How to Prepare a Capacity Building Workshop

1 Preparation Meeting with your Team:

This Toolbox focusses on eight selected themes that address some of the most frequent problems encountered by civil society organizations in Turkey. In order to prioritize which theme(s) to work on, your team can use the Toolbox to find your specific capacity building need.

Start with the **Method Card: Determining a Development Priority (01)**. It helps you to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your team or organization and indicates issues for development.

* After choosing a focal topic for the workshop, it is helpful to form a preparation group.

2 Preparing a Path:

For each theme, the Toolbox offers a **Path**, which provides a recommended sequence of activities, discussions, and exercises that will guide you through a fruitful learning process. Most Paths assume that you will invest a full day to work on the respective theme.

The Paths start with an **Orientation** (a first focus on the theme), followed by some **Groundwork** (deeper problem analysis), a **Summit** section (the development of new practices), an **Outlook** (dealing with the consequences of development) and finally an **Action Plan** session (anchoring the agreements and follow up tasks that result from the workshop).

ORIENTATION	GROUNDWORK	SUMMIT

OUTLOOK	ACTION PLAN
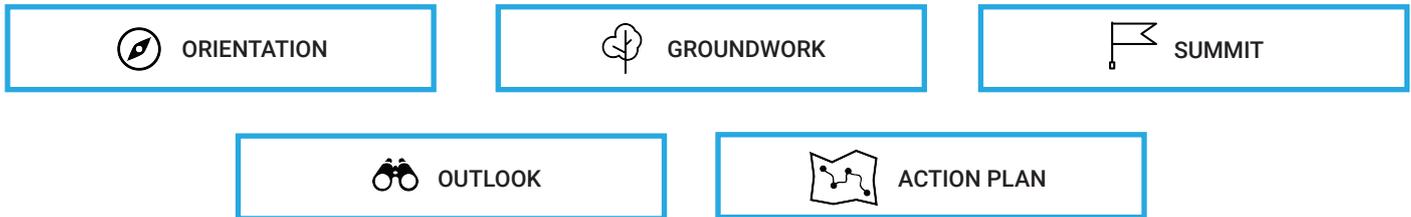
HOW TO:

STEP 1   IN YOUR PREPARATION GROUP:

Review the results of the preparation meeting. Share your impressions of the resulting discussions and assessments and define the key objectives for the capacity building workshop.
What outcomes would you like to get from this workshop? What exactly should be changed for the better?

STEP 2   Download the Path which fits to your capacity building need from the Toolbox library. Carefully review the suggested Path for your theme and the related Method Cards and materials.

STEP 3   Discuss whether this Path will be helpful for achieving the objective you defined or whether you will need to adapt it. Feel free to throw out or add individual steps and methods.
Have a look into the Toolbox library, if you want to add another method.
Make sure that you realistically assess how much you can do in one day. The times indicated are just an orientation. Sometimes you may need more time depending on the size of the team as well.
Most Paths invite you to delve into deeper levels and explore your values and principles of operation. If you feel that this is too much or too risky without external facilitation, feel free to stay closer to the surface of concrete structures guid practices.

STEP 4   Once the workshop outline is finalized, do a quick run-though to get a feeling for how the steps flow together.

STEP 5   Continue with talking about the details.

3 Organizing Details for Your Workshop

Assigning Roles:

Assign within your team a **facilitator** for the workshop! It can be helpful if this person is *not* from the leadership of the organization, so that there are clear roles of facilitator and participants (of course, the facilitation can also rotate).

It is important to note that a facilitation role implies responsibility for the process, not for the outcome. Your task as a facilitator is to propose methods and ensure good communication, not to push content.
If you do want to contribute to the discussion from a team member perspective, make the role switch transparent (e.g. "I put myself on the speakers list and make the following statement as a colleague").

During the workshop, use the **Path Canvas** provided in the Toolbox as a flip chart protocol outline to keep track of your workshop results. For the protocol, focus on outcomes rather than full documentation of everything that is said. For this, assign to somebody the role of **Canvas editor** to make sure you document your results.

Also, it might be helpful to distribute some additional more funny roles:

an **Energizer** (person who suggests energizers when the concentration or energy is low),

a **Time keeper** (to watch the time and breaks) and

a **Fresh air keeper** (who opens the window if fresh air is needed).

Choosing the Setting:

Plan your workshop at a place that is out of the norm for your team (find a friendly, light filled room, preferably not your workspace).
If possible, have a flip chart and a pin board ready and make sure there is space to hang the documentation. In many cases a circle of chairs without a central table can facilitate an atmosphere of open discussion.
If you want volunteers to participate, pick a time that is outside of regular working hours.

Make sure there is tea and coffee and some small snacks to make people feel comfortable!

Inviting the Right People:

Each Path description indicates who, optimally, should be involved in the workshop.
Generally, groups of 7-15 people are perfect for capacity building workshops. If the number is smaller, sometimes a diversity of perspectives might be missing. If the group is bigger, it is more difficult to ensure everyone's involvement and an effective process dynamic.
Make sure everyone invited receives the agenda and possibly a task to prepare before the workshop.
Don't get bogged down in the problem-talk. Instead, highlight the hopes and opportunities of this capacity building process. Invite your team to embark on an exciting journey!
Your attitude and approach can help maintain the focus on the positive aspects of the exercise.

Prepare the Facilitation:

Read through the **Tips and Methods** for Facilitation.

Last but not least:

Enjoy your Capacity Building workshop!

4 Tips and Methods for Facilitation

Facilitating a Discussion:

It is helpful to decide how you discuss and make decisions before starting the workshop.

Ask people to raise their hands when they wish to speak. Note the names down on a list and call them to speak in order.

When people are speaking too long, you can introduce a time limit (e.g. 2 minutes per contribution). If individual people dominate the discussion, you can also introduce a round or a limitation on contributions (e.g. "match discussion": Each person is given the same number of matches. Every time someone speaks s/he gives up a match. When someone has used all their matches they may not speak again until everyone else's matches are gone too).

Collecting and Clustering Options:

The following collection compiles the most common methods for collecting and evaluating options in teams (Metaplan method).

Collecting Options	The guiding question of the session is presented and explained (best in written form). Participants individually write their answers on moderation cards (one answer per card, maximum 2 lines).
Clustering Options	The cards are presented and placed on a pin board or distributed on the ground. The facilitator takes the first card and places it on an empty place on the pin board/ground. Then s/he places the second card next to it if it fits thematically, otherwise the facilitator puts it on another empty space on the board/ground. Usually the author of the card decides on its position. Step by step, a landscape of thematic card groups (clusters) comes into existence. When all the cards are clustered, the individual groups /clusters are given titles.
Prioritizing Options	Participants receive a number of points (stickers or marker dots) which they distribute on their favorite clusters. The 2-3 options with the most points are selected for further analysis /refinement in the process.

Go-Round:

Go-Rounds are a good way of equalizing participation and giving everyone a clear space to express their opinion. In a Go-Round, everyone takes a turn to briefly speak on a subject or question without interruption or comment from other people.

The Go-Round can also be facilitated with a **talking stick**, an object symbolizing the privilege to speak which is passed on from speaker to speaker.

Brainstorming:

Brainstorming (also: Ideastorming) is a tool for creative thinking and gathering a large number of ideas in a group. Clearly state the question or problem and ask people to call out their ideas, which will be noted in a list on the flipchart. All ideas, even crazy and impossible ones, are welcome in this phase! It is not about criticizing or reasoning yet.

In the second step, ideas can be checked and evaluated to choose which ones the group wishes to explore further.

Small Group Work:

Small group work is a way to energize groups, to give the opportunity for everyone to reconnect and be involved, to focus and generate new creative angles, or to create a space for personal sharing.

When splitting the group up, you can choose to discuss different issues in each subgroup (a way to cover more content in short time) or have every subgroup deal with the same issue (in order to compare outcomes). You can randomly split participants up (e.g. by counting off or by lottery), assign them according to criteria such as expertise, or have them select their group by thematic preference. The question to be worked on in the small group and the time available should be written clearly on a flipchart or handout for each group. It can be helpful to even design a template flipchart for the documentation of the group work.

When sharing group results back in the plenum, make sure the groups report only the relevant outcomes, not the entire working process (which can become tiring when you have several groups).

Parking Space:

The Parking Space is a flip chart that serves as a list of all open issues that come up along the way. Using a Parking Space ensures all ideas get recorded and participants don't feel like they've been ignored.

Whenever anything comes up that's not relevant to the discussion at hand, "park" it in the Parking Space. The issues can then be addressed at a later stage.

When Meetings Get Hot:

When people are working with passion, discussions can get heated and conflict can loom around every corner. In this case, the facilitator needs to step in and offer a more controlled communication framework.

One such example is the controlled dialogue format, in which two parties engage in a discussion where each side is invited to give their account, and then each party repeats and summarizes the points made by the other before giving their responding arguments. If the conflict is anchored on the personal level and not related to the group, you can ask the involved persons to clear it up among themselves outside of the team workshop.

If the conflict has structural dimensions that involve everyone, take a break and consider if you can handle it without external support, or if you want to involve mediation or outside facilitation to deal with it.

Exercises to Start Workshops:

It is helpful to start workshops with short rounds and exercises that give people an opportunity to connect themselves with the group and to "arrive" in the workshop theme.

Start with a round of everyone **sharing** one of the aspects below:

1 something exciting that happened to them recently
2 the personal feelings they bring to the workshop
3 expectations and wishes regarding the topic
4 a moment of silence

Start with a **Warm Up** such as:

1 stretching or yoga exercise
2 music and dance
3 a mini sculpture in which you express for example your expectations
4 an energizer game

Inspiration by www.seedsforchange.org.uk

5 A Word on the Do It Yourself Approach

The DIY approach has many charms and advantages: it is flexible and light, it builds competence and self-reliance rather than dependency on experts and outside professionals, and it certainly saves some of your budget. Furthermore, most development happens in a self-organized way anyway. At the same time, there are good reasons to involve external facilitation and support in capacity building processes.

Capacity building workshops are about change and will not always allow you to stay in the Comfort Zone. Beyond the **Comfort Zone** lies the **Stretch Zone**. This is where you want to get to in capacity building: the space where change happens in terms of learning and development. But beyond the Stretch Zone lies the **Panic Zone**. This is certainly not where you want to be. This is where unhealthy things happen that block learning and development and can harm people and relationships.

Comfort Zone	Stretch Zone	Panic Zone

When should you abandon the DIY approach and seek help?

✓ When one or more persons are feeling highly uncomfortable or unsafe to speak up in the group.

✓ When people are feeling offended, conflict is played out by blaming and accusations.

✓ When the group feels persistently frustrated and stuck; discussions are moving around the same issues without progress.

✓ When the discussion is unbalanced and you are not able to include everyone due to persistent dominance of individuals (facilitated by age, experience, gender, or other criteria).

If you decide to seek external support, you can ask experienced colleagues and partners or professional consultants and facilitators for help. In this case, the Paths and methods of this Toolbox may still be followed.