



Methods #5: Action



After finding a group of people, identifying a community around it and brainstorming an idea, it will be time to make a plan, of how it will happen. We find it interesting to start with choosing the tactic on how to approach the given situation as well as the suitable technique that can be implemented with the resources existing within the group.

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5.2 Planning actions

Do we agree about how we do this? Are we getting stuck in details, or is this important? How do we facilitate the groupdynamics, and how do we coordinate the different subgroups? And how do we pull it all together and make it happen? These are some of the issues are tackled in the action planning.

Market of topics

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Collect topics from the group, which they were thinking about during last week. Collect their thoughts on post-it notes and hang them visible on a wall. Divide into sub-groups. In order to do this, set up the room with three type of tools for creative activism and ask the participants to choose the one they felt most connected to. They then divide into three subgroups accordingly. Of course, you can use any means to split the group. Each group will be asked to pick a topic from the „Market of topics“ and plan an action taking into account the context and somehow incorporating the tool which they felt affiliated with.

Tip:

Be aware that people might be uncomfortable with sharing topics they care about if the group and the atmosphere is not good enough for them. Avoid using this method as a complete starter.

Open space technology

Time:

2 hours

Target group:

Any

This is a well known approach a purpose-based leadership, including a way for hosting meetings, conferences and community summit events, focused on a specific and important purpose or task—beginning without any formal agenda, beyond the overall purpose or theme.

We have adapted Open space technology for structuring ideas for actions and planning when to realize them.

First, ask participants to write down their action ideas and their name on papers. The person who write the action idea is going to be the responsible for it. Participants can write as many ideas as they want and, as well, not write any. After everyone finishes, the group start an explanation round where each of participants explain about their idea or ideas. Other participant can ask questions to get more info about them. After the explanation round, people stick their papers on one wall. Now participants read the actions ideas and write down their name in the ones they would like to be involved in, taking into account that they can not be in all of them. When people finish to choose, facilitator presents a timetable with different time slots. The time slots could be from 2 hours. Now is time for each responsible to place their paper with their action idea in one or more time slots, depending how much time they will need to organize and make the concrete action. When the papers are placed, the group together check the timetable and see if everybody agrees on it. If there are disagreements, participants and facilitator try to find a solution together changing things in the timetable.

Tip:

During the part of reading all the action ideas and writing down their names, people usually get really excited and have problems to choose which actions they want to be involved in, ending up in putting their name in so many papers. Remind people to choose the 2 or 3 ideas they like the most and leave the others. The method can seem a bit chaotic at the start but, in our experience, always ended up in a clear working timetable.

Planning an action using a communication process map

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

After presenting creative activism through communication theory (see Methods #1, Explaining creative activism using communication theory), draw the scheme on a big paper. Divide the group in smaller groups, maximum 5 people. Give each group one copy of the map on a big paper. Give them 20 minutes to design their action, concretizing all the aspects that appear in the map. After that groups choose one representative who will explain to the other group the action they have created. These representatives switch groups and tell their new group about the action. The rest of the people in the group are invited to make questions, suggestions and ideas and find improvements. Representatives write down all the new information and come back to their original group to final conclusion. After that action is ready to be implemented!

Tip:

Is important to engage participants not to be shy to make suggestions, ask questions and for clarification to the other group.

Simulation game - game of boxes

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

This game is useful to help beginners to get started in the process of developing an action in a playful way. It also helps to start reflecting about topics that concern the people participating.

Firstly participants individually reflect about three concrete issues that concern or affect them. After 10 min individuals gather in small groups of four or five people. If the group is small, it could be as well in groups of three. The groups share the topics and choose one for the group.

After that we present 3 boxes: in one of them there are folded papers with names of places, for example, university, shopping centre, school, village, etc...; in another one there are folded papers with different target groups: women, kids, consumers, etc...; in the other one there are folded papers with creative activism techniques with an explanation: craftivism, performance, light graffiti, theatre, etc... Each group can choose one paper from each box so they have a topic + a place + a target group and technique to design an action together.

When the groups are ready with their actions you can either provide time for them to go "hands on" and try out the action or directly analyze them in plenary without trying them. In both cases, keep time for groups to present and analyze their action taking in account the different factors (topic, place, target group and technique) and their relations.

Tip:

This method works better if you use it after discovering creative activism methods with video and photo so participants will have already a visual idea of different techniques. Don't forget to add an explanation of the techniques you have in the box and a round of questions before the group start designing. Don't forget to write places close to the workshop space that the group don't have to go far to do the action. You can divide this method in two and use the first part till the design of the action - as closing of the day and the part of experience an action, presenting and analyzing - as opening of the next day.

The 5 Ws and How

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

This exercise use the concept of the "5Ws and How" to analyze all the aspects you have to keep in mind while organising an action - like choosing the better place and time to carry out the action.

Before the exercise prepare six signs: Why, What, Who, Where, When and How.

Divide into 6 groups. Give each person a paper with Why, What, Who, Where, When and How. Ask them to move around and organize themselves in a way so that they show the order of importance or the chronological order you need to answer to each question when you are organizing an action. This will create a discussion: "What comes first, because you need to know what you want to do?", "Why comes first, because you need a reason to do what you do?". Leave some time to discuss and reach an agreement. When they agree, try to challenge their decision with questions that make them reflect about their preconceptions like: "If your action is about changing a neighborhood, then the first one will be "Where", right?" " Do you always have a reason before you start to do something and does your reason change while doing it?"

Tip:

If you cant separate the group in groups of six, it is better to give them the signs to organize them in a table instead of six people hanging a sign and the others looking.

5.3 Analyzing actions

An action is only done after we have had time to reflect about it and share it. These methods has been used to learn from the errors and copy the secrets of sucess from other action groups. Be aware! The reflection can turn into a wild brainstorm for the next action.

Reflecting on practical actions

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

After doing some practical examples of actions (upcycled pots, seedbombs, moss graffiti...) in rotating groups, everyone share how they feel at this moment and how they felt while they were doing the activity. Ask questions to each other about their process and outcomes.

Divide the participants in different groups and give a practical activity to each group. For example, one group need to mould some seed bombs, other to prepare the "paint" for the moss graffiti and other to upcycle some containers into pots. When the activity is finished, ask one person of each group to explain what they were doing. After that give all the participants the opportunity to ask to the others questions about their activity. It will be important that, at some point, you direct the discussion to the implementation of the action with questions like: " Where will you spread the moss graffiti?" " Why would you rather use a moss graffiti than a paint one?" "In which case would you chose a paint graffiti instead of moss graffiti?" " Have you ever thought you can use a fabric bag as pot? What other "container" do you have at your trash bin that you could reuse?" "Where are you planning to throw the seed bombs and why?"

Tip:

If you have enough time you can have rotatory activities so each person can taste all of them and compare.

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