Professional Development Guidelines

1. Introduction

Welcome to these guidelines on how to use the functionalities of [AppRaiser](#) for planning your professional development. Here you will find:

- Key points behind self-directed learning in the professional development journey
- How to use the AppRaiser platform to plan your professional development
- Hints and tips on how to navigate your way through the process

Feel free to check out the guidelines on other functionalities and possibilities of Appraiser and contact the team for any further assistance: appraiser@iywt.org.

2. Professional Development and Practice

Our business as international youth work trainers is that of training and facilitating the professional development and learning of those working with young people, emerging youth leaders and volunteers and therefore essential foundations of our practice.

Another essential ingredient in our work is that of self-directed learning and, together with professional development, we can start to map out, identify and better understand our own practice.

AppRaiser builds on these principles and encourages trainers and facilitators to: take responsibility; have the freedom to choose focus and intended outcomes; identify and work on professional development with support; use a structure and framework of competence development, acknowledge and a range of possibilities and in their own time.

3. Professional Development and AppRaiser

What for and how?

Before utilising AppRaiser for Professional Development take some moments to reflect and answer the following questions:

- *What are my reasons for developing myself professionally?*
- *What have been my previous strategies for professional development? (what worked, did not and why?)*

- *How do I like to learn and improve?*
- *What is my current workload and how much time do I want to commit for my development?*

AppRaiser believes no development will be successfully planned and implemented without first analysing the past strategies and patterns. If you are new to being a trainer or you have not focused before on your development, take a few steps back and reflect on *What kind of trainer am I?* and *What kind of trainer do I want to be?* After taking time for this reflection, we have some recommended strategies and approaches for your development and in using the AppRaiser platform.

Recommended Strategies and Approaches

What to focus on?

- Focus on developing your expertise

(here could be icon saying EXAMPLE) If you are an advanced trainer in human rights and conflict transformation you could focus on further building your expertise around this and focus on developing the competence area 'Being Civically Engaged'.

- Focus on developing the areas you need to improve

(EXAMPLE) If you notice from your 360 degree feedback that you have a lack of active listening or integrating learning with digital tools, pick up on those and use them as goals for development.

- Focus on the essentials

(EXAMPLE) If you are just starting as a trainer, you could invest your time developing the foundations of facilitation - how to realise experiential learning, how to plan a learning activity, how to manage the group process, how to conduct needs assessment and evaluation of the learning.

- Find your focus

If none of the above focus tips fit you, try to customise and discover a strategy that will work for you. Maybe look at the areas you take for granted, the competence areas you find difficult to answer or assess for yourself, or respond to the feedback you are regularly given by others.

How to plan realistically?

- Choose 1 indicator as a goal to achieve within a specific time frame. Give it a try to see how it works for you.
- Choose 3 to 5 indicators as goals and make a long-term plan.
- Customise and work with a system that works for you.

How to use the platform?

Step 1: Using self-assessment results

When you have completed your self-assessment, below the main grid you will see ´Add indicators to Professional Development Plan, you marked these indicators´. The following steps are:

1. Click on ´view all´ and you will see the full list of indicators that you marked as ´need development´.
2. Browse through the list and choose the ones that you want to focus on for your development.
3. Add indicators to your development plan by clicking on the plus icon ´add this indicator to the Development Plan´.
4. Once you have added the indicators you can see them in your 'Development Plan'.

Step 2: Using feedback results

Once you have requested feedback and gathered some responses, you can use the data to support your Development Plan. In the feedback page below the main grid you will see, ´Add indicators to Professional Development Plan, Need Development from Feedback Results´. The following steps are:

1. Click on ´view all´ and you will see the full list of indicators that were marked as ´Need Development´
2. Browse through the list and choose the ones that you want to focus on in your development, pay attention to the numbers of reviewers, you can see it below the indicator name as ´reviewers voted´
3. Add indicators to Development Plan by clicking on the plus icon ´add this indicator to the Development Plan´
4. Once you have added the indicators you can then see them in the 'Development Plan'.

When you enter the page of your Development Plan you will see all the indicators added. To make a plan of them here are the steps:

1. Click on the indicator and on the "add step".
2. Give your step a title, description and the deadline, you can also add an attachment.
3. Add more steps to the selected indicator, make sure the steps are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based).
4. Choose another indicator and repeat the process.

Adding goals without indicators:

1. Click on the space "what do you want to learn" and type anything that is not covered in the assessment model.
2. Add steps to what you want to learn.

1. Monitor - visit regularly the platform and check in with your progress
2. Ask for support - reach out to colleagues, supervisors and share your need for support or recommendations. If you are part of a Peer Support Trio, discuss with your trio (*you can find more information on the Peer Support Trios below*).
3. Analyse - take time to understand which approaches to development have worked better than others. This will help with future plans for development.
4. Celebrate the process and repeat!

4. Hints/tips for a smoother implementation

- Focus on one to three goals. Don't overplan.
- Do not invest time only in developing your weak(er) points, but also consider "low hanging fruits" (indicators and competences that can be improved with a little effort).
- Be specific as much as you can, break down your goals into steps
- Be realistic with time frame planning
- Maintain momentum and regularly visit
- Ask for help and support from your peers