# PLANNING A TOOL FAIR

Starting to plan a tool fair means to start thinking and creating all the necessary elements of the puzzle that will let you organize all the steps of the process.

## MAPPING

**COMMUNICATION PACKAGE:**
- Tool fair presentation
- Tool form

**NGOs selection**

As we said at the TC1, you will have an internal and an external communication.

The internal communication will start from you, when you will start contacting the local organizations and potential trainers.

You will have to create a **presentation of the tool fair** how you imagine it, in order to give them the possibility to understand what you are planning to organize, as well as **a tool form** that you will ask them to fill in order to collect their propositions. In the tool form they will explain you their tool, the materials they need to present it, objectives, etc… Remind them you have no budget concerning materials!

It is very important for you to fix selection criteria for tools you will received. Once collected the forms and the organizations who wants to participate, you will have to select them, if you have more than necessary.

Once you will have selected tools, it will be necessary to revise them and put them in a common format that will become the "tool description" made in your language. This form will be useful for the participants booking as well as to guarantee enough public to all the presentations.

When you will have a more detailed idea of your tool fair you will revise the tool fair presentation sent at the beginning and you will start with the external communication (see "ADVERTISING").

## LOCATION:

The location of the event is very important in order to create the atmosphere that you want to have and a suitable place for your intents.

Thinking about the location you should keep in mind that the tool fair is an event where you need different rooms on the base of the tools you will organize at the same time, enough large spaces where people can feel comfortable to stay (this is linked to the number of participants), maybe a common area or a place where to eat in case you have lunch time or dinner time in the schedule. Think about the acoustics of the rooms and the possibility to use technical instruments needed by trainers.

So, the basic elements you should check are:
- ✓ Spaces?
- ✓ Capacity of rooms?
- ✓ Plugs and technical needs? Acoustics?
- ✓ Common area where to discuss in the breaks or to introduce and conclude the event?
- ✓ Coffee, bar, restaurant in the same area or a buffet organized by you or other local partners?

In order to find the appropriate place you can think about a **non formal place** or an **institutional** one.

You will have to try to include the local community as much as possible, so do not forget the local municipality or institutions, they could also have good places where to host the tool fair.

## DATE

The date must take into consideration that people who want to participate normally have a job and it is not possible to ask them to take a day off or more to take part to our local tool fair.

That's why probably Saturdays, Sundays and evenings are the best moments to organize it.

It will be possible to create a very concentrate event in one day or in a week end, starting the activities from the morning till late afternoon or you can develop the program splitting the sessions in two, three or more evenings depending on how many tools you have.

In case of the **evenings** you could start at 6.00 p.m. with a long session of two hours and organize a kind of brunch/dinner/buffet to have a break before the second shorter session, if you have the economical possibility to do it. This schedule will give the possibility also to discuss what participant have done in the first session in a informal moment (the break) before re-starting the activities.

Informal moments are very important to built new partnerships and relationships, especially at local level, as well as it will be at the international one during the seminar. So, try to define the duration of sessions (30', 1h, 1h 30', 2h…) and breaks. To alternate different sessions helps the learning process and gives the chance to mix people in different groups. You can also repeat sessions to give the possibility to change.

In case you organize **the tool fair on Saturday or Sunday**, why not to think about parallel programs for children in order to let families interested in this field to take part together with their children.

There are organizations who could create workshops for children and who could use the tool fair to improve their visibility in the local area, so why not to include them?

## HUMAN RESOURCES

As we spoke about in the local tool fair session, human resources involved are not just you! The more you will be able to involve other people and to share out tasks among them, the more resources you will manage to use, not just at human resources level but also as all kind of resources (materials, communication, gadget, sponsoring..).

A coordinating group is preferably not just to avoid you to have everything on your shoulders, but also to share with other people involved at different level efforts and success; if you will be able to coordinate the group well, everyone will give a personal contribute to have a good result.

It is important to create a working calendar with them, deadlines and meetings in order to have a good communication and a well efficiency.

## MATERIALS

When you will have a clearer idea of the location and the date, you can start thinking about a first general list of material needed for an event like this.

Secondary, in the tool form the NGOs send you, you should have asked them to write all the materials they need to run their session. So starting from that list you will  drawn a second list with specific materials needed for the tools presentations that you will add to the first list.

As well as for the human resources, first you will check with your organization about what you have inside, but you can also ask the external support of the partner organization and other people involved.

You don't need to buy any material, lots of things can be borrowed and exchanged, so if you have a good internal organization within the rooms you can re-use lots of things; you could think about a stock room where all the trainers and facilitators will take the necessary materials following the schedule you will have prepared or a person in charge for the logistic who will prepare the materials in the rooms before starting, it depends on you.

## ADVERTISING

- Info form
- Tool description
- Booking form
- Web area
- Official badge
- NGOs catalogue

The external communication will take in consideration to try to involved the maximum number of participants both belonging to the partner organizations and individuals, but also of people involved in the organization of the whole event, as local partners who don't have tools to present or to run, but can participate with stands, foods, children animation, location, sponsoring…

In order to book their place, participants will have to fill an **info form**, collecting useful information for the trainers involved. This form will give trainer a better idea of people who will participate to their workshops.

A **tool description**, that you will revise after the association/NGOs will have fulfilled the tool form, will be available to your organization web site in order to give the possibility to participants to book the tool presentation they want to take part through a **booking form or an online booking system**.

If it is possible, a specific **web area** inside your organization web site is preferably dedicate to this event and the booking process. If you cannot have dedicate web area you can manage the process by e-mail, but pay attention not to overbook some tools and underestimate others, so try to balance the booking on the base of participants preference creating your own criteria to manage it (suggestion: fix a maximum number per tool on the base of general number of participants in order to ensure a good balance).

You will have to prepare **communication materials** to present the tool fair and a **catalogue** of the NGOs involved in order to give them visibility, that can be realized also at the end.

During the event, an official badge of the tool fair, possibly with the name written on and the logo, will be necessary to recognize people involved and give an official capacity to the event. People taking part have to feel they are doing something important for their personal or professional grow and everything that is present must have a common logo representing the event, you can use OPEN logo alone or you can add also a local logo of the hosting organization for example. Even the best tool can be undervalued if it is not well presented; likewise a gathering of tools' presentation, as it is the tool fair, can be undervalued if it not enough officialized, put in the right context, with the proper communication. So pay attention to details.

## PROGRAMME

The programme depends on the date, the number and kind of tool presentations and the location. By crossing these three elements you will understand how to better organize you program.

You can have different kind of sessions:

A presentation of the tool (max 45')

Run a short tool (max 1h 30')

Run a workshop (from 2 to 3h)

Video presentation (depending of its duration, max 30')

Some suggestion:

✓ if you have the whole day, try to divide the morning and the afternoon in two session each, one longer and one shorter, in order not to create too heavy moments where the attention fall down.

✓ If you have evenings, take in consideration that people will be more tired, so maximum two session will be preferably with a break in the middle.

✓ Try to alternate different tools in order to give the possibility to people to experiment different things one after the other. The same tools can be repeated in more than one session in order to let more people participate.

✓ If you have just few tools but lots of participants you can divide the participants into more groups and make them try all the tools by repeating the tools more than one time.

✓ Try to think "participant oriented" but also "organizational oriented" at the same time; participants want to discover new tools and the more tools are attracting the more people will book them, so if you have a lot of tools and you put two most attractive ones in the same day, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, you risk that the other presentations will be empty if you don't fix a maximum amount of possible applications. So it is up to you to split tools in two different days or moments of the day or to present them at the same time, but try to guess the consequence of your programme every time you make a choice.

Probably you already though at the most of these suggestions, but I hope that a systemization of all necessary info could have been useful.

If you want to contribute adding some other parts that I missed, please send me your suggestion in order to improve the organization of the whole group and I will send the suggestions to all!