



# YOU PART

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## NETWORKING WORKSHOP

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# NETWORKING WORKSHOP

## FACTS

**Age** of participants: 15+

**Number** of participants: 6-12

**Duration:** 120 minutes

## GOALS

This workshop aims to provide young people with the opportunity to brainstorm ideas for future cooperation. By networking participants, young people are also able to interact and build personal and professional relationships. The activity effectively stimulates cooperation among participants of youth trainings, which will take place after the training workshops.

## TOPICS

The activity can have various thematic focuses and address a wide range of thematic issues. For instance, the activity could facilitate and support participants' personal plans to volunteer; encourage cooperation among participants and across borders on a range of youth-related issues; provide a platform for peer-to-peer support and education within the group and on issues like youth self-employment, non-formal education, participation in decision-making, etc.

An effective networking workshop usually focuses on a particular area of activity or thematic issue. Therefore, before organising the networking workshop, the organisers need to define the focus of the workshop. However, as the networking workshops are often organised as part of larger events – for instance youth trainings – the thematic focus of the networking activity is often decided by the overall focus of the training event.

The organisers may also need to decide which participants will actually work in one group. This depends directly on the total number of participants and is possible if the participants and their professional background and personal interests are known beforehand.

In deciding how to group participants, organisers are often led by the geographical location of the participants. For instance, participants from one geographical area are grouped together to make it easier for them to cooperate and support each other after the training. Alternatively, if the purpose of the overall training is to network participants across borders, a completely different approach to geographical organisation may be chosen.

Organisers also usually take a shared interest approach of grouping participants with shared interests, irrespective of where they live.

Overall, there are almost infinite variations depending on many factors. However, the goal of the networking event always remains the same: to bring like-minded people together and to facilitate future cooperation among the participants after the training.

## **MATERIALS**

- Fix 4 to 6 pieces of A0 or similar format flip chart paper and provide up to 10 fat-tip black and red markers. Ideally, the flip charts should also be secured to enable more comfortable writing on them. If not available, flat tables must be provided for participants to place the papers on. Alternatively, flip chart papers can be stuck to a wall.
- Secure a deck of playing cards. In addition, refreshments are also required as the workshop lasts (over) 120 minutes.

## **PREPARATIONS**

Place the chairs for the participants in a semi-circle. The chair(s) of the facilitator(s) should be in front of the semi-circle. No other preparations are necessary at this stage.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Step 1**

Introduce yourself. Possibly in a fun way. For example, you can say your name and tell the participants what you can do best in the world, what your hobby is, or add a character trait to your name that starts with the same letter.

Then go around the room and invite the participants to briefly introduce themselves and, if applicable, to name the organisations where they work or volunteer.

### **Step 2**

At the beginning of the event, it may be useful to organise more “icebreakers”. The goal of this activity is to "break the ice" and create a creative and relaxed working atmosphere.

Give each participant a card and instruct them to find their matching pair. To add a competitive element, create groups with matching cards and then ask each participant to find their match and join others to form a group. The first group to find all their matches wins a prize.

### **Step 3**

Describe the previously chosen thematic focuses and explain the reasons for the choice. Present the overall and specific objectives of the networking workshop.

Divide the participants into smaller group of 4 to 6 people according to the prepared plan. Depending on the overall group size, this process may or may not be necessary.

#### **Step 4**

Ask the participants to think of an idea for cooperation that is both doable and cost-effective for the participants and allows all or at least most of the group participants to cooperate and stay in touch after they go back home. At this stage, it may be necessary to facilitate the process so that the group unanimously adopts a single idea, using the facilitator's help to get the brainstorming going.

Participants discuss the idea and preferably write it down on flip chart papers in the order of writing a project proposal: define the project purpose, specific objectives, methods/activities, expected impact, etc. The most active participants are usually given the chance to become a kind of group leader and write down ideas on flip chart paper. Alternatively, you can also do the writing if necessary.

#### **Step 5**

If applicable and there is more than one working group, the ideas are presented by each group. The participants of the other group are given a chance to ask questions regarding the presented idea and to give their opinion about the idea they have come up with. The group as a whole presents its work.

#### **Step 6**

At the very end of the workshop, ask participants how they liked the event. You can ask for general feedback or provide the participants with questions for a survey.

#### **Step 7**

After the workshop, send handouts from the networking workshop to all participants, especially photos of the flip chart papers with the ideas presented.

Consider how participants can stay in touch with both the organiser(s) and with each other, e.g. via a social media page or an email list.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FACILITATORS**

The networking workshop, consisting of two smaller groups, can be done by one facilitator. You can go back and forth between the groups, follow up on the work and guide if necessary. However, ideally and when working with two groups, two experienced facilitators are always the better option.



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## PROJECT PARTNERS



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