EVENT CREATION – THE INCUBATOR OF IDEAS

TRAINING MANUAL

- Summary -

Trainer/s: Ovidiu Ghiuță, Lidiia Davybida

Topic: Creative event planning from idea to impact

Total Duration: 30 hours (Theory: 5 hours / Practice: 7 hours / Evaluation: 3 hours / Individual learning: 15 hours)

Course Objectives

- To develop participants' competencies in creative and collaborative event creation by guiding them through a structured learning process that enables them to transform identified needs into well-designed and impactful events. The course aims to build the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate events that engage diverse audiences, involve relevant stakeholders, and operate effectively in both local and international or cross border contexts.
- Specific objectives: 1) The course aims to enable participants to understand events as tools for communication, education, intercultural exchange, and community engagement, and to apply this understanding in practical settings. Participants will learn to identify and analyse real needs, problems, and opportunities, and to translate them into coherent, audience-oriented event concepts. 2) participants will develop the ability to design complete event frameworks, including stakeholder involvement, communication strategies, visualisation of ideas, and basic budgeting, ensuring feasibility and clarity of implementation. The course also focuses on applying practical methods for event promotion, audience engagement, and activity coordination during implementation. 3) participants will be able to organise basic monitoring and follow-up processes, including feedback collection and assessment of event outcomes and impact, supporting continuous improvement. In the long term, the course contributes to the development of transversal competencies, such as teamwork, creativity, communication, project-based collaboration, and resource planning, strengthening participants' capacity to initiate and manage events in diverse, international, or cross-border environments.

Specific Competencies Acquired
Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

Competency Type	**Detailed Description**
Professional Competencies	Apply structured event creation methodologies to develop events from concept to evaluation; identify needs and target audiences and translate them into coherent event concepts; design event plans including stakeholder engagement strategies, communication approaches, visualisation tools, and basic budgeting; organise event promotion and implementation activities using appropriate offline and digital tools; apply basic monitoring and evaluation techniques, including feedback collection and impact assessment.
Transversal Competencies	Demonstrate teamwork and collaborative problem-solving in project-based tasks; apply effective communication skills in multicultural and interdisciplinary contexts, including international and cross-border settings; show creativity and innovation in idea generation and event design; develop critical thinking in analysing needs, audiences, and outcomes; demonstrate organisational and time-management skills in planning and delivering event-related activities; strengthen adaptability and initiative in dynamic project environments.

MODULE 1: Defining the problem/need that can be tackled by an event

1.1. Theoretical Foundations

Events are instruments, not goals: they serve communication, education, intercultural exchange and community engagement. Every successful event starts from a clearly identified problem, need or opportunity, explored through context analysis, community consultation or the problem tree.

The need is then translated into the rationale (purpose) of the event and into SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound. Purpose, objectives and activities must remain distinct, and the SMART objectives set at this stage become the benchmarks of the evaluation in Module 7.

1.2. Key Concepts to Remember

Core Takeaway: An event is a means, not an end – it is justified by a clearly defined community need and guided by SMART objectives, which later become the benchmarks of its evaluation.

1.3. Self-Assessment & Reflection

1. Which of the following is a SMART objective?

a) “Make the event popular”; b) “Attract 100 cross-border participants by 2 July 2026”; c) “Improve communication”; d) “Organise a great festival”

2. The problem tree technique is mainly used to:

a) plan the event budget; b) analyse the causes and effects of a community problem; c) design posters; d) select volunteers

3. Think of a recent event in your community: what need did it address, and how would you reformulate its objective to be SMART?

1.4. Module Glossary

Need analysis: Identifying and understanding the community’s real problems, needs or opportunities before designing an event.

Problem tree: A visual tool mapping a central problem, its causes (roots) and effects (branches).

SMART objectives: Objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

Concept note: A short document summarising the problem, objectives, audience, format and expected impact of a proposed event.

MODULE 2: Processes of generating ideas

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

Ideation techniques generate innovative outcomes in the design phase. Classic brainstorming follows four principles: defer judgment, focus on quantity, welcome wild ideas, and build on others' ideas. Brainwriting adds a silent stage of independent idea generation; mind mapping links the brainstormed ideas logically; SCAMPER modifies existing concepts (Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to other uses, Eliminate, Rearrange/Reverse).

Selecting ideas involves shifting from divergent thinking (many creative options) to convergent thinking (practical plans), guided by feasibility, relevance to the need and audience, and validated with simple checks such as the "grandmother test".

2.2. Key Concepts to Remember

Core Takeaway: Effective event design alternates between divergent thinking (brainstorming, brainwriting, mind mapping, SCAMPER) and convergent thinking, selecting concepts based on feasibility, alignment with objectives, and audience appeal.

2.3. Self-Assessment & Reflection

1. Which statement best describes the difference between divergent and convergent thinking?

a) Divergent thinking evaluates ideas, while convergent thinking generates them; b) Divergent thinking generates many ideas, while convergent thinking organises and refines them; c) Both are identical processes; d) Convergent thinking ignores feasibility and audience needs

2. Which tool is specifically used to modify existing ideas through actions like substitute, combine, and eliminate?

a) Brainwriting; b) Mind mapping; c) SCAMPER; d) WBS; e) brainstorming

3. Choose one ideation technique (e.g., brainstorming, SCAMPER, mind mapping). How could you apply it to design a real event, and what type of ideas would it help you generate?

2.4. Module Glossary

Brainstorming: A group ideation technique guided by deferring judgment, seeking quantity, welcoming wild ideas and building on others' ideas.

Brainwriting: A silent ideation stage in which participants generate ideas independently before sharing them.

SCAMPER: An idea-modification method: Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to other uses, Eliminate, Rearrange/Reverse.

Divergent vs. convergent thinking: Generating many creative options (divergent) versus organising and refining them into practical plans (convergent).

MODULE 3: Publics segments involved

3.1. Theoretical Foundations

An event addresses distinct publics (groups that attend or are affected) and stakeholders (those with interest or influence) – there is no "general public". Applied segmentation divides the audience into homogeneous groups using socio-demographic, geographic, behavioural and psychographic criteria.

Segments are prioritised into primary and secondary by size, relevance and accessibility, and each priority segment is described through an audience persona – a semi-fictional profile (motivations, barriers, preferred channels). Segmentation shapes the format, partners, channels and promotion decisions of the next modules.

3.2. Key Concepts to Remember

Core Takeaway: An event communicates and delivers effectively only when its audience is divided into concrete segments, prioritised, and brought to life through personas that guide every later decision – from format to promotion.

3.3. Self-Assessment & Reflection

1. Behavioural segmentation groups people according to:

a) age and income; b) place of residence; c) habits, frequency of participation and benefits sought; d) nationality only

2. An audience persona is:

a) a real VIP guest of the event; b) a semi-fictional profile representing a typical member of a segment; c) the official spokesperson of the event; d) a legal document required by the funder

3. For an event idea of yours, identify two audience segments and sketch a short persona for the primary one.

3.4. Module Glossary

Audience segmentation: Dividing a heterogeneous audience into homogeneous groups with shared characteristics.

Audience persona: A semi-fictional profile of a typical segment member – motivations, barriers and preferred channels.

Primary segment: The audience group for which the event is primarily designed and to which most resources are directed.

Stakeholder: Any person, group or institution with an interest in, or influence over, the event.

MODULE 4: How to involve different institutions

4.1. Theoretical Foundations

Collaborative events rely on a range of institutional partners: public authorities (funding, infrastructure, regulatory support), NGOs (social expertise, community engagement), educational institutions (content, people, credibility), the private sector (funding, innovation, services), and media (communication, public image). Engagement takes the form of strategic partnerships, sponsorships, in-kind support, volunteering or patronage.

Collaboration starts with stakeholder mapping (interests and influence), followed by a clear value proposition and formal agreements on responsibilities, timelines, and branding. The budget – a forecast of income and expenditure – guides decisions and controls risk; revenue sources include grants, sponsorships, participant fees and in-kind contributions.

4.2. Key Concepts to Remember

Core Takeaway: Successful events rely on synergistic partnerships and financial realism: engage stakeholders early and support creative concepts with realistic budgets to deliver measurable, sustainable outcomes.

4.3. Self-Assessment & Reflection

1. Which statement best distinguishes in-kind support from sponsorship?

a) In-kind support always involves media promotion; b) Sponsorship is non-monetary, while in-kind support is cash-based; c) In-kind support provides goods/services instead of cash, while sponsorship is usually a financial or marketing exchange; d) Both terms mean the same thing

2. Which of these is a common source of event revenue according to the sources?

a) In-kind contributions; b) Participant fees; c) Government grants; d) All of the above

3. Explain how soft power and social capital can influence the success of an international academic event.

4.4. Module Glossary

Stakeholder mapping: Identifying key partners and analysing their interest and influence on the event.

Value proposition: The benefits a partner gains from participating in the event.

In-kind support: A partner's contribution in goods or services rather than money.

Budget: A forecast of an event's income and expenditure that guides decisions and controls risk.

MODULE 5: Communication with the public segments

5.1. Theoretical Foundations

Communication is planned, not improvised: a communication strategy defines the objectives, key messages, channels and calendar. The core message stays constant, but its language, tone and emphasis are adapted to each segment identified in Module 3; channels are chosen per segment, combining online (social media, e-mail, messaging) and offline (posters, local press, community meetings).

Communication covers the whole life cycle: before (informing, attracting, registering participants), during (orientation, coordination, real-time updates) and after (thanks and results – the bridge to follow-up, Module 7). It is two-way: clear calls to action, plus channels for the audience to respond and provide feedback.

5.2. Key Concepts to Remember

Core Takeaway: Communication works when one core message is adapted to each audience segment and delivered through the channels each segment actually uses – before, during and after the event.

5.3. Self-Assessment & Reflection

1. Adapting the message per segment means:

a) changing the objectives of the event for each group; b) keeping the wording identical on all channels; c) adjusting language, tone and emphasis to each audience while keeping the core message; d) communicating only on social media

2. Communication after the event mainly aims to:

a) sell additional tickets; b) thank participants and share the results of the event; c) recruit new staff; d) test the technical equipment

3. Pick two very different audience segments: how would the announcement of the same event differ for each (message, tone, channel)?

5.4. Module Glossary

Communication strategy: The plan defining the objectives, key messages, channels and calendar of an event's communication.

Key message: The essential idea conveyed consistently across all channels.

Communication channel: The medium through which a message reaches a segment (social media, e-mail, posters, local press).

Call to action: A clear invitation addressed to the audience to do something specific (register, share, participate).

MODULE 6: Promotion of the event

6.1. Theoretical Foundations

Promotion is the visible part of communication. The promotional mix combines social media, media relations (local press, radio), printed materials, e-mail, partnerships used as promotional channels, and word of mouth, balancing online and offline communication methods based on the channels each segment actually uses.

Promotion follows a calendar with distinct phases – teaser, launch, reminders, last call – timed to the audience's decision moments. A simple, consistent visual identity (logo, colours, fonts) makes all materials recognisable; tools such as Canva enable professional posters and posts. Results are monitored through reach, interactions and registrations.

6.2. Key Concepts to Remember

Core Takeaway: Promotion is not a single poster but a planned sequence – the right mix of channels, a consistent visual identity and a promotion calendar aligned with the decision moments of each audience segment.

6.3. Self-Assessment & Reflection

1. The promotional mix of an event refers to:

a) the event budget structure; b) the combination of channels and tools used to promote the event; c) the list of sponsors; d) the layout of the venue

2. A promotion calendar is useful because:

a) it replaces the event programme; b) it schedules messages in phases aligned with the audience's decisions; c) it is a legal requirement; d) it eliminates the need for visual identity

3. Build a three-phase promotion calendar for your team's event: one channel and one message per phase, adapted to your primary segment.

6.4. Module Glossary

Promotional mix: The combination of channels and tools used to promote an event.

Promotion calendar: The schedule of promotional actions in phases, aligned with the audience's decision moments.

Visual identity: The consistent set of visual elements (logo, colours, fonts) that make an event recognisable.

Reach: The number of people exposed to a promotional message.

MODULE 7: Follow-up of the event

7.1. Theoretical Foundations

Follow-up is the final stage of the event management cycle: it extends the event's impact beyond its delivery and supports accountability, organisational learning and the sustainability of partnerships. Feedback is collected through surveys and questionnaires, the Net Promoter Score (NPS), observation and monitoring, and debrief meetings with staff, vendors and partners.

Event success is assessed against the objectives set in the planning phase (the SMART framework), covering participant satisfaction, communication outcomes, financial performance, and the Return on Event (ROE). The post-event report summarises feedback, budget reconciliation, challenges and recommendations. Follow-up also maintains relationships: thank-you messages, sharing results with stakeholders, documenting lessons learned and corrective actions.

7.2. Key Concepts to Remember

Core Takeaway: Follow-up is not the end of an event – it is the foundation of future success: systematic evaluation, feedback and relationship management improve future events and maximise long-term impact.

7.3. Self-Assessment & Reflection

1. Which of the following is the primary purpose of event follow-up?

a) To increase the event budget; b) To evaluate results, learn from experience, and maintain stakeholder relationships; c) To redesign the event venue; d)To recruit participants for other projects

2. Which tool is commonly used to measure how likely participants are to recommend an event to others?

a) SWOT Analysis; b) Risk Register; c) Net Promoter Score (NPS); d) Gantt Chart

3. You have just completed an event: what three types of information would you collect during follow-up, and why?

7.4. Module Glossary

Follow-up: The final stage of the event cycle, extending impact and supporting accountability, learning and continuity.

Net Promoter Score (NPS): An indicator measuring whether participants would recommend the event to others.

Post-event report: A document summarising event outcomes, lessons learned and recommendations.

Return on Event (ROE): The value an event generates relative to the resources invested.