

Checklist ‘How to organise a training, seminar, workshop’

In this document¹ you will find a list of practical details, to be taken into account when organising a training activity. It goes from aspects such as the place of venue to questions of a more methodological character.

A. Why are you organising this event?

What made you decide to organise a seminar, workshop, or discussion?

Please do not be satisfied too easily with the answer to this question. You have to be aware of the direct and probably obvious reason. But there is more: what do you want to change? Would you hope for better knowledge and understanding of the issue at stake? Would you like people to change their moral convictions? Would you like to inspire people to take action? If yes, what should the outcome be of the action taken?

You have to be very clear on your motives, aims and drive – if your focus is not clear the organisation and programme of the event might suffer from this lack of focus.

B. Who will be your target group?

The target group is decisive for the translation of your aims mentioned above and the actual programme of your event: their needs, their level of understanding, their position in society or work is decisive for what you can do.

¹ This document is drafted on the basis of the Manual on training methodology for human rights training of the Council of Europe HELP Programme

Again: be very precise in identifying your target group. It is easier to have an effective and profound study or discussion if you invite a homogenous group of people; they share background, needs or level of understanding and can easily exchange.

Heterogeneous groups will not have this advantage and you will find it more difficult to offer a programme satisfactory to the different needs and expectations. However, it is not always possible to create homogenous groups.

The advantage of heterogeneous groups is that people have the opportunity to encounter people they normally would not meet and can benefit from new insights and experiences.

C. Deciding on the trainers/speakers/experts

Can the habitual team of trainers/speakers you generally invite cover the subject?

Is it necessary/preferred to invite 'outsiders', e.g. journalists, psychologists, lawyers, the Ombudsman, national experts, victims of a violation or others?

Is it necessary/preferred to invite foreign experts? For example: experts from religious or other communities, NGOs, representatives of relevant international institutions or organisations (European Union, Fundamental Rights Agency, Council of Europe, OSCE, UN and so on).

D. Deciding on materials and methods

The (team of) trainers/speakers/experts should decide at an early stage how they want to conduct the event.

This means they should identify:

- What materials the participants will be provided with, either in advance or during the training (programme, handbooks, readers, handouts, case studies).
- Which tools would they like to use (PowerPoint, overhead projector, video/DVD, flipchart)?

E. Establish the best possible learning environment

Whatever methods are adopted, there is one general issue which needs to be addressed: how to ensure that participants feel comfortable and receptive. In other words, how to establish the best environment?

Location: if you invite participants related to work: providing an environment geographically distinct from the working place of participants is helpful: there will be less chance of interruption on work-related issues (provided mobile phones are very definitely turned off!) making it easier to achieve training aims and outcomes.

Accommodation issues, etc: physical comfort is important. Consider:

room temperature

room ventilation

seating capacity

seating arrangements – can everyone see the speaker? Can the speaker see every member of the audience? Are there enough rooms (or areas) for 'breakout' small group activities?

F. Deciding on the activity

Decide on the budget available for the event.

Timing: duration of the event (one day, several days)

Level of training: are you organising a seminar or workshop for participants with advanced knowledge on the topic or beginners?

Aim of the event: transfer of knowledge or skills, change of values or attitude?

Formulate the intended learning outcomes in advance; they are the basis for all further decisions and preparations.

G. Practical organisation

1. Send the invitations or the confirmations of participation to the participants. (min. 2 months in advance);
2. Send the materials well in advance to participants, so that they will have enough time to prepare themselves (min. 2 weeks);
3. Inform the trainers and participants about the 'house rules';

TIP: Make sure that mobile phones are kept off during training and explain to participants they have opportunities to phone during breaks;
4. Prepare the evaluation tools (e.g. questionnaires);
5. Prepare the badges for participants and trainers;
6. *Coffee breaks/ lunch*: ensure that coffee, tea and lunch is available at the right time;
7. Prepare the documents to be distributed at the venue;
8. Prepare PowerPoint, overhead projector, flipcharts and pens etc.;
9. After the event: compile the evaluation results and plan a follow-up. Discuss the evaluation outcome with the trainers and within the institute.