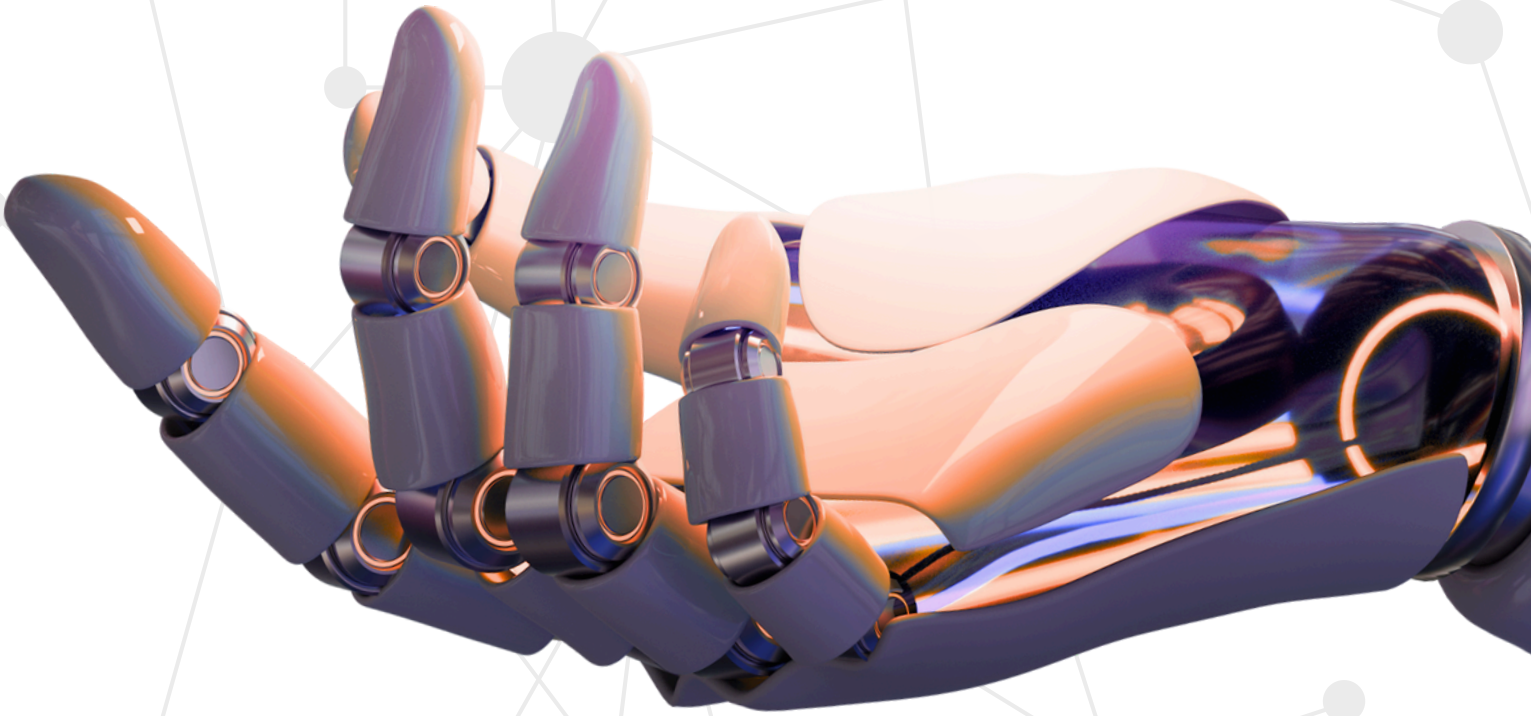
THE FEMAILAB GUIDE



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WHAT IS FEMAILAB?

FemAiLab is a learning framework that was developed during the Erasmus+ cooperation project with the same name - FemAiLab - Open Lab for Artificial Intelligence for Women, 2024-1-DE02-KA210-ADU-000243633.

It provides the framework for a new type of collaborative and co-creative learning. It combines elements from existing systems such as Working out Loud (WOL), SCRUM, Agile Working, and LernOS.

The FemAiLab Guide provides an overview of this learning framework and describes the various building blocks and their functions that make up the FemAiLab.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE FEMAILAB

The FemAiLab consists of several building blocks. These building blocks can be adapted, omitted or expanded depending on the requirements and design of the individual realisations of the FemAiLab.

FemAiLab Events

A FemAiLab event is a meeting of FemAiLab participants where they learn together. Each event consists of three possible sections:

- an introductory LearningImpulse,
- a meeting of the LearningCircles, and
- the free learning.

The FemAiLab usually takes place once a week over a period of 10-12 weeks. There are two special events at the beginning and end of the FemAiLab: the kick-off at the start and the closing event at the end. These two events differ in their format from the other sessions.

KICK-OFF

The kick-off brings the FemAiLab participants together for the first time and has the following agenda:

- Brief introduction of the participants.
- How does the FemAiLab work?
- Forming LearningCircles.
- Setting individual learning goals.

CLOSING

The closing event marks the end of a FemAiLab cycle. It can be used for the following activities:

- Sharing and showcasing the individual goals achieved with the other participants.
- Defining follow-up activities.
- Planning further (joint) learning activities.

A - LearningImpulses

Learning Impulses are thematic inputs at the beginning of each FemAiLab event.

They provide participants with ideas on what and how they could try things out.

They are timeboxed, i.e. limited in time and should last no longer than 1 hour.

The LearningImpulses can be designed by learning facilitators, external speakers or by the participants from the lab.

They contain current information, tips, tools, use cases, workflows, etc. related to AI and digital topics.

The topics can initially be inputs on the basics of AI and later on specific topics requested by the participants.

Excursions to other institutions that teach or apply AI could also take place here (e.g. makerspaces, fablabs, etc.).

An example of the content design for the learning impulses for a 10-week implementation (W1 -W10) can be found in the appendix of this guide.

B – Learning Circles

The LearningCircles consist of approximately 3-5 learners. They are formed at the kick-off and remain together for the entire duration of the FemAiLab, if possible. However, if necessary, the small groups can also be reconfigured for each event.

The LearningCircles meet regularly, ideally at every FemAiLab event and after the Learning Impulse. In addition, participants can decide among themselves when it is best to meet, e.g. outside of FemAiLab events and on additional dates. The LearningCircles meetings are also timeboxed and should last no longer than one hour.

The structure of a LearningCircle can include the following elements:

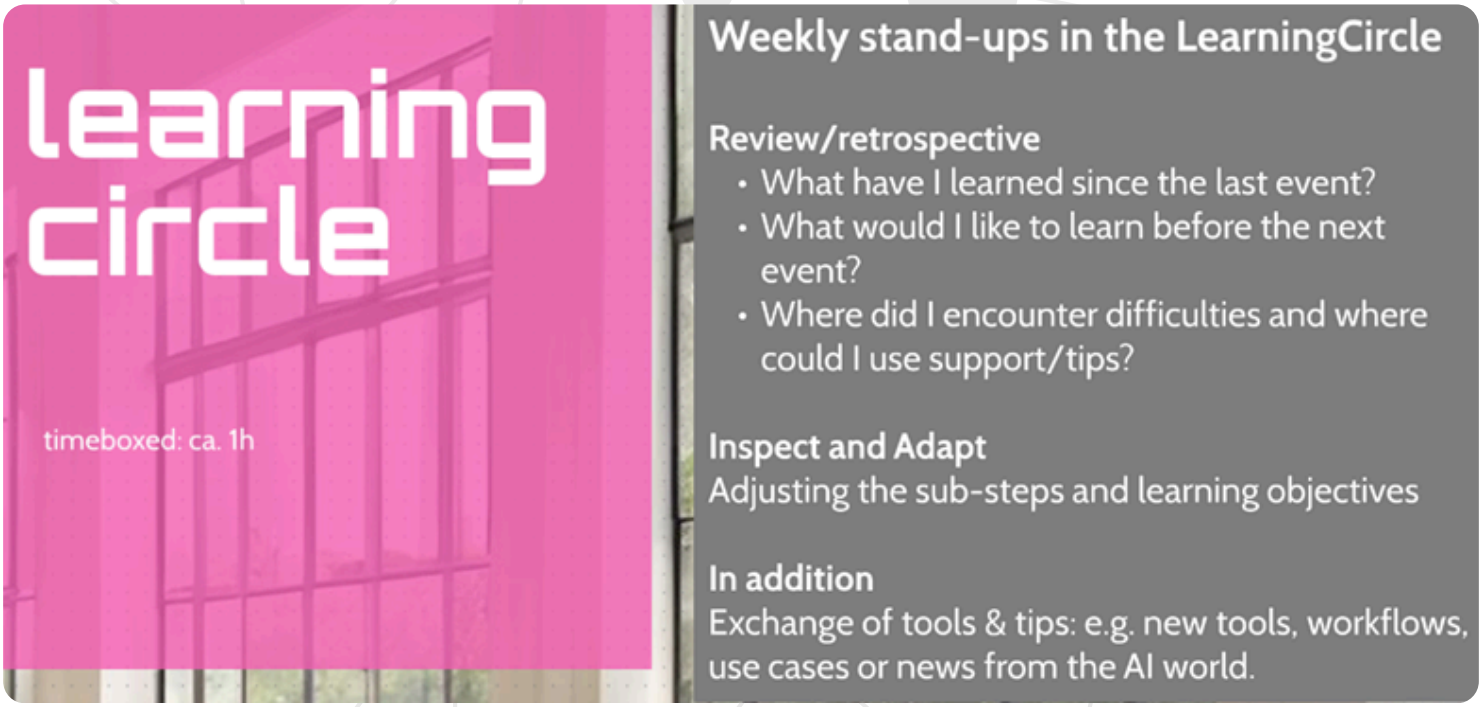
Review/retrospective: The following three questions are asked:

- What have I learned since the last event?
- What would I like to learn by the next event?
- Where did I encounter difficulties and where could I use support/tips?

Inspect and adapt

- Review and adapt the individual learning objective and the individual steps.

And the LearningCircle can also be used to exchange new tools, workflows, use cases or news from the world of AI.



C – Free learning

The Free learning takes place after the LearningImpulse and the LearningCircles meeting. It gives opportunity to start right away with the learning on your own learning goal while being in the company of other learners. Learners can study independently or exchange ideas with others. They can continue working on their own learning goals or try out and deepen the ideas from the learning impulse in practice. The Free learning is also timeboxed and should last no longer than 2 hours to limit the total duration of a FemAiLab to a maximum of 4 hours. However, it would be nice if further learning remains open were always possible in case someone is in an ongoing learning flow.

The Free learning can be supported by various elements – the Learning Helpers.

Learning Helpers

The following elements of the FemAILab can be helpful on the Learning Journey:

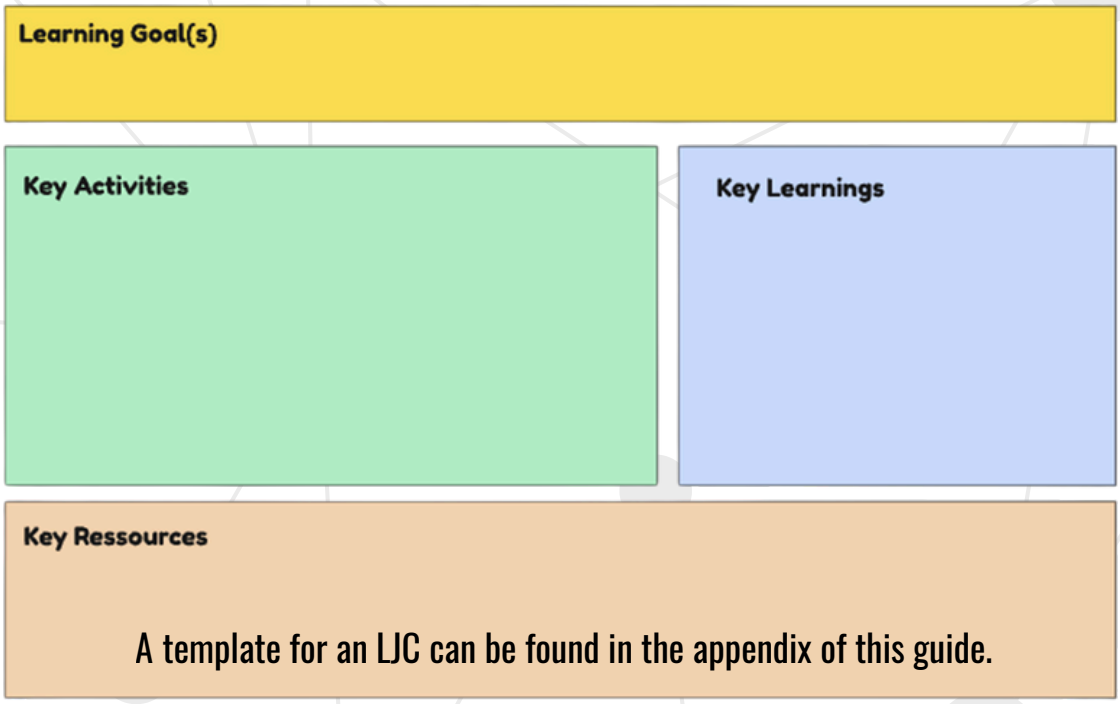
LEARNING JOURNEY CANVAS

The Learning Journey Canvas (LJC) is an overview of where the learning journey is going for each participant in the FemAiLab. It contains the following elements:

- Overarching personal learning objective in the course of the FemAiLab
- Sub-goals for achieving this learning goal
- Key learnings, insights or take-aways
- (Learning) resources

The LJC can be created in paper form and/or digitally. If necessary, it can/will be adapted during the learning journey.

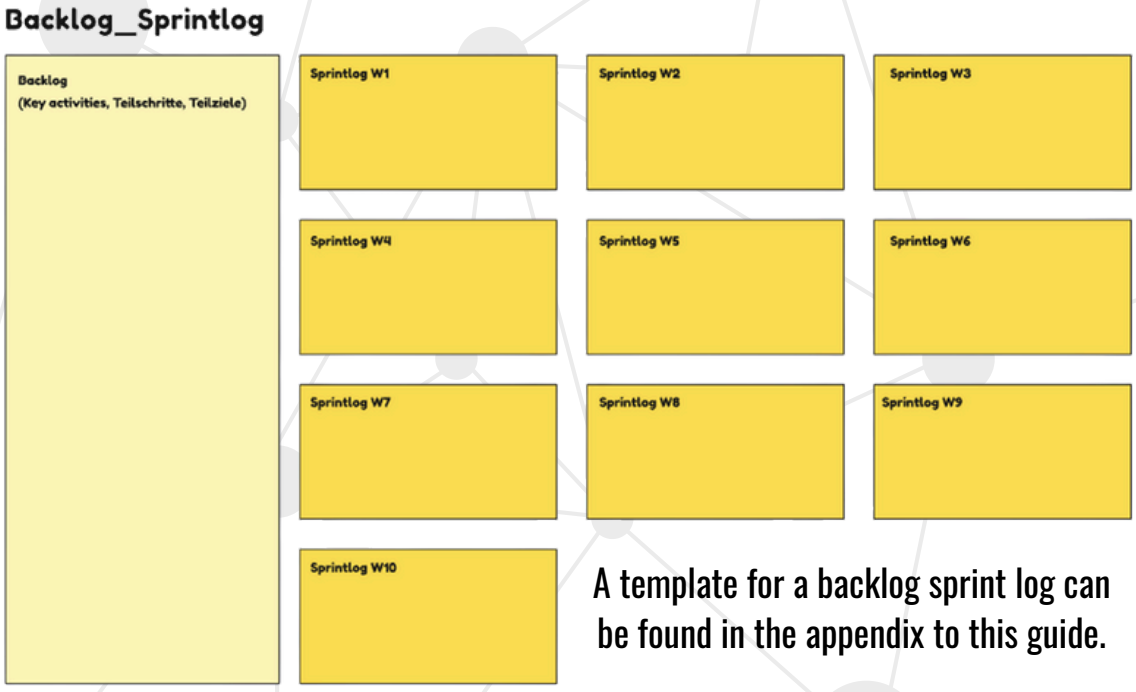
Learning Journey Canvas



A template for an LJC can be found in the appendix of this guide.

BACKLOG_SPRINTLOG CANVAS

The Backlog_Sprintlog Canvas is an optional add-on to the LJC. It enables easy monitoring of weekly activities. In an initial list – the backlog – all sub-activities required to achieve the overarching goal are collected. From this backlog, the tasks to be implemented in the current week are then selected each week. These lists are called sprint logs (the term "sprint" comes from SCRUM and simply refers to a fixed period of time in which tasks are completed). Subtasks that are not completed in the selected week/sprint are simply returned to the backlog and transferred to a weekly sprint log in one of the following weeks. The entries in the backlog can of course be adjusted at any time.

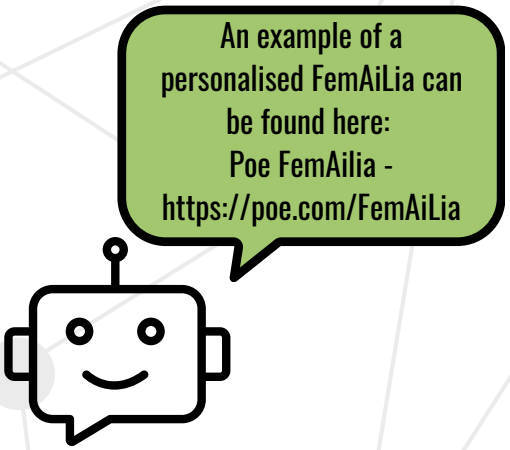


A template for a backlog sprint log can be found in the appendix to this guide.

FEMAILIA – PERSONAL AI BUDDY

FemAiLia is a personalised chatbot/assistant based on an LLM (e.g. Claude, Gemini Flash, or similar) and has the following additional knowledge and skills:

- The FemAiLab Guide,
- AI topics and applications,
- How to set goals and formulate sub-goals,
- the FemAiLab curriculum,
- how to motivate learning,
- Coaching methods,
- etc.



She also has the option of using tools, e.g. browsing the internet, and can provide interfaces to other tools on request.

LEARNING RESOURCES

The Learning Resources are a collection of links, prompts and tips that arise during the course of the FemAiLab and should be made available to all participants. The technical implementation is open and depends on the respective design of the FemAiLab. In the first round, we created a Miro board, and in the second round, we worked with a Padlet. All other formats are conceivable. Additional information and links to the respective learning impulses were also stored within the Prezi (online presentation tool) used behind the individual FemAiLab events. In addition, each participant will develop her own individual system for collecting her personal learning resources.

Commitments

During a FemAiLab, learners can make three commitments. These can be as follows:

I commit to:

- to my individual learning goal,
- to my LearningCircle, or learning in a community, and
- to my own responsibility for the quality of the learning outcomes of my learning journey.

These commitments help to internalise the fact that you are embarking on an individual learning journey on your own responsibility, but that you are in good and supportive company. You commit to a defined and manageable time commitment. In doing so, you give yourself time to learn and automatically become part of the emerging learning ecosystem.

THE FEMAILAB IN PRACTICE

In this section, we describe three different practical implementations of FemAiLab in various spatial and organisational settings and with different participants.

Practical implementation of FemAILab

PILOT RUN IN WIESBADEN, GERMANY, SPRING 2025

In the pilot run of the FemAiLab in Wiesbaden, up to 15 learners met on a total of 10 Mondays between April and June 2025 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the premises of BerufsWege für Frauen e.V. in Wiesbaden.

An overview of the presentations and learning impulses during the pilot run can be found here:

https://prezi.com/view/1WTNDGfQVFmXmeOMAzJX/

As most participants were unable to attend all 10 events, no fixed LearningCircles were formed; instead, participants came together according to their needs and thematic interests.

The spatial arrangement consisted of a large room in which the learning impulses were shared on a smartboard. The room was designed with three learning islands (group tables) for approx. six people each, and there were two additional separate rooms where smaller groups could learn in a quieter atmosphere. All participants brought their own digital devices (BYOD – bring your own device). Two laptops were also available for use.

From the 4th week onwards, the LearningImpulses were provided by an external speaker and by the participants of the FemAiLab.

PILOT RUN IN LJUBLJANA AND KOPER, SLOVENIA, SPRING 2025

The pilot run of the FemAiLabs in Slovenia was explicitly designed as an internal tool for digital upskilling for the employees of the Ljudska univerza Koper, Slovenia (an adult education centre). The employees were given the opportunity by their employer to participate in the learning events during working hours. It was attended by approximately 11-15 women of different ages.

The learning events took place on the institute's premises, where courses are usually offered to external participants. These rooms were equipped with the necessary digital equipment. In addition to regular events, one additional virtual session was organised at a later date.

Each meeting consisted of two parts: LearningImpulses and an open lab for independent work or group work on specific examples (where LearningCircles and free learning were combined). The LearningImpulses focused on the basics of AI, how to write prompts correctly, how to optimize working with AI, what copyrights are, and learning about different AI tools.

FEMAILAB GOES ZUKUNFTSWERK DER STADT WIESBADEN, SUMMER 2025

Starting summer 2025, the FemAiLab was held regularly once a week in the rooms of the Zukunftswerk (Future Workshop) of the state capital of Wiesbaden. The Zukunftswerk is an initiative of the City of Wiesbaden, the Department for Smart City, Europe and Order, and sees itself as a city lab for smart, sustainable and digital projects.

This time, the participation in the FemAiLab was not designed as a fixed 10-week cycle, but rather as a series of independent, individual events held every Monday. Many of the women participated regularly in the lab every Monday. The learning impulses of the first events started with rather general basic information about AI, each with presentations of current tools to try out. No fixed learning circles were formed; instead, the women spontaneously formed learning groups. Some of the participants already knew each other from the pilot run of the FemAiLab and were therefore also supportive contact persons for new learners.

A special element for learning is the spatial design of the Zukunftswerk. This consists explicitly of furniture that promotes learning and exchange for new ways of working and learning. At each lab event, different arrangements of the learning space were tried out and feedback from the participants was taken into account.

Considering connection options

During the practical implementation of the FemAiLab, the following questions arose in particular:

- How can the FemAiLab be continued after one cycle?
- How and where can adaptive, individual, co-creative, collaborative learning be sustained?
- How can transitions or combinations with other learning ecosystems be created?

The implementation of FemAiLab in the Zukunftswerk of the City of Wiesbaden was already an answer to these questions. It is desirable to make it as a permanent offering.

Another collaboration took place with Heimathafen in Wiesbaden. Heimathafen is a co-working space and innovation centre for freelancers, start-ups and companies. It offers modern workspaces, conference rooms and an inviting atmosphere that facilitates the exchange and joint development of ideas.

As part of the monthly Community Day at Heimathafen, all FemAiLab participants were offered the opportunity to use the co-working spaces and get together in the conference rooms for a joint learning event. Here, too, there are plans to make this a reoccuring event.

The FemAiLab in the context of corporate learning

We are convinced that the FemAiLab concept is an excellent learning format for use in the field of corporate learning, e.g. in a company, but also in other institutions such as municipal structures. The FemAiLab is an excellent answer to thes potential question from companies: How can we bring digital and AI-related skills into our company in a way that is as application-oriented, practical and individually adaptable as possible?

We recommend the following framework conditions:

- Learning spaces, that are openly accessible and protected at the same time,
- Good Wi-Fi, sufficient power sources, adjustable lighting,
- BYOD (bring your own device) additionally optional, laptops, PCs, tablets, smartphones,
- Metaplan and digital technology, projectors, smartboards, etc.
- Comfortable and flexible furniture so that learners can interact and exchange ideas easily, allowing for relaxed and comfortable independent learning.
- Quiet areas for individual learning and adequate noise protection,
- Incentives for drinks, food, restrooms, table football, fruit, water 😉
- Exemption for employees to participate in the lab.

SUMMARY OF THE FEMAILAB CONCEPT

The concept for the FemAiLab was developed based on two levels. The first level is the learning setting, i.e. the learning format, how and where learning takes place. The second level is the learning content, i.e. what is being learned.

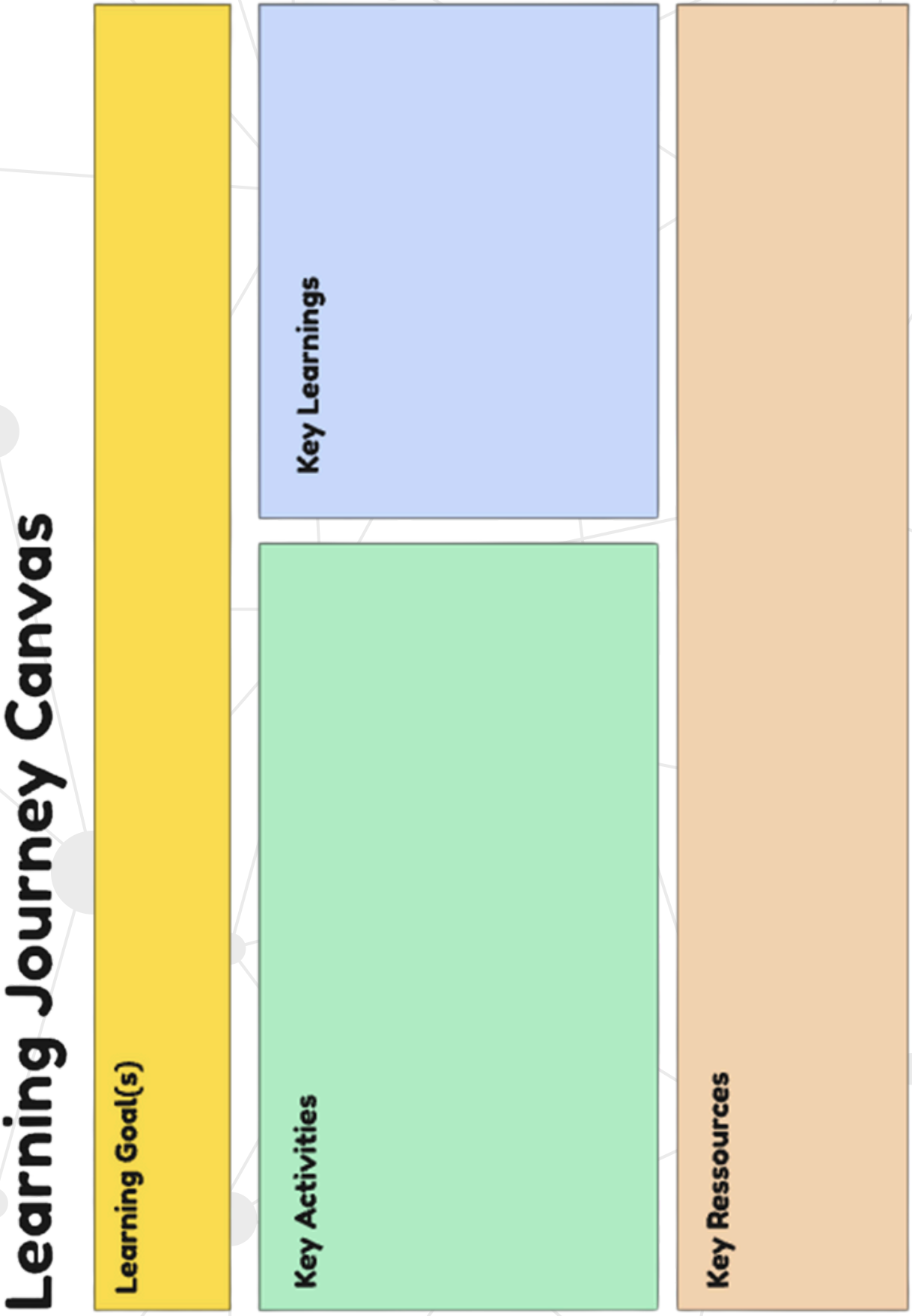
In the area of learning content, a further distinction is made between the two blocks of personal skills and AI skills: In the area of AI skills, content on the topic of AI is offered, while personal skills primarily include those that are developed through self-organised learning. These serve primarily to develop and expand individual professional and personal skills.

The entire concept can be viewed HERE.

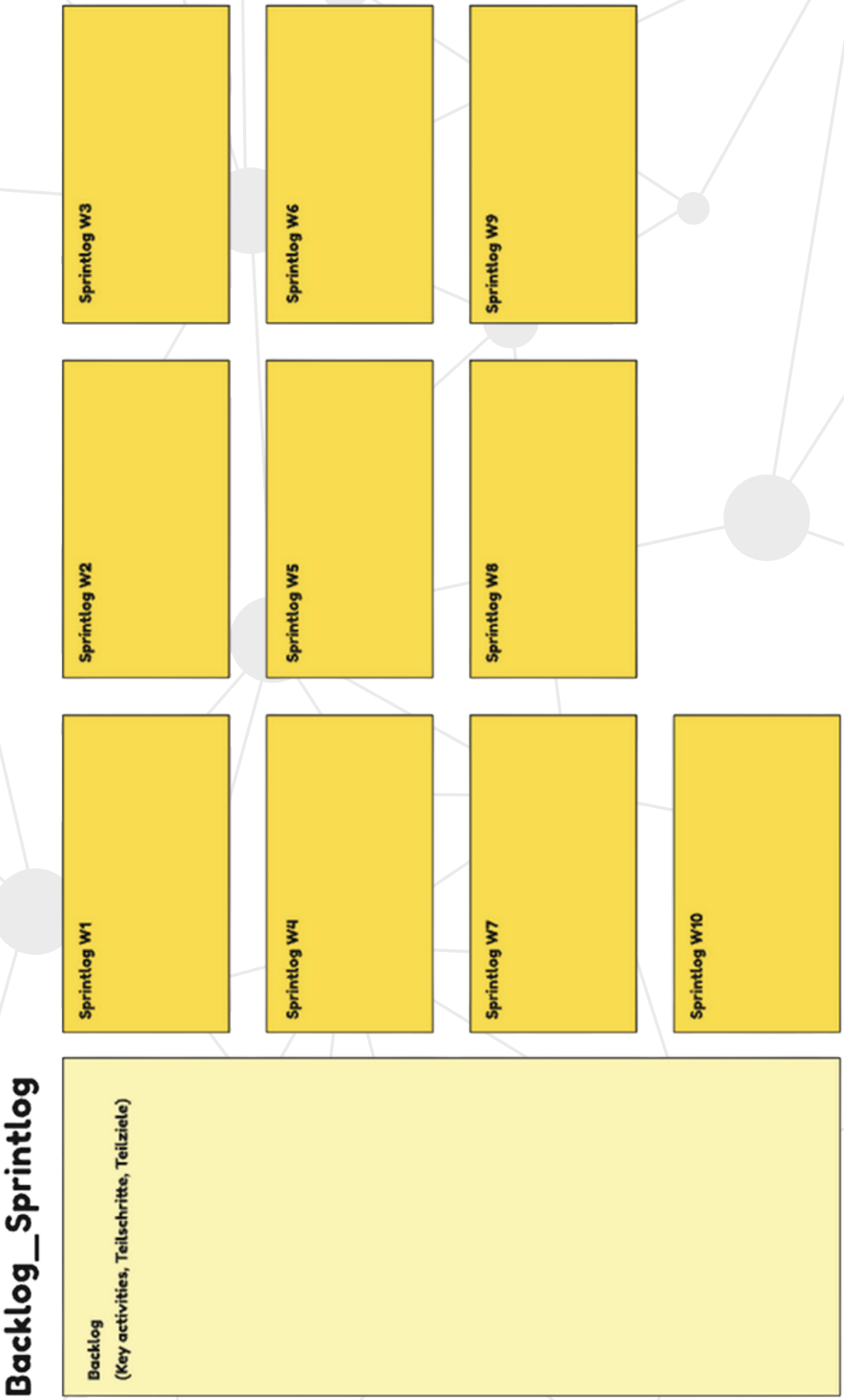
Proposed curriculum for a 10-week course

Week	Learning impulse (~1h)	Learning circles (~ 1h)	Free learning (~2 hours)
1	Kick-off Introduction to the concept and process of FemAiLab	Getting to know each other, forming learning circles, setting learning goals	individual
2	Basics of AI Getting to know language models	LearningCircle, stand-up, retrospective, review	Individual
3	Basics of prompting Rules for good prompting, practical testing	Learning Circle, Standup, Retrospective, Review	Individual
4	Basics of AI agents What are agents, current state of developments	Learning Circle, Standup, Retrospective, Review	Individual
5	Selection of practical tools (e.g. Napkin, NotebookLM, Gamma, ...)	Learning Circle, Standup, Retrospective, Review	Individual
6	Helpful workflows with tools e.g. for everyday questions (tax returns, business plans, interactive games)	LearningCircle, Standup, Retrospective, Review	Individual
7	Tools for image and video design (e.g. HeyGen, Dall-e, Canva, Midjourney, ...)	Learning Circle, Standup, Retrospective, Review	individual
8	Optional: "I can code!" Examples of vibe coding or coding with, for example, Micro:bit, Calliope, Rasperry and Co.	Learning Circle, Standup, Retrospective, Review	Individual
9	Optional: Excursion to local makerspaces (insights into 3D printing, sensors, robotics)	Learning Circle, stand-up, retrospective, review	Individual
10	Closing: Retrospective, outlook, consolidation		

Template for a Learning Journey Canvas



Template for a backlog sprint log



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Information about the project on the official Erasmus+ project page of the European Union:
https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2024-1-DE02-KA210-ADU-000243633

Learning resources from Open FemAiLabs in the Zukunftswerk of the City of Wiesbaden:
https://padlet.com/karinsiepmann1/open-femailab-2025-mx27fu2kbxfpwead

Learning resources from FemAiLabs in Slovenia (translated to English):
Artificial Intelligence Tools
Prompting Basics

Contact information for the implementing organisations:

- BerufsWege für Frauen e.V. Wiesbaden, Germany
  https://www.berufswege-fuer-frauen.de/erasmus/

- STEP Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia
  https://www.step-institute.org/femailab-open-lab-for-artificial-intelligence-for-woman/

Open LinkedIn group of the FemAiLab
https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13202295/

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