

A guide to creative facilitation techniques to monitor and evaluate European cooperation

by Melting Pro



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CONNECT
KNOWLEDGE ALLIANCE
FOR AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

A guide to creative facilitation techniques to monitor and evaluate European cooperation

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Some of us have been working since 2013; the consortium continues to develop and is currently and, in the future, working together to advance the European field of Audience Development.

CONNECT is a Knowledge Alliance project for Audience Development that promotes innovative cooperation between universities and enterprises in the cultural sector across Europe. <http://www.connectingaudiences.eu/about>

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WHY THIS GUIDE?

When applying for a European grant, most of the time you are likely required to define a quality assurance and evaluation strategy to guarantee that the project will reach the expected goals. This guide will help you reach those goals and keep your partners and stakeholders motivated, even if they have been part of the design process. From the idea design to the implementation, each **project is a learning practice**. *Monitoring* and *evaluation* are essential elements of this process. Both should be seen as an integral part of the process and not an add-on.

“This is where creative approaches really shine. They can be embedded into the activities within your programmes, supporting stakeholders to engage with your reporting by balancing the text and stats” (Fitton, 2018)¹.

This toolkit is aimed at sharing an approach to monitoring and evaluation by suggesting using creative games and visual techniques along with standard monitoring and evaluation tools. The idea is that by creating a space of continuous and encourage discussion open feedback, it fosters ownership, collaboration and a bottom up approach relevant to the needs of the project partners and the different stakeholders involved. Creative and visual mapping techniques bring people back in the creative process of generating ideas, according to Adrian de La Court. Not only because it helps to visualise ideas, tasks and strengths, foresee weaknesses and plan actions but also because they foster a participatory approach. Of course, you will need to plan ahead and invest time, but at the end it will be worth it.

With this approach facilitation skills are essential. But facilitation isn't just useful for workshops and meetings. As you develop this skill, you'll find that you're using it in many of your conversations and throughout projects to get the

¹ <https://www.theaudienceagency.org/resources/getting-creative-with-evaluation>

best out of the people around you. It helps you to keep momentum going and make sure the project is moving forward² (Coward, 2015).

In this particular guide, we refer to the specific case the CONNECT project funded by the European Erasmus Grant – Knowledge alliances, KA2. By all means, these do not replace the classic tools such as the Project Cycle Management and the Logical Framework but are ways of applying standard models differently and to make complex tools more familiar and accessible.

In literature there are many other valuable tools available on managing European Projects and international collaborations. This guide could be useful either if you are an expert in European project management, and you might be are looking for inspiration or if you are beginner and you would like to acquire some suggestions.

The guide is structured in two main sections, the first section illustrates the difference between meetings and workshops, and some literature around running good meetings. The second section presents some tools that we have used in CONNECT or in other collaborative environments. The tools are described according each step of the project. The start, when is important to form a team and realign values and expectations, in the middle of the project when you need to keep the momentum going and the end, when finally, you can celebrate and carry out the final evaluation. And maybe look ahead, what the future holds for the project.

The exercises in this toolkit have been sourced from many people that have inspired us. Some are approaches that are familiar and it is difficult to know who invented them. We hope that this guide will serve as tools to anyone in charge for managing European projects or any kind of project and hopefully they will help you to tell the story of your project.

² Coward, Alison, Great times. A guide to better creative collaboration, © Bracket Ltd 2015

WHY ARE MONITORING AND EVALUATION IMPORTANT?

A project, by its own definition, it is a specific set of activities to achieve a planned goal. To implement within an established timeframe and given resources, that one is willing to carry out because they want to change an initial situation. It is, of course, something that it is not possible to achieve alone.

“A project is a system that embodies a structured set of interactions and different elements (tangible, intangible, ideas, relations, human) joined by multiple connections, which are uncertain – many - and unstable. [...] **People make the project**; it’s impossible to separate the project dimension from the human side, which involves emotional engagement, cognitive, executive and behavioural elements. Ultimately it is the project dimension that leads to the development of making ideas possible.” (Argano, p.26,2013).³

Since it is all about people, “What one should be aware of is to try to go beyond the technical role of monitoring and assessing the quality of project performances and results. It’s about facilitating a process” as Giulia Fiaccarini, Melting Pro, says.

You need to engage the different stakeholders from the beginning, starting from your project partners. As Adrian De La Court, ICCE, Goldsmiths, University of London project partner says, “Engage people in your vision to make things happen”.

In this vision, you have also many other stakeholders that you need to be aware of, keep satisfied or informed, such as your funding institution and, of course, the direct beneficiaries.

³ CREATIVE GYM: TRAINING EXERCISES FOR CULTURAL MANAGERS
<https://meltingpro.org/en/library/creative-gym-training-exercises-for-cultural-managers-a-collection-of-essays-and-case-studiesnon-solo-la-crisi-economica-che-ha-ridotto-le-spese-destinate-al-settore-ma-luso-delle-nuove-t/>

In a European context, of course, there are different elements to take into account like the geographical distance, the different cultural backgrounds, various style of job planning and the linguistic diversity. Monitoring and evaluation **are a way of facilitating processes and stories among different people involved in a project.**

Understanding from the beginning what you identify as successful is key. What is the impact that you want to make? In other words visualise together and realign what you wrote in the project application.

In literature this is also known as stories of change “Stories of change show what is valued through the use of specific narratives of events. Structured with a beginning, middle and end, they focus on the change that has taken place due to the program.”

Ideally, in a project we should work through the following steps:

- What were expectations/goals?
- What shifted/changed/created challenge?
- What was the response?
- How did collaboration evolve with others?
- How did innovation occur/solution find?
- Main Lesson(s)?
- New Expectation(s)/goals

Facilitating this process, **means maximising the moments of exchange amongst partners**, monitoring the compliance to the set deadlines and deliverables together with the degree of flexibility necessary to manage such a complex project, and guiding partners in understanding how the project will impact them and their countries.

This is why we should **be privileging quality assessment method that allow partners to share their opinion on the project and have a dialogue on it.**

Planning activities that can take place during the meetings and are functional to better the next phases of work. It is an open discussion on how the project is

going and how everyone is doing while implementing it to try to make improvements and solve problems together, rather than a mere measurement of project performance indicators⁴.

⁴ Giulia Fiaccarini, Melting Pro, Expert project manager

WHY FACILITATION IS A VALUABLE SKILL?

Every project should be seen as a transformation process, we commit to it because we want to change an initial situation in collaboration with other people. Steinlin and Widrig Jenkins (2010) highlight that, whatever the format one is dealing with, an event, a meeting or a project, many successful transformation processes follow the three phases of divergence, emergence and convergence (in this order):



Figure 1 Steinlin Widrig Jenkins 2010, author's own elaboration

The stage of divergence is the initial phase during which people open up: they broaden their horizons, learn about the world (system) they live in, and reflect about (their own and others') past experience, about their peers and other stakeholders, and about new ideas, concepts, research and the like.

The stage of emergence is the central turning point of a process. Something new emerges: a direction, vision, future that in some way has the character of novelty, that is desirable and attractive.

The stage of convergence is the final, opposite movement. Once participants know the scope of possibility, and – within this space – they have determined their preferred direction, they now need to close in on those options

that lead straight towards this new future, that are conducive and practicable, and are doable at the same time.

Having this in mind, facilitation skills are essential because as a facilitator you have the ability to create the space, by surfacing and unlocking the potential and capacities of people, by mobilising inherent resources and by supporting stakeholders in shaping their own future and the impact of the project. **The role of monitoring and evaluation should be of co-creating change, build trust and co-operation, involvement of stakeholders, complete map of current reality, focus on possibilities, encourage open conversations, collect and give feedbacks.**

At this point, it is worth thinking about the difference between workshops and meetings. As Alison Coward mentions in *A Pocket Guide: Effective Workshops*: “Good workshops and good meetings have a structure and a set of goals. They energise people, bring out different points of view, brainstorm possibilities and generally use the best thinking of a great team to solve a shared problem creatively. They require preparation, facilitation and follow-up”.⁵

She continues, saying: “People often go to meetings with the intention of getting their point across and to convince others that their idea is the best – and sometimes, they just sit there hoping they could be somewhere else! In contrast, workshops are for everyone in the room to problem solve together.”

A workshop, as defined by the Oxford Living Dictionary is a 'meeting at which a group of people engage in intensive discussion and activity on a particular subject or project'.

In many cases the use of a workshop format is more useful than a meeting format to make decisions and to engage and motivate a team. Particularly in European project since you created a partnership based on different and interdisciplinary competences.

⁵ Coward, A., *A Pocket Guide: Effective Workshops*, p.12

A well-run workshop looks very different to a meeting. Great workshops are:

- dynamic and engaging
- part of the process – a means to an end, not the end itself
- efficient and productive (p.12)

A comparison between great workshops vs Typical meetings by Alison Coward	
Great workshops	Typical meetings
People are there to develop content together	People come to present content
Exploring different options and possibilities	Trying to persuade people of one right answer
Unknowns to explore	Known facts or decisions to be communicated
Engaged participants	Passive attenders
Equal contributions	Power dynamic of the loudest or most senior people in the room
Dynamic	Static

Fig.2 Difference between workshops and typical meetings Source: Alison Coward (2015) p. 13

Most importantly, it is essential to have well designed sessions, with a clear focus in mind, not longer than two hours and not to forget about breaks. It's important to know when to do what, to give the event an inherent structure and flow, and a thread that guides participants from one phase to the next – working (and learning) step by step to create a logical structure which targets precisely the purpose of the session. A workshop setting that uses creative tools has the

potential to allow participants to stay active and focused and to leave their mobile phones and laptops.

Another suggestion from many experienced facilitators (Coward, Goodacre) is to keep the team small *“There have been many different opinions on what the ideal team size is, and it seems to fall somewhere between 5 and 9 (i.e. 7, plus or minus 2). What everyone seems to agree on however, is that as a team starts to get into double figures, it becomes more difficult to remain productive.”*

Leigh Thompson in her Creative Conspiracy book suggests using a hybrid, interactive meeting structures—characterized by periods of autonomous work punctuated by periods of intense collaborative work; clear goal setting and goal striving.

To summarise:

- Create the right environment
- Know your partners
- Build trust
- Clear goals, structure and rules
- Work in small teams
- Use hybrid sessions individual and group sharing
- Take notes
- Wrap up
- Action planning

HOW TO YOU USE CREATIVE TOOLS TO MONITOR YOUR PROJECT

In this section, we have arranged a list of tools according the different lifecycle of the project: the starting, the middle and the end. The suggested tools are organised with consideration to the goal you want to achieve with your team. Every facilitation job is different, and you should tailor your sessions to suit your context and aims. It is crucial also to think about a balance between the group aims and individual perspective and making sure the process is enjoyable and creative. As mentioned, these tools and the way they are presented should be seen as a suggestion. Some of them, might appear not to have any relation to monitoring and evaluation, but ultimately, the goal is to prompt an open conversation with your partners. You can find many online resources and toolkits as well. You could apply some of the tools to online meetings too⁶.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: THE STARTERS

First of all, it is really important **to create the right working environment**, to shape a suitable and trustworthy environment among your team. You need to set the tone of how you want the team to work for the next two or three years. As one CONNECT colleague said: to create “a safe space, for unsafe ideas (Niels Righolt, CKI)”. It’s important to invest some time at the beginning to realign your partners about the scope of the project and the impact they want to make, as individuals, as a team and as a network.

“When a team comes together, the mix of skills, expertise and personalities will be unique. Each new project is an opportunity to build a new team culture. Even if a team has worked together before, the context of a new innovation challenge

⁶ <https://hbr.org/2020/03/virtual-meetings-dont-have-to-be-a-bore>

or creative brief will bring in different dynamics. The project kickoff is a key part of all of this.”⁷

Mortensen says that these sessions are an opportunity to 1) set ground rules about the way the team wants to function, 2) help people to understand why they’re there, and 3) have an agreement on what they are there to do.

As a first step is important to encourage participants to know each other beyond their professional expertise and encourage empathy among the group.

Johnson in her article “Introductions Are Much More than Icebreakers (2010)” says “...hearing or saying your name can boost your confidence” and she mentions that in The Checklist Manifesto, Atul Gawande explains that when introductions were made before surgery, the average number of complications and deaths fell by 35%. He attributed this dip to the “activation phenomenon”: Having gotten a chance to voice their names, people were much more likely to speak up later if they saw a problem”⁸.

A good way to do this are of course warm up activities or, as they are commonly known, icebreakers. According to Samuel Tschepe, warm up activities are a good way to:

- Create a positive and more intimate group atmosphere
- Help people to get to know one another (better)
- Break down social barriers
- Reduce pressure
- Energize
- Distract the group temporarily to better focus afterwards
- Prepare the team for a certain mode of working / phase / mindset⁹

⁷ <https://www.bracketcreative.co.uk/projectkickoff/>

⁸ <https://hbr.org/2010/02/introductions-are-much-more-th>

⁹ Tschepe, S., Warm-ups in Design Thinking—more than just a game, <https://uxdesign.cc/warm-ups-in-design-thinking-more-than-just-a-game-7f755fcc8497>

Not all people like icebreaking¹⁰ or to tell something personal, so maybe you can guide the group in a safe way, pairing people or having small groups conversation, or you can plan an exercise to make people laugh, to release the tension. It is always advisable to create the space for everyone to know each other, and sometimes partners know each other and have been working for years together, sometimes in your group you might have newcomers.

¹⁰ <https://www.fastcompany.com/90184521/ideo-redesigns-the-icebreaker>

HOW TO KICK OFF IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY?

1. The story behind your name

Warm-ups are a strategic way to set individuals, the team, and the work up for success. And if you do them consistently, you'll build your team's awareness muscles. You'll become more self-reflective, tuned-in, empathetic, and intentional about the work you are setting out to do.¹¹

One game you can use at the beginning is this storytelling exercise “The story behind your name”. Storytelling is universally recognised to be a powerful tool to develop emotional competence, empathy, listening skills, communication skills. The link between emotional intelligence and leadership behaviour becomes evident in an individual's ability to be increasingly self-awareness, to understand the values that drive our motivation as professionals, to make personal connections, and show concern for others' feelings and motivations. It is also a good way to start to remember names. How long it takes will depend on the number of participants. It is useful to do this by standing up and move away from the desk, if possible.

First, in couples ask participants to share the story behind their names. Some might argue, “I do not have a story to tell” but encourage them to tell also that unknown story. Everyone has a story about why their particular name was chosen for them.

After this first round of sharing, one participant presents the other's story to the whole group, telling the other participants what grabbed their attention, what

¹¹ <https://www.ideo.com/blog/4-reasons-warm-ups-will-fundamentally-change-your-work>

emotions they felt while listening. You can also judge the situation and maybe just ask some volunteers to share or it might be sufficient to talk in couples.

2. In Flow Moment as a storytelling exercise

Another useful prompt to understand ourselves and what makes us happy at work is to understand our '**Flow**' **moment**.¹² It is also a way to share expertise and passion, and how someone prefers to work.

The flow moment was recognised and named by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a Hungarian-American psychologist. In simple words, the 'flow' moment is a highly focused mental state, in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energised focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity, the optimal experience.

Flow is the way people describe a moment when they feel at their best, when skills and happiness reach a meeting point and one feels totally absorbed by what one is doing.

You can pair participants and ask them to talk about what makes us happy at work. What is your Flow moment? What were you doing when you experienced it? What was surrounding you at that moment? What made that moment so special?

3. Draw your colleagues' portrait

A fun activity that we learn from a Portuguese colleague in another European project¹³ is to start a session by asking participants to draw each other's portrait, the person sitting next to them or you can pair people with someone they know

¹² We thank Adrian De La Court and Sian Prime, ICCE, Goldsmiths University for having shared this exercise with us.

¹³ <https://meltingpro.org/en/progetti-en/european/upskill/>

less. Here you can find also a version from [IDEO “SKETCH YOUR NEIGHBOUR”](#). They give a solid explanation on why this is useful “Most people default to verbal/analytical mode, so getting people to use their hands and get involved with pen and paper can prove to be a very refreshing gear shift. As the name suggests, Sketch Your Neighbour requires everyone to draw the person next to them. Set a timer for a minute or two and let loose. For the majority of people who claim that they can't draw, this exercise involves a certain amount of vulnerability—and that's the point. If everyone is used to failing in front of each other, the group dynamic is going to be more open, generous, and positive.”

HOW TO MAKE SURE WE ARE ALL ALIGNED?

From the time you submitted the application to the starting of the project, usually it takes some months. It is a good practice to spend time at the beginning to realign purpose and relevance. Team alignment is the starting point for great teamwork. It means that a team is clear on what they're doing and why they're doing it. As well as mapping out, what success looks like. Setting key milestones will keep you on course and give you something to work toward.

4. The metaphor exercises

Metaphors as the conceptual and powerful instruments constitute a fruitful component not only in our daily conversations and discourses but also in academic research. Metaphors contain symbolic language which is “basic to the intellectual processes humans use to determine truth, facts, and meanings” (Ortony, 1979).¹⁴ There are two versions of this exercise¹⁵.

The exercises can be done in pairs or small groups, from different organisations. How do you see the project?

Like a virus that infects with your ideas

Like a dandelion that spreads ideas

Like a magnet that attracts people, stakeholders?

Or you can ask simply to design a metaphor of the project and discuss as a group the meaning. It's a powerful exercise to keep the discussion going around values and impact of the project.

¹⁴ These tools provide this chance for the people to interpret meanings and make sense of their worlds and lives (Ortony, 1975; Osrick, Keenoy, & Grant, 2002; Pepper, 1942; Smith & Simmons, 1983). As Morgan (1997) asserts, metaphors are the cornerstones of our understanding and thinking, and all the suggested theories about organizations are metaphorical in nature

¹⁵ One was suggested by our Polish partner of AMU University and the other one by Sian Prime and Adrian De La court, Goldsmiths, University.

5. Expectations exercise

Once in an international meeting we just asked our partner to say what they expected to get from the experience. We did this at the beginning, we asked partners to move post-it if they thought that that expectation was met. At the end of the week, we saw that there were few post-its left. We had a final discussion and saw that most of the expectations were met, but that still for some, there were still some doubts.



Fig. 3 Evaluation activity during CONNECT – Warsaw November 2017

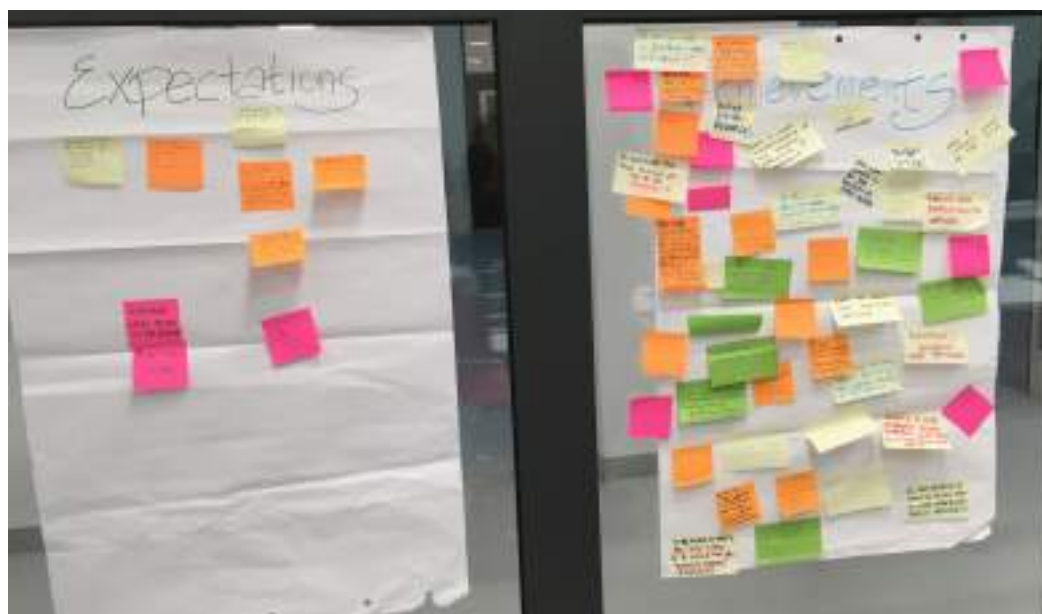


Fig. 4 Evaluation carried in Warsaw CONNECT project November 2017

HOW TO CREATE A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP?

6. Ball of red string - We are all connected

The group stands in a large circle. The facilitator begins by sharing expectation for the meeting, how they think success would look like in their countries. The ball of red string is then thrown to the first person (within the rest of the group) to say they share the reply to that prompt. After catching the ball of red string, and holding it their hands, they throw it to another person. The game continues until every person has received the ball of red string. The image that you will get the end of the game is a connected network of people.

7. Impromptu Speed Networking

The following warm up exercise is taken from the Gamestorming website:

To introduce participants to each other and energise the atmosphere. This activity “scales” really well from a minimum of around 12 to thousands.

1. Invite everyone to leave their “stuff” and move to an open space in the room where everyone can stand and there’s room to move around.
2. Pose a juicy question that is directly related to the purpose of the gathering, for example ‘if you had an image of the future what it would be like?’
3. Ask everyone to reflect on the question silently for a full minute
4. Explain the simple rules;
 - When you hear the chimes, find a partner (someone you know less well than others are more interesting). If you’re looking for a partner put your hand in the air so someone else who needs a partner can find you easily.

- Have a 5-minute conversation about the question.
 - When the chimes ring again, find a new partner (remember the hand up trick) and have another conversation.
 - When the chimes ring continuously, stop and find out what happens next.
5. Three 'rounds' of the process are usually good.
6. At this point, there are two possible variations for a next move: Two possibilities: (1) Invite everyone to sit back down and start the next part of the gathering. (2) Invite partners to hook up with one or two other pairs and sit down in a knee-to-knee circle and talk about what struck them about the conversations.¹⁶

8. Impact / effort matrix¹⁷

This exercise is also taken from the Gamestorming website:

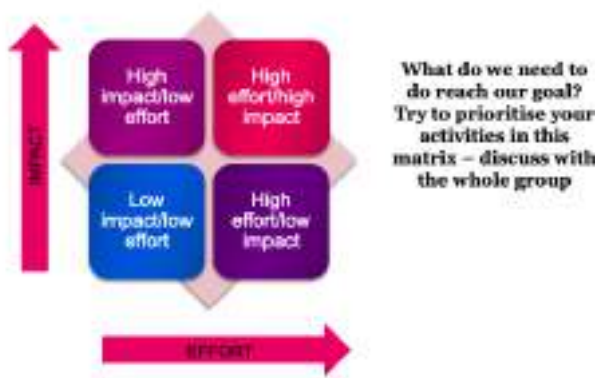


Fig. 5 Impact/effort matrix – Used in Bilbao January 2017

In this decision-making exercise, possible actions are mapped based on two

¹⁶ Gray, D., 'Impromptu Speed Networking', <https://gamestorming.com/impromptu-speed-networking/>

¹⁷ Gray, D., <https://gamestorming.com/impact-effort-matrix-2/>

factors: **effort required to implement and potential impact**. Some ideas are costly, but may have a bigger long-term payoff than short-term actions. Categorizing ideas along these lines is a useful technique in decision making, as it obliges contributors to balance and evaluate suggested actions before committing to them.

Based on small groups which can scale to any size the duration of it can range from 30 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the size of the group. Given a goal, a group may have a number of ideas for how to achieve it. To open the exercise, frame the goal in terms of a “What to do” or “What we need” question. This may sound as simple as “What do we need to reach our goal?” Ask the group to generate ideas individually on sticky notes. Then, ask them to present their ideas back to the group by placing them within a 2×2 matrix that is organized by impact and effort: Impact: The potential payoff of the action, vs. Effort: The cost of taking the action

Strategy

As participants place their ideas into the matrix, the group may openly discuss the position of elements. It is not uncommon for an idea to be bolstered by the group and to move up in potential impact or down in effort. In this respect, the category of high impact, low effort will often hold the set of ideas that the group is most agreed upon and committed to.

KEEPING THE MOMENTUM GOING – SO FAR SO GOOD?

Sometimes we need to reflect on what we have done so far, take time as a group to celebrate what we have achieved so far and to take some decisions.

HOW TO MOTIVATE THE TEAM?

9. GIVE and GAIN exercise

This simple exercise, that can be done in pairs or in a group, depending on the size of the group, is a useful exercise to remind us what we are giving as professionals, as organisations in the project and what we are gaining.

Reflecting collectively and sharing thoughts is a valuable exercise that we should do from time to time in the project to refocus on our goals.

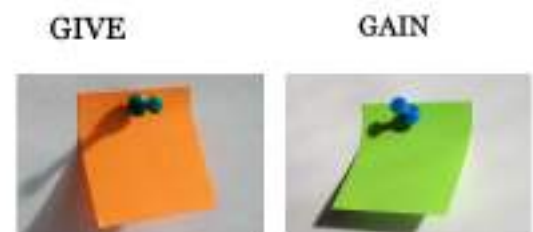


Fig. 6 Give and gain exercises

10. Story timeline of your project

A timeline provides a visual representation of events that helps you better understand history, a story, a process or any other form of an event sequence. Naturally in a project we need to look ahead to anticipate progress. But the past can be as informative as the future. When we are in the middle of the project is a good way to visualise what we achieved so far, what were the best moments, the difficult ones, and appreciate what got us where we are today. We can see the past as a guiding light or a course correction for our future. It's also a great way to familiarize new people with the project history. If you wish you can decide to ask participants to allocate the good moments up and the bad moments below the timeline.

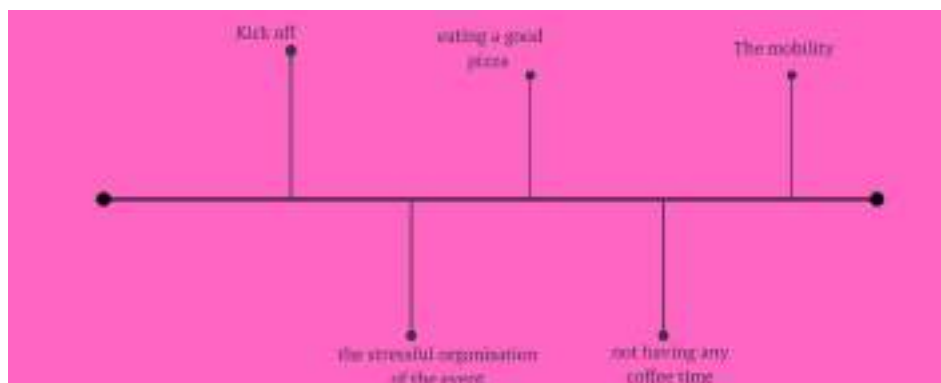


Fig. 7 Example of storyline

HOW TO FACILITATE DISCUSSION AND STIMULATE DECISION MAKING?

11. The world café

The World Café¹⁸ is an effective yet simple method to engage people around conversations that matter to them. Just decides the questions that you want an answer to in advance and you can create small conversations groups. It was created by Juanita Brown and is based on seven design principles:

- 1) Set the Context
- 2) Create Hospitable Space
- 3) Explore Questions that Matter
- 4) Encourage Everyone's Contribution
- 5) Connect Diverse Perspectives
- 6) Listen together for Patterns and Insights
- 7) Share Collective Discoveries

If you are already experienced in using this tool, we would like to remind you of its use in this context. If you are new to this method, we encourage you to discover it through the World Café website:
<http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/design-principles/>

¹⁸ See <http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/design-principles/>

12.Actions for Retrospectives

This other game written by Dave Gray¹⁹, is also a useful to review meetings.

1. Start by drawing a large 2×2 matrix with a square labelled “Actions” in the middle; this is designated for the changes that the team commits to making as a result of the retrospective. The four quadrants surrounding it represent different aspects of your event:

- **Puzzles:** Questions for which you have no answer
- **Risks:** Future pitfalls that can endanger the event
- **Appreciations:** What you liked during the previous iteration
- **Wishes:** Not improvements, but ideas of your ideal event

You can also reframe the questions, to suit your context.

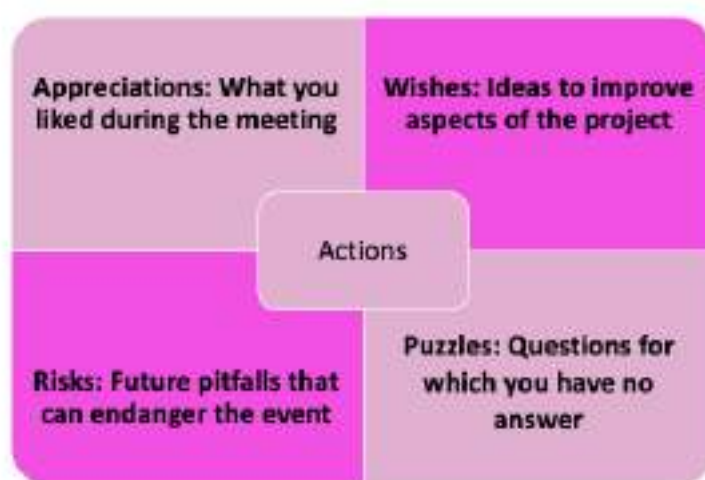


Fig. 8 Example of matrix actions for retrospective - author own's elaboration

¹⁹ Gray D, <https://gamestorming.com/?s=action+for+retrospective+>

2. Provide the players with pens and sticky notes, preferably different coloured notes for each quadrant. Have the participants write their ideas for “Appreciations,” “Puzzles,” “Risks,” and “Wishes” one category at a time, allowing 5 – 10 minutes for each section.
3. Once players have written all their thoughts, ask them to post their notes on the chart. As a team, go through the ideas and cluster related ones together.
4. Discuss the novelty, feasibility, and impact of the ideas, and collaborate to analyse how they can be applied to the next event. Use this process to create practical, efficient “Actions” in the middle.

13. Empathy map

Dave Gray designed the Empathy Map²⁰ at XPLANE many years ago, as part of a human-centred design toolkit we call “Gamestorming”. This particular tool helps teams develop deep, shared understanding and empathy for other people. People use it to help them improve customer experience, to navigate organizational politics, to design better work environments, and a host of other things.

Why in this toolkit? Because from time to time in your project it would be helpful to remember who your beneficiaries are, what they think, what they feel, and if they are aligned.



Figure 9 Adapted by The Audience Agency

²⁰ <https://medium.com/the-xplane-collection/updated-empathy-map-canvas-46df22df3c8a>

👉 HOW TO RUN QUICK CHECK IN SESSIONS WITH YOUR PARTNERS?

14. HAND EVALUATION or 5-finger evaluation²¹

There are many versions of this evaluation game online. If something needs to be evaluated quickly, the 5-finger evaluation can be used. In principle, all you need as a material is your hand, on which you can go through the five steps of the evaluation. It is important that everyone says or writes something about a finger.

Each finger of the hand is assigned a phrase that participants have to answer.

The thumb: "That was great! I liked that ..."
Thumbs up!

The index finger: "I point to it! I would like to say that ... Things to consider"

The middle finger: "Things to improve! It annoyed me that ... "

The ring finger: "Things I want to marry; I want to bond to it"

The little finger: "Smaller than the others. I missed the following, or little reminders that I must not forget"

Finally, the palm, if I had to choose out of everything this would be!



Fig. 1 5-finger evaluation author own elaboration

²¹ We need to thank our colleague Niels Righolt, CKI for this game

15. START STOP CONTINUE



Fig. 10 Start, stop, continue autho's own elaboration

The object of Start, Stop, Continue²² is to examine aspects of a situation or develop next steps. Ask the group to consider the current situation or goal and individually brainstorm actions in these three categories:

- Start: What are things that we need to START doing?
- Stop: What are we currently doing that we can or should STOP?
- Continue: What are we doing now that works and should CONTINUE?

Have individuals share their results.

Strategy

This exercise is broad enough to work well as an opening or closing exercise. It's useful in framing discussion at “problem-solving” meetings, or as a way to brainstorm aspirational steps toward a vision.

Or you **could use just** open and simple questions, such as:

Please finish this sentence... The TTP in my country will be successful because...



Fig. 11 examples of questions

²² Gray, D, <https://gamestorming.com/?s=start+stop+continue+>

CLOSING AND CELEBRATING

👉 HOW TO RUN A FINAL SESSION WITH YOUR TEAM?

16. MEMORABLE

The invested time in creating a space for open feedback at the beginning of the project, similarly, should be done at the end of it.

You could use this matrix and ask questions regarding how the project was relevant to your needs as a professional and to your institution? How are you going to use the results? How efficiently did we use time and resources? How effective have we been?

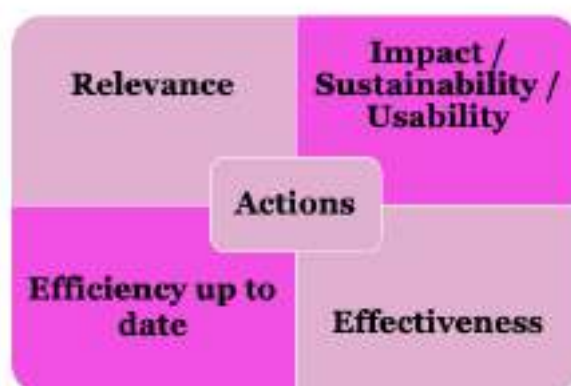


Fig. 12 Matrix elaborated by the author inspired by the actions for retrospective matrix

As well as asking your partners what the most memorable moments of the project were? Share inspiring stories with your colleagues so that they become part of our collective consciousness. The goal is to build a repository of stories for your team to draw from, tell, and retell. Capturing those resonant ideas and feelings and building them into the very narrative of your team's work helps everyone down the line.

Taking a picture together/do something creative like a poster or film to cement the partnership. Instruct everyone to write the most important thing they learned or experienced during the project – their most important takeaway.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Gamestorming is a set of co-creation tools used by innovators around the world.

<https://gamestorming.com/>

IDEO.org is a nonprofit design organization that launched out of IDEO in 2011 with a mission to improve the lives of poor and vulnerable communities through design. Visit designkit.org

Helping teams work better together

<https://www.bracketcreative.co.uk/>

Find methods for teaching innovation and entrepreneurship.

<https://innovationenglish.sites.ku.dk/metoder/>

You may find a lot of resources in the [CONNECT Website resources](#), in particular the in the Mentoring Toolkit “A TOOLKIT OF EXERCISES FOR MENTORS IN THE CONNECT PROGRAMME” that was written for the CONNECT Mentoring scheme by Adrian De La Court and Sian Prime, Goldsmiths University, in collaboration with Melting Pro, you can find a lot of inspiration.

<http://www.connectingaudiences.eu/resources/a-toolkit-of-exercises-for-mentors-in-the-connect-programme>

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CONNECT is a Knowledge Alliance for Audience Development that promotes innovative cooperation between universities, institutions and enterprises in the cultural sector across Europe, funded by European Programme Erasmus Plus – Ka2 Knowledge Alliances.

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