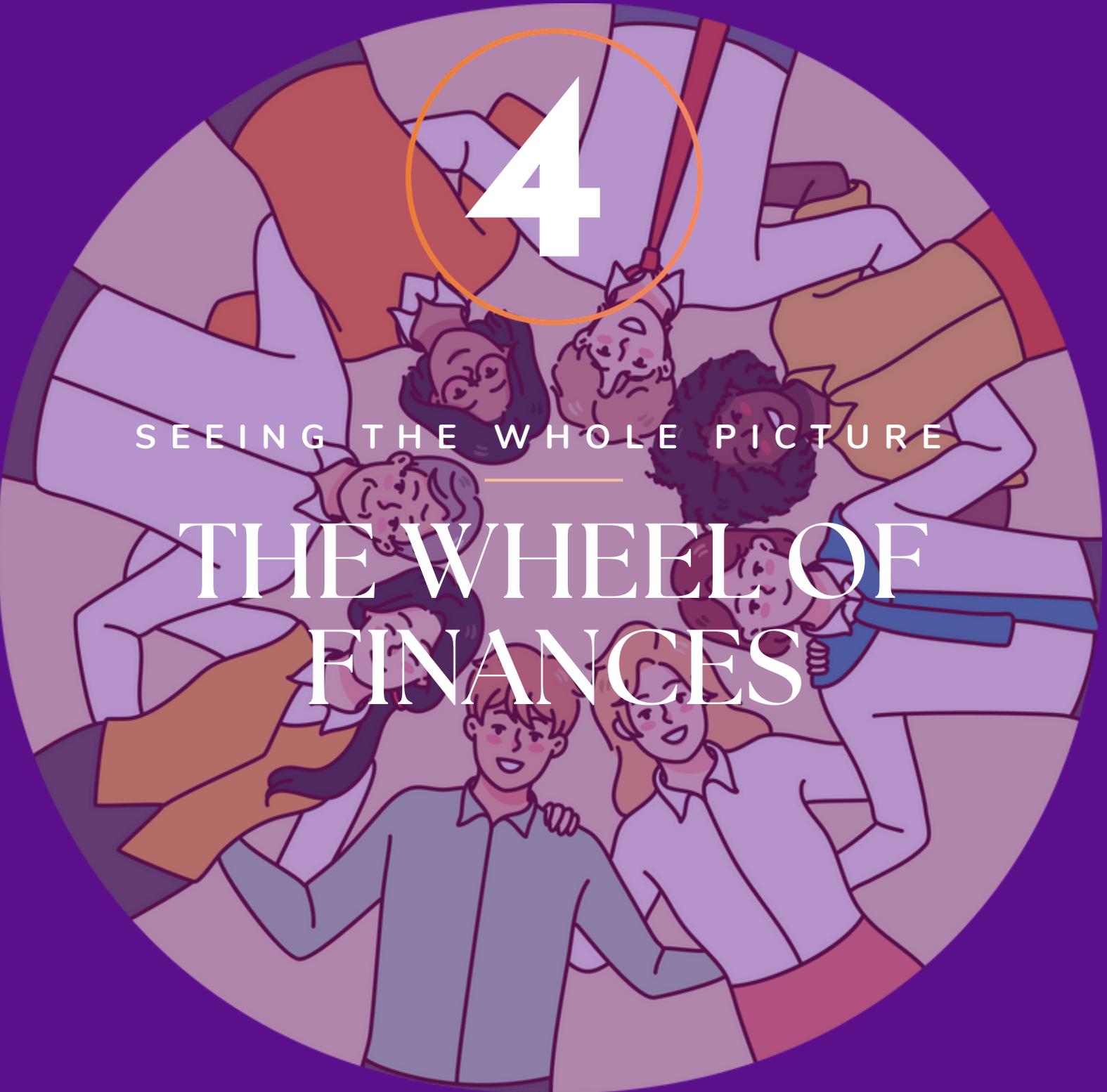
This exercise is not about labels or diagnosis.

It is about recognising patterns
— because patterns can be changed.

Awareness is not the end of the work. It is the beginning.

WHY THIS MATTERS:

European research consistently shows that young people who first understand their patterns — without shame — are more likely to change them sustainably than those who are only told what they “should” do.



4

SEEING THE WHOLE PICTURE

THE WHEEL OF FINANCES

When we talk about money, we often focus on one problem at a time: not enough income, too much spending, a debt that worries us.

But money doesn't live in one single place.

It moves through time, emotions, energy, and everyday choices.

That is why changing only one thing often doesn't work — because the rest of the picture stays the same.

The Wheel of Finances helps you step back and look at your whole financial life, not to judge it, but to understand how the parts connect.

Take your time with this exercise.



STEP 1

RATE EACH AREA

For each area below, give yourself a score from 1 (very low) to 10 (very good), based on how things feel right now.

INCOME

Do I feel my income is enough for my current life?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

VERY LOW

VERY GOOD

SPENDING

Do my spending habits feel mostly conscious and intentional?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

SAVING

Do I have any form of financial buffer, even a small one?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

DEBTS

Do debts feel manageable, or do they create pressure?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Do I have any sense of direction with my money?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

RATE EACH AREA

For each area below, give yourself a score from 1 (very low) to 10 (very good), based on how things feel right now.

TIME & ENERGY

Do I have the time and mental energy to deal with money decisions?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

EMOTIONS CONNECTED TO MONEY

Do money-related thoughts feel mostly calm or mostly stressful?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

THERE ARE NO “GOOD” OR “BAD” ANSWERS HERE.
Only honest ones.



STEP 2

DRAW YOUR WHEEL

NOW DRAW A CIRCLE AND DIVIDE IT INTO SECTIONS — ONE FOR EACH AREA.

Shade each section according to your score.



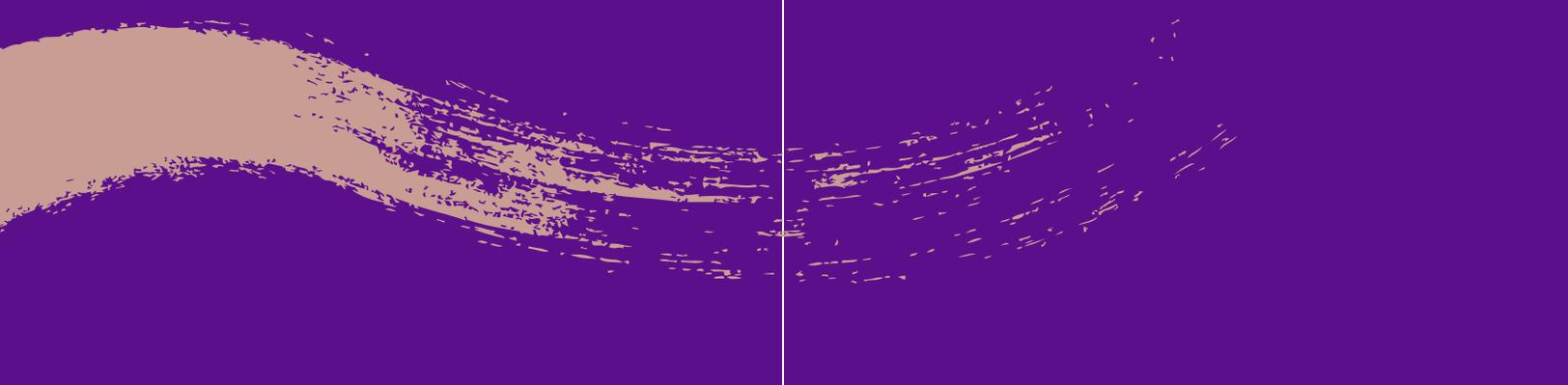
Your wheel doesn't need to look perfect. But when some areas are much lower than others, **the ride through daily life often feels bumpy and exhausting.**

This exercise is **not about fixing everything.** It is about **seeing clearly.**

Because clarity is where real change begins.



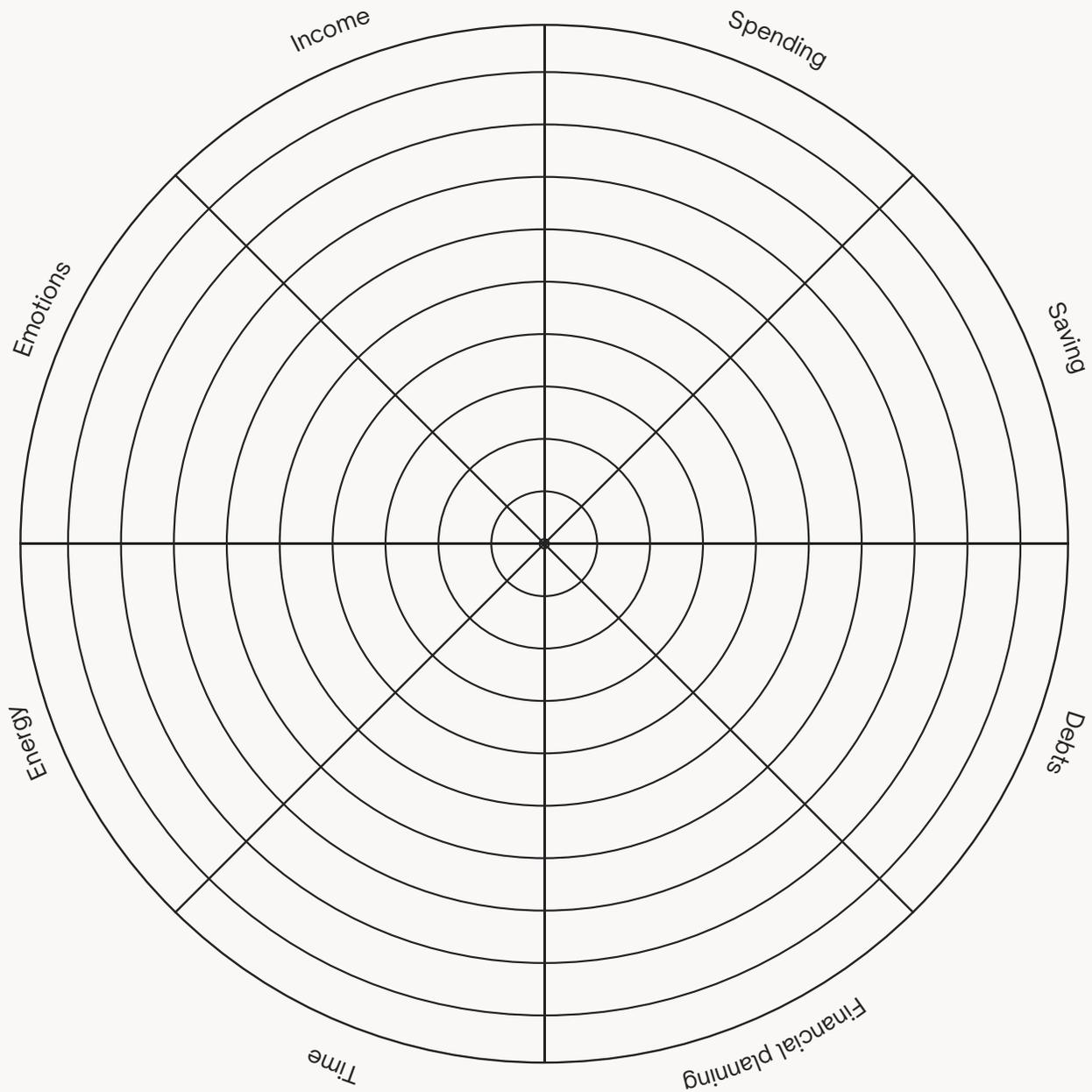
But money doesn't live in
one single place.
It moves through time,
emotions, energy, and
everyday choices.



WHEEL OF FINANCES

The Wheel of Finances helps you step back and look at your whole financial life, not to judge it, but to understand how the parts connect.

Take your time with this exercise.



Notes



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SHORT-TERM PRESSURE AND
LONG-TERM DIRECTION



WHAT IS REALLY
URGENT FOR ME?

When money feels stressful, it often pulls us into the present moment only.

We focus on what needs to be paid now, what we want now, what we fear now.

Research across Europe shows that many young people don't avoid planning because they are careless, but because the future feels uncertain — and planning feels overwhelming.

That's why this page is not about long-term budgets or perfect plans.

It's about deciding where your attention matters most right now.

Look again at your Wheel of Finances.

One area is probably asking for attention — not loudly, but persistently.



PAUSE AND ANSWER HONESTLY

Which area has the lowest score?

How does this area affect my daily life?

(stress, lack of sleep, arguments, constant worry, avoiding decisions...)

This is often the area that creates the most short-term pressure — even if it doesn't look dramatic from the outside.

LOOKING A BIT AHEAD...

Now gently shift your focus forward.

If nothing changes, what might this look like in 6 months?

(more pressure, the same stress, slightly bigger problems...)

*You are not predicting the future.
You are simply noticing a direction.*

CHOOSING ONE SMALL SHIFT

***Planning does not mean controlling everything.
It means choosing one direction instead of drifting.***

*If I change just one small thing in this area, what could improve?
(e.g. tracking spending for one week, setting a small limit, creating a
simple plan for the next month)*

***Short-term choices shape long-term outcomes —
even when the steps feel small.***

***You don't need to fix everything.
You don't need a perfect budget.***

***You only need to choose where to start —
and allow yourself to begin.***





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NOT PERFECT.
JUST REAL.

MY FIRST FINANCIAL STEP

Not perfect. Just real.

Many people believe they fail with money because they don't have a good plan.

In reality, most people struggle because their plans are **too big**, too abstract, or too far from real life.

Change doesn't start with discipline.

It starts with **one step** that **feels possible**.

You don't need a complicated strategy.

You need one small action that fits your life as it is right now.



Take a moment and choose something realistic,
even if it feels almost too small...

MY FIRST FINANCIAL STEP

***You don't need a complicated plan.
You need one realistic step that fits your life now.***

My small financial goal (something achievable, not ideal):

One action I can take this week (specific, simple, concrete):

One thing that might get in the way (lack of time, stress, temptation tiredness...):

One gentle solution I could try (a reminder, a limit, asking for help, preparing in advance...):

***This is not a promise to be perfect.
It is permission to start where you are.***

***In Banometru, we believe this:
Small steps, done consistently, change lives.
And every step counts — especially the **first** one.***

7

WHEN EMOTIONS TAKE OVER

MONEY TRAPS



Most money decisions are not made with a calculator in hand.

Research on young people's financial behaviour in Europe shows that emotional spending is one of the most common ways of coping — especially when life feels overwhelming or uncertain.

They are made in moments of tiredness, stress, loneliness, or pressure.

These are some of the most common money traps. Read them and notice which one feels familiar.

I DESERVE THIS

After a hard day, spending can feel like a small reward.

I'LL DEAL WITH IT LATER

Avoiding the problem can bring short-term relief — and long-term stress.

THIS HELPS ME FORGET

Spending, gaming, or gambling can temporarily numb uncomfortable feelings.

EVERYONE ELSE IS DOING IT

Social comparison makes it harder to say no, even when something feels wrong.

PAUSE AND REFLECT...

Which trap catches me most often?

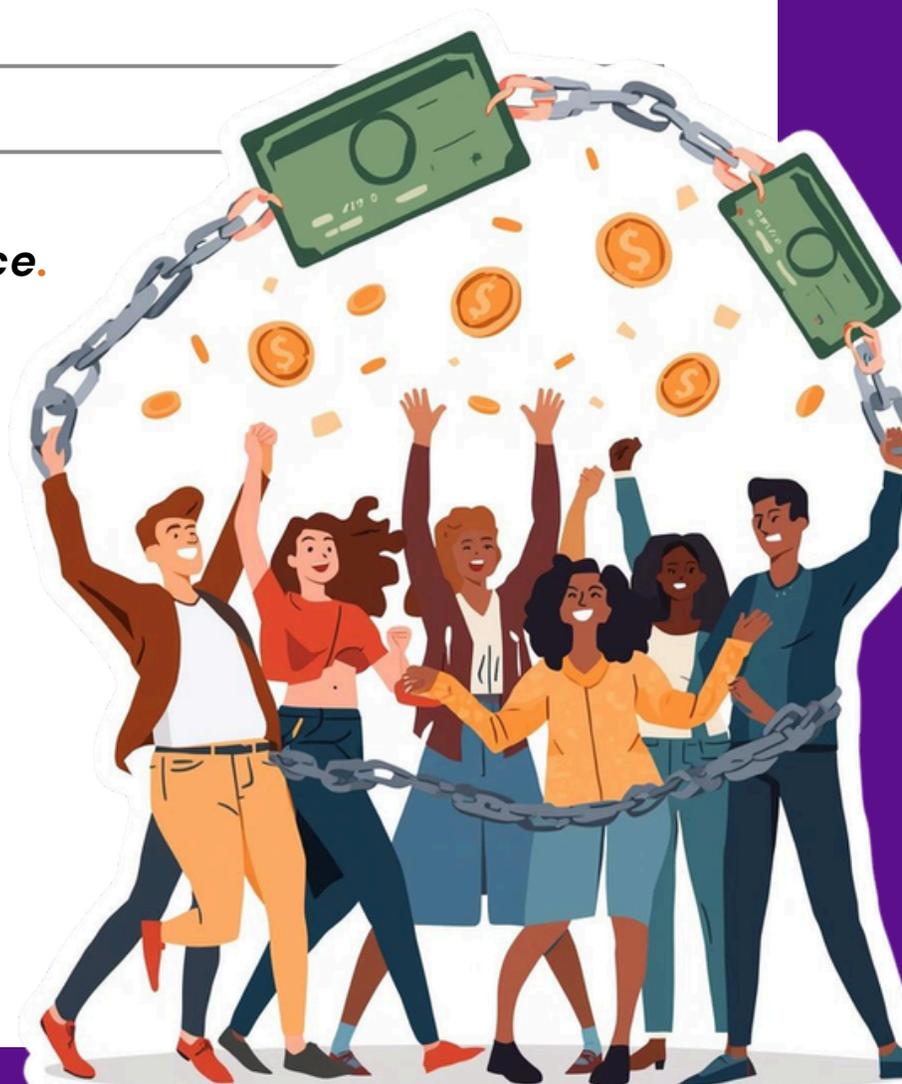
What feeling is usually behind it?

(stress, boredom, loneliness, pressure, fear...)

Now imagine the next time this situation appears.

One thing I could try instead is:

Awareness creates choice.
Choice creates power.



8

A SIMPLE WAY TO MAKE
MONEY FEEL LESS STRESSFUL

BUDGETING

BUDGET PLAN



STEP 1

WHAT USUALLY COMES IN?

Think about the money that comes into your life in a normal month.

This can include:

- salary or part-time work
- allowances or family support
- scholarships or benefits
- occasional income.

MY USUAL MONTHLY INCOME (APPROXIMATELY):

*If your income changes from month to month, that's okay.
Write an average or a rough estimate.*

STEP 2

WHERE DOES IT USUALLY GO?

Most people don't lose money on big things. They lose it on small, repeated expenses. Below are common spending categories for young people.

HOUSING / CONTRIBUTION / UTILITIES: _____

FOOD & DRINKS: _____

TRANSPORT: _____

PHONE / INTERNET / SUBSCRIPTIONS: _____

FUN, GOING OUT, ONLINE SPENDING: _____

OTHER REGULAR EXPENSES: _____

*You don't need exact numbers.
Clarity matters more than precision.*

STEP 3

WHAT FEELS HEAVY?

Look at what you wrote.

Answer honestly:

WHICH CATEGORY CREATES THE MOST STRESS OR SURPRISE?

This is often the best place to start – not because it's the worst, but because it affects you the most.

STEP 4

A BUDGET FOR REAL LIFE

A good budget is not strict.
It is flexible and kind.

Choose one small adjustment you could try next month:

- setting a simple limit
- tracking one category for a week
- pausing one subscription
- planning one expense in advance.

ONE SMALL BUDGET CHANGE I AM WILLING TO TRY:

This is not a forever decision. It is an experiment.

Budgeting is not about being perfect with money.

It is about feeling safer and more in control.

Even a simple budget can give you:

- fewer surprises,
- clearer choices,
- and more breathing space.

And that is already progress.

8

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS
ALONE.

NOT ALONE



Across Europe, many young people say that: “I avoid asking for help because I feel...”

Money becomes much heavier when we carry it alone.

Many young people across Europe say they avoid asking for help because they feel:

- ashamed,
- afraid of being judged,
- or unsure if their problem is “serious enough”.

But support is not something you earn by struggling long enough.

It is something you are allowed to use.

Asking for support is not weakness.

It is a life skill.

Support can come from:

- a youth worker or facilitator
- a counsellor or coach
- a trusted adult
- youth organisations
- safe and reliable online resources.

REFLECTION

One person or place I could reach out to:

You deserve support — even before things get “**bad enough**”.

MY COMMITMENT *to myself*

DATE:

TIME:

✦ One thing I choose to do differently from now on:

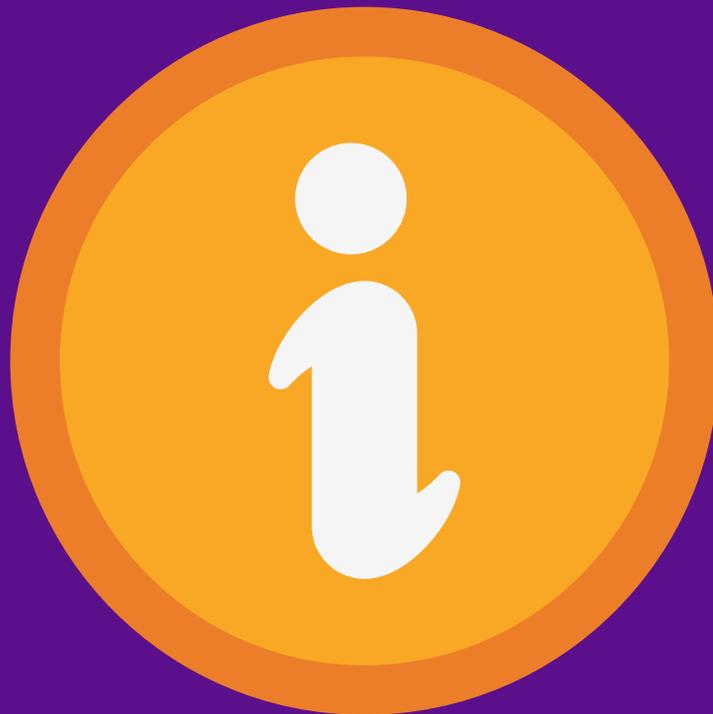
✦ One thing I will observe for the next 30 days:
(a habit, a feeling, a situation, a pattern)

This is NOT a contract.

**It is a reminder that you matter
and that your choices can change.**



ABOUT



ABOUT THE TOOLKIT



Young Money Matters is part of the Money Matters project, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

The project supports young people and youth workers across Europe in building:

- financial awareness,
- realistic and informed decision-making,
- and confidence around money.

This toolkit was created through international cooperation and real-life experience with young people, reflecting their challenges, questions, and strengths.



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Money Matters – Training Youth Workers to Empower, Educate and Elevate is an Erasmus+ project designed to strengthen the capacity of youth workers to deliver practical and impactful financial literacy education through non-formal learning methods.

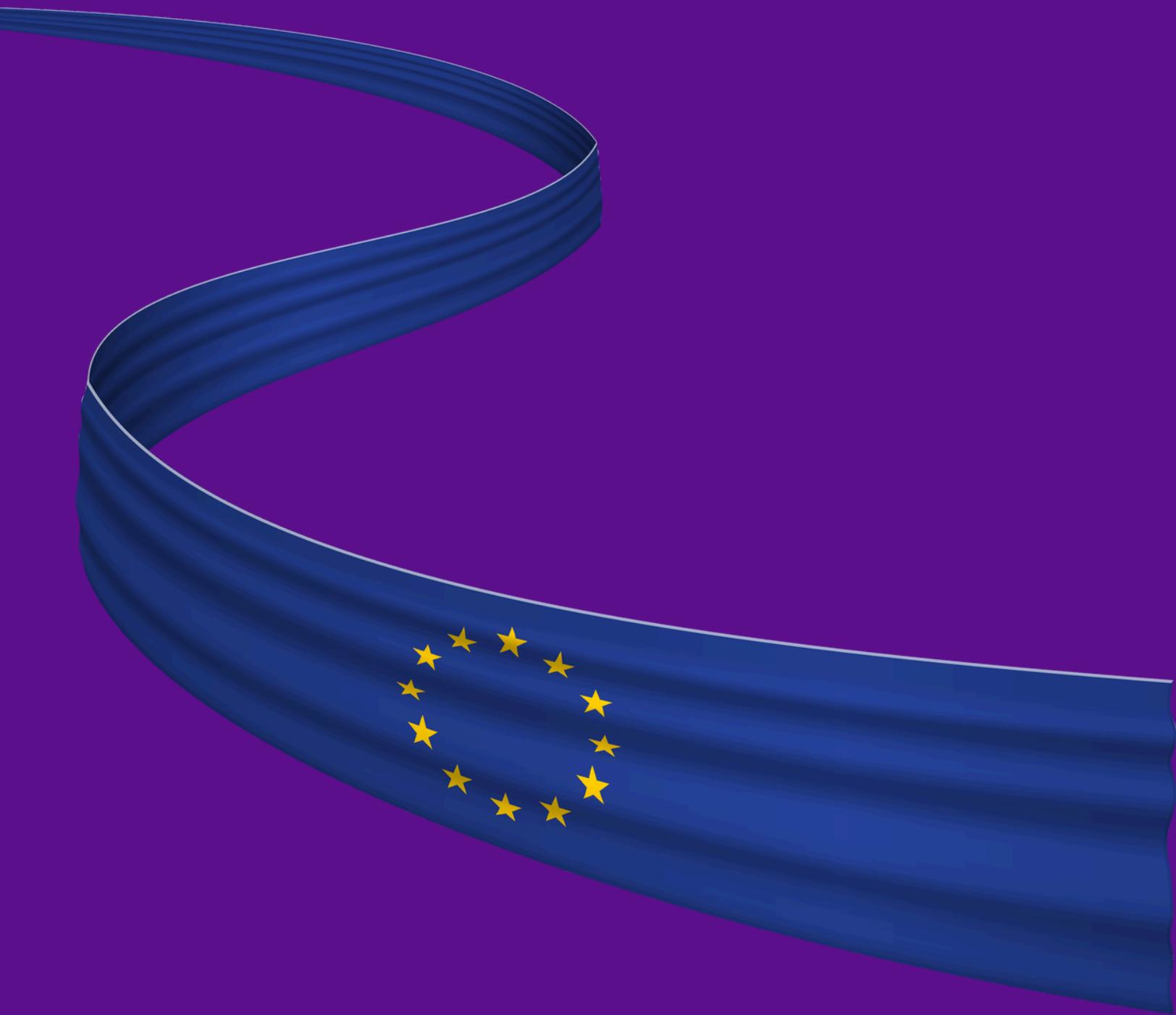
The project responds to the increasing financial vulnerability of young people across Europe. Many young people face unstable income, rising living costs, easy access to digital financial products, and strong social pressure around consumption. At the same time, structured financial education remains limited in many formal education systems.

Through international cooperation, the project develops experiential tools, reflection-based activities, and accessible educational resources that address key financial themes such as income generation, budgeting, saving, debt management, risk behaviours, and responsible decision-making.

The main outcome of the project is a two-edition toolkit:

- **Young Money Matters**, designed for young people, and
- **Old Money Matters**, a methodological guide for youth workers.

By combining financial knowledge with behavioural awareness and non-formal education principles, the project promotes financial resilience, social inclusion, and empowered participation in economic life.



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