



# Get Involved

## Guide

*on how not to go insane while planning and implementing competitions*

## Imprint

This guide was developed within the #GetInvolved project, with the number 2020-1-DE02-KA202-007408.

## Project partners and contacts:

### **QBS Gewerkstatt gGmbH (GER)**

Andrea Wisotzki / wisotzki@gewerkstatt.de

### **3s research laboratory (AT)**

Monika Auzinger / monika.auzinger@3s.co.at

### **PKZ Voca Train (PL)**

Zbigniew Skwierawski / pkz.vocatrain@interia.pl

### **Leibniz University Hanover – IDD (GER)**

Malte Kleinschmidt / m.kleinschmidt@ipw.uni-hannover.de

### **ISFORCOOP (IT)**

Alessandra Obinu / alessandra.obinu@isforcoop.it



www.getinvolved-project.eu  
hello@getinvolved-project.eu

## Credits

Published in 2022.



Except where otherwise noted, content of the present document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC BY-SA). Photos, logos and any third party material are not included in the licence.

## Funded by



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

# Table of contents

Overview	2
Foreword	3
Look for inspiration	4
Assess possibilities	10
Build a great team	16
Work out a plan	20
Motivate, engage, appreciate	23
Engage the environment	26
Select the perfect jury	30
You made it!.... Now what?	33

# Foreword

**Everything is possible for a person who does not have to do it by themselves...**

Maybe the impulse for change was triggered by your students or listeners, who were looking for new role models, paths of development or opportunities. Maybe it was forced by changes in the mission of your institution that want you all to be more competitive, innovative and open to the needs of your listeners, students and teaching community. Maybe your local community is experiencing changes directly affecting your students that need to be addressed accordingly. Or maybe you yourself want to change your teaching skills and acquire new skills and competencies to make your classes more attractive?

Be it a competition, presentation, sports or artistic event, each type of event requires appropriate preparation and planning. There is a need for people who will carry out a given event or take part in it. You also need people who will support planned activities and appropriate resources (not necessarily financial ones), in order for all the planned tasks to be implemented properly. Time is needed to prepare any props, acquire the required knowledge and skills, and develop promotional or informational materials. You will also need time to build relationships with potential participants of the event, sponsors, supporters, and the players themselves. Time will also be needed to check that everything is going according to plan and face the consequences of our actions, both in the case of euphoric success and devastating failure.

Contests, projects and thematic events are very interesting tools for improving your own teaching skills, enriching your knowledge and developing your skills. They give us the opportunity to meet new people, experience cultural diversity and learn about the attitudes and views of the participants. They are an excellent tool for breaking down barriers and building good relationships that have a chance to go beyond the competition itself and last for many years after it ends. Finally, it is an ideal tool for integrating

both the community of a given institution and the local/regional community and for transferring important social content through innovative forms of cooperation.

On the other hand, implementing innovative forms of cooperation, such as competitions and other activities, can be a real challenge for people doing so for the first time. You often have to wade through a maze of laws and regulations, face organisational, technical and financial problems. Collaboration in a group requires a lot of sacrifice and preparation work for competitions often take more time than initially planned. Additionally, if a given initiative is implemented by an international group, other challenges must be faced, such as proper communication with all participants, ensuring equal access for all, etc. The multitude of additional activities may cause us to get lost in a maze of bureaucratic red tape. This can lead us to forget that the implementation of initiatives integrating our community and responding to its pressing needs and problems can be deeply satisfying.

That is why we created this guide. In it, we will describe our effective and proven approaches for handling most of the crisis situations you may encounter. We will share with you the very solutions and tools that we use in our everyday project work. We will do away with the mysteries surrounding „project thinking“. We will show how to establish good relations in the team, how to hand over responsibilities and how not fall into depression when half of the team suddenly disappears somewhere over the horizon. We will advise you on how to keep your cool when your initiative is successful and how to strap your toolbelt tighter after the first, and sometimes the next, failure. In a word, we will give you the knowledge, tools, and experience to face the challenges of any project.

Reach for success yourself.

# LOOK FOR INSPIRATION

Inspiration will find you even when you are not looking for it.



## In this chapter:

- We present ideas on how to start thinking about competition or initiation.
- We share a list of actions that can make your school more inclusive.
- We list some interesting ideas that other organisations and institutions are using to empower their student to be more active.
- We show you places where to look for inspiration.
- We provide information on brainstorming methods that can be used.
- We share ways to facilitate class discussions.

As the ancients used to say, the most difficult part of a long march is taking the first step. In our case, when we are talking about competitions or projects open to the school community, it is usually finding an appropriate grant programme or competition that meets the expectations of both our superiors and students who are to actively participate in it. In this chapter, we will focus on searching for sources of knowledge about available competitions and grants, and where to look for inspiration to create activities at the school or institutional level. As you will see, there are many possibilities and tools of this type, and each of you will surely find tools that suit your individual needs.

We have gathered some of the most important and renowned competitions and awards that deal with the themes of active citizenship, di-

versity, human rights and democracy in Austria, Germany, Italy and Poland and put them together in the national State of the Art Reports. You can download the reports from the project website and take a look at them in your free time. In this chapter, we will concentrate on activities you can implement directly in your workplace or at the local/regional level.

As the world that we know is rapidly changing right before our eyes, we will all face many changes that will affect us directly. New pupils will join the ranks of our training entities and schools with many different issues and needs. Before we move to the ideas connected directly to promoting active citizenship and democracy in your entities, let's see what we can do to make our workplace more inclusive and open for vulnerable pupils.

**General ideas:**

- Start a free clothing closet.
- Give out free lunch packets or sandwiches.
- Provide free access to sanitary supplies.
- Provide school supplies available for anyone.
- Help the pupils find safe transportation, especially after extra classes.
- Have a school library.
- Build and maintain a long-term mentoring program.
- Install a washer and dryer.
- Communicate with other staff members to work together.

**In the front office:**

- Post a welcome sign in different languages.
- Provide newsletters and community notices (translated if necessary) and post online.
- Post a school event board to notify staff and community of upcoming events.
- Display student artwork and projects.
- Post photos of school events.
- Notify the community of school awards and achievements.
- Have a morning greeting from the principal, a staff member, or a student.
- Have the daily bulletin read by students and post it online.
- Make birthday announcements.

**In the classroom:**

- Ensure that shelving is appropriate for student reach.
- Designate an area for class meetings and discussions.
- Create learning centres such as a book nook, science station, or writing retreat.
- Use masking tape to outline walkways and student seating.
- Supply materials for differentiated learning.
- Provide different types of lighting in the room.
- Group desks together to facilitate group interaction (when social distancing is not a factor).
- Provide large tables for cooperative group work.
- Post visual reminders, announcements and lesson concepts.
- Communicate regularly with families.

**In the library:**

- Provide various print, audio, and visual materials.
- Ensure that technology is up to date and available.
- Offer a reading club that is open to all students.
- Have student assistants help with younger grades.
- Create a “reading buddies” program.
- Provide workspaces for group and/or individual projects.
- Ensure that shelving and books are accessible.
- Offer different types of seating and seating arrangements.
- Create silent reading areas.
- Provide different types of lighting.

**On the playground:**

- Ensure that pathways to and around the playground are accessible.
- Provide modified playground equipment.
- Make sports equipment available to students.
- Create an area for structured games.
- Provide a group seating area.
- Make use of a playground social coordinator who organises games and activities for students.
- Create quiet areas for students to read or chat

We know that these points are not necessarily connected to the theme of this booklet, but if they are still not being implemented in your institutions, they can be a great starting point for a change. They can also be treated as a set of new challenges that many of us will have to face with the new waves of refugees seeking shelter in Europe.

Let us go back to the main topic of this chapter, namely what kind of competitions or activities could be implemented in your school. The range of the activities is very broad, so we will only list a few of them to give you an overview of what is possible:

**Performance-Based Challenges:**

These activities are normally held in subjects that are related to making experiments or mo-

odels that need to be set within specific requirements, such as physics, programming, modeling, etc.

**Tournaments:**

These events are often associated with sports, but are also suited for education, especially when they address multiple disciplines at once.

**Presentation and debate competitions:**

These competitions challenge the presentation and communication skills of the students and can be a great way to express diverse points of view on a given topic.

**Concept submission competitions:**

A written essay, poem, piece of artwork or other submission is typically the product created in this category of competition. Students are often tasked with creating a written or visual product as a response to a topic statement. These are then reviewed based on a wide range of criteria including grammar, comprehension, design, story-telling, etc. However, there can be many other submission-based topics such as software/coding, videos, or simply ideas. These competitions are typically conducted as individual projects with online submissions.

**Fairs:**

Normally organised as large-scale events in schools, where diverse fields and branches are presented.

**Exam competitions:**

This kind of contest is often seen in vocational schools and entities where vocational training pupils are encouraged to compete against each other. Even though it is a specific kind of competition, it can gain a lot of attention from the entire school community, especially when they are connected to activities that show the practical skills of the participants.

There are also other activities that are not necessarily a competition per se, but can make the school community more aware of the given issue, such as:

1. Passing a pupils’ council resolution that promotes the case they want to support. You can announce an initiative for open writing of a draft of a resolution supporting the case

you want to promote in the school (human rights, diversity, freedom of speech, etc), so that your pupils can actively participate in creating your institution’s culture and way of conduct. It is a great way to activate the pupils to do something for their school community.

2. Writing articles in your school’s newspaper on given topics. School newspapers can be a great place to talk about the importance of many important topics that affect your pupils directly. Encouraging pupils to write articles from their own perspective and from their own experiences will not only enhance the whole idea but also shed light on their actual feelings towards a given topic.
3. Organising a public reading on the current issues that affect your school community.
4. Setting up a free expression wall. Set up a blank wall or giant piece of paper and encourage your friends to write about what a given topic means to them.
5. Making a viral video on the topic that you are concerned about.
6. Starting a social media campaign by encouraging pupils and teachers to change their profile pictures or sharing a common message.
7. Organising special lectures. Invite experts on the topic you want to address and work with other teachers and the board on how to credit the pupils that attend the extra lecture.
8. Holding a candlelight vigil or other commemorative event, especially when you are addressing an act of violence or a breach of human rights or freedoms.
9. Holding a talent show, dance or party. Big social events are a great way to bring awareness to many different issues, especially those connected to global problems.

What if your supervisor expects you to participate in a specific initiative or if your students are looking for ways to obtain additional funds for a specific purpose? Here are the tools that will help you in this field.

The first step in looking for inspiration will be to return to everyday rituals. Each of us likes to make a so-called “press briefing”. This means browsing your favourite newspapers (paper or

electronic versions), listening to the news, viewing social media on the way to work or listening to podcasts of your favourite reporter or influencer on the way to everyday shopping. Scanning the headlines or checking what is trending in opinion-forming portals often allows you to spot interesting information that can inspire you to further work.



Another, quite important point in looking for inspiration, is to scan opinion-forming portals to check which most important topics start and end a given day or week. If our knowledge of foreign languages allows it, we should add opinion-forming portals from the European Union (such as POLITICO) to the most important information portals from a given country and 2-3 stations or global portals (e.g. CNN, BBC, TED), etc. You should also keep up-to-date with the information coming from the European Commission, because the Commission's website usually outlines the framework of subsequent programmes or initiatives: <https://ec.europa.eu/>. Reviewing the information on foreign portals once a week allows you to calmly follow trends in the European and global market and learn about interesting topics from different regions of the world.

If your organization is interested in taking part in the competitions connected to human rights, anti-discrimination and equal rights, please check the “state of the art” reports prepared by the partners of this project and uploaded onto the project’s website. We have gathered information on many interesting local, regional and national initiatives implemented in our countries for you so you do not have to look for the information yourself.

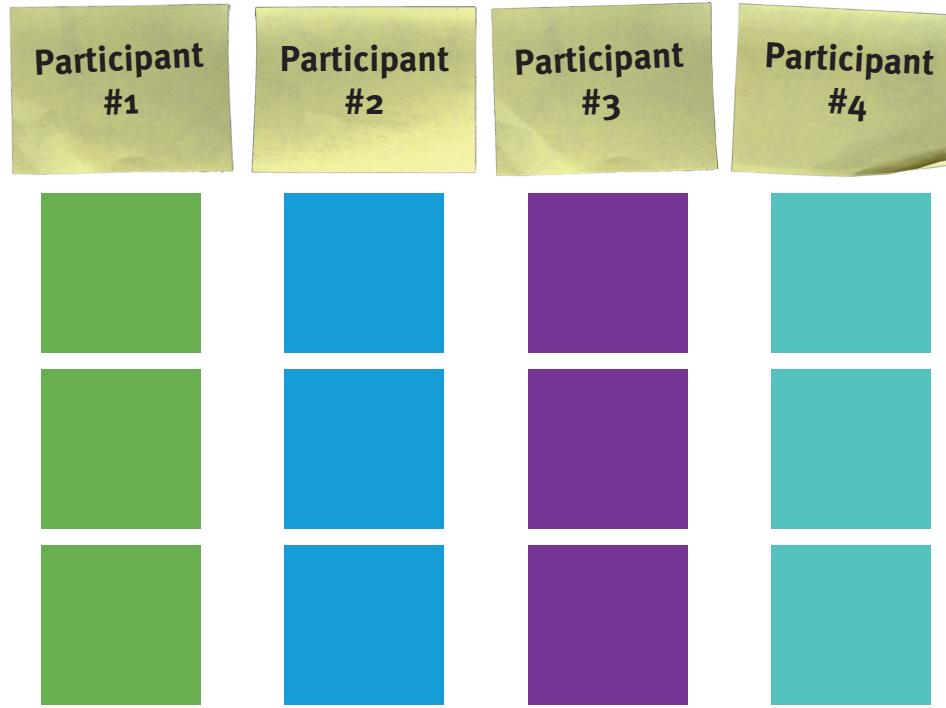
If your goal is to participate in a specific competition organised by an external organisation, the first step is to read the entire competition documentation. It includes the invitation to the competition, its rules, documentation templates and deadlines for submitting applications. This will allow you to assess whether you are able to meet the conditions for participation in a given competition, plan the preparation process and

minimise the possibility of failure both in the process of registering participants and the implementation of the entire competition. If you are to be the organiser of a given event or competition, it is good to search the Internet for similar initiatives organised by other schools, institutions, or organisations.

**Interesting!** Following people with an established social position (journalists dealing with difficult topics, politicians related to a given social movement, or non-governmental organisations acting for the benefit of a given group or specific changes in society or law). Twitter allows you to not only follow trends in public opinion, but also inspires you to deepen your knowledge on a given topic.

This allows you to not only check how a given initiative was implemented by a specific institution, but also what activities were implemented under this initiative and what was the response of the school and the local community to its implementation. It is also a good starting point for establishing contact with the implementers of a given initiative. With good cooperation, the previous implementers will provide you not only with information on specific methods of implementing a given initiative, but also share their experiences in this area.

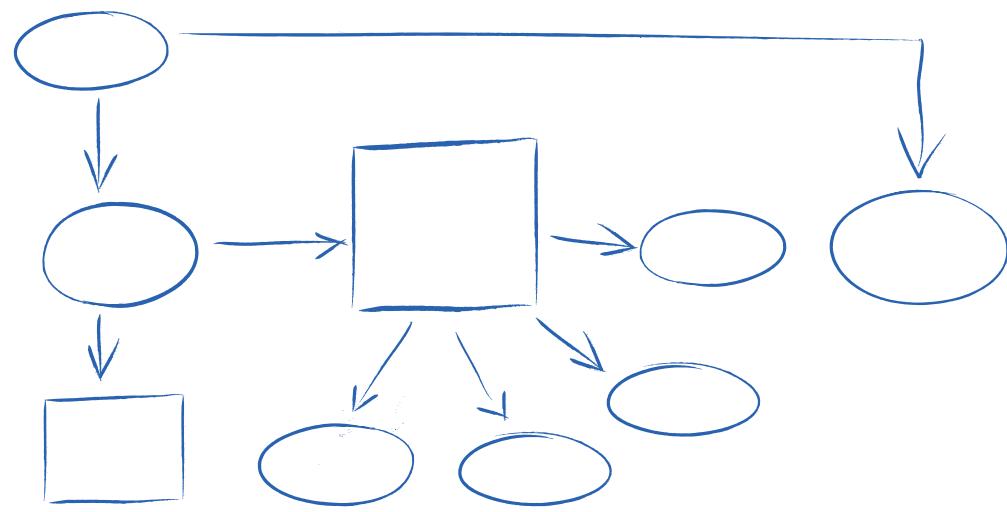
It is also a good time to ask for help from more experienced colleagues from your organisation and people interested in a given topic to cooperate in crystallising your idea and setting goals that you want to achieve through its implementation. Tools related to the transformation of ideas and a plan, which are colloquially called brainstorming methods, will certainly help you in this. Let us briefly present some of the most commonly used brainstorming methods.



**Brainwriting:** During brainwriting, each person is told to write down several ideas on post-it notes or index cards. It allows the ideas to be kept anonymous and encourages more introverted classmates to participate in the activity. This way a wider range of ideas is generally produced. Ideas are then shared with the whole group and either discussed or collected by the team leaders. This method is used to separate idea generation from the discussion.



**Starbursting:** This is a method that requires you to ask pivotal questions regarding your idea. Place the main idea at the centre of the star diagram, labelling each point of the star with the 5W1H question words. Next, develop a series of questions about your idea for each point. Starbursting is popular among brainstorming methods because of its exploratory nature: One question triggers another question, and before you know it, you have the beginnings of a solid strategy within the answers to those questions.



**Mind-mapping:** Mind maps are creative, non-linear diagrams used to capture many ideas so you don't miss anything. Start with a topic or question in the centre of the mind map, and branch off to include every participant's thoughts.

However, the most important source of inspiration for creating, implementing or supporting competitions and activating initiatives, as well as for their subsequent implementation, is always our students and listeners. Regardless of whether we meet with them every day or only in selected lessons, they are the real driving force for us, the force behind every change in both school policy and the teaching process. Do not underestimate their influence on the shape of initiatives and projects implemented by the school and in your own workshop. Observation of their attitudes and behaviours and reactions to events taking place in the social space will have a key impact on how the contests or other initiatives you plan will proceed and what their final effect will be.

We are aware that establishing a positive relationship with the listeners you see occasionally may be difficult, but regardless of whether you meet them in class every day or only from time to time, sometimes it is worth postponing the lessons planned for a given day and discussing important topics, both from a local and a global perspective. Especially now, in these fast-changing and very challenging times.

It is not easy to be a good facilitator when it comes to discussing controversial and often painful subjects. We have gathered some tips on how to moderate the discussion in class and will describe them briefly below:

Set out clear rules and expectations for discussions:

- Respect everyone's right to hold different views, beliefs and opinions.
- Challenge or criticise the idea, not the person.
- Support your statements with evidence.
- Approach discussions as a way of thinking aloud, where ideas and positions can be modified and clarified in response to new information and insight.

Summarise major discussion ideas and themes, either verbally or visually on the board.

When answers are not immediately forthcoming, wait and refrain from answering your own questions too readily. Answering your own questions quickly establishes an expectation among students that they need only to wait you out for challenging questions.

Reveal in advance some of the questions you plan on asking in class. This especially benefits your reserved students and those who do better with a bit of advance opportunity to think.

Ask questions that require more complex thinking. Broader discussions happen when students are probed and stretched to elaborate, evaluate and synthesise, as opposed to answering ad hoc questions that spring to mind. Until you get more familiar with the method it helps to make an advance note of some questions to ask.

# ASSESS POSSIBILITIES

Don't let what you cannot do determine what you are able to do



## In this chapter:

- We explain how different forms of actions will need a different approach.
- We share information on how to raise money at your schools.
- We provide links to crowdfunding platforms.
- We present event checklist template.
- We pose basic questions to ask yourself before you move to plan your event.
- We mention interesting online resources that can be of help.

For the purposes of this chapter, we will assume that you have already selected the theme for your new project and its form. Regardless of whether it will be a knowledge competition, an installation, a sports initiative or activities integrating the school community with the local community, it is time to assess whether and to what extent you are able to implement a given idea and who will be necessary for its implementation.

If, for example, you want to make a small scale internal event, such as a video presentation, art exhibition, etc., you will have to check the venue, book it, get the necessary approvals from your heads and make sure that the exhibits are secured before you release them to the

public. This kind of activity does not require a lot of preparatory work (apart from creating the exhibited articles, of course) and can be done without a large number of people involved. If you want to organise something bigger, like a public hearing on a special topic or a school-wide campaign connected to a specific issue, you will also have to think bigger. A bigger space must be booked so that all the listeners can fit in and feel safe, a place for extra activities must be set up and secured, extra informative materials and documents need to be prepared in advance so that the audience can learn more about your initiative later. Some extra helping hands will be needed to help you organise the space, manage the crowd and maybe help out with the presentations or equipment and so on.

You will probably have to devise an action plan and at least check all the resources at hand so that the whole event can run smoothly later.

If you intend to take part in an external competition or initiative (i.e. organised by other institutions and organisations), your first step should be to get all the documentation related to the event. This will include an invitation to participate in the event, the rules of the competition or initiative, additional documentation (template applications, evaluation cards, additional sources of information, etc.) and the location of the event. While reading the competition documentation will allow you to figure out what exactly the organiser of the initiative expects and what challenges you may have to face, checking the location of the event will allow you to assess whether all your students and listeners,

including people with special needs, will be able to take part in it.

If you want to organise a bigger event, involving the school and external community, you must choose the right place for its implementation, create clear regulations specifying the conditions of participation in the event, expectations for participants, criteria for evaluating participants, etc. If you are facing such a challenge for the first time, checking the documentation of similar competitions organised by other educational institutions and direct contact with their organisers will allow you to clarify the rules and avoid possible problems already encountered.

The basic check-list when planning bigger competitions/events should contain the following data:

<b>Name of the event</b>	
<b>Date of the event</b>	
<b>Duration</b>	
<b>Place</b>	
<b>Event coordinator / contact person</b>	
<b>Target audience</b>	
<b>Event goals</b>	
<b>Number of participants</b>	
<b>Number of audience members</b>	
<b>Number of invited guests</b>	
<b>Event description</b>	
<b>Potential threats</b>	
<b>Evaluation / selection criteria</b>	
<b>Budget including:</b>	
<b>Own resources</b>	
<b>Sponsors</b>	
<b>Other income</b>	

Based on this list, as the event date approaches, you can expand it and add additional items, e.g. extensive budget items (costs of room rentals, catering, costs of deposits or subcontractors of given services), data on the detailed program of the entire event, placement of individual points in a given location (registration of participants, assembly points, places for meals, toilets, medical assistance points, etc.), decorations, additional services offered (e.g. special music, amenities for groups with special dietary preferences or needs), activities for invited guests or jurors (such as organising their accommodation, meals, transfer to the event venue and planning their free time), promotional activities at your institution and at the local/regional level, and any additional information that will help you in the implementation of the event (e.g. safety information during the event, its appropriate signage, Wifi access for guests and the public, fast check-in lanes for participants, etc.). The next step will be to prepare a check-list for the day of the organisation of the event. In other words writing out step by step what will be implemented when on that day, planning activities after the implementation of the event (communication with invited guests, teachers, volunteers, posts in social media, posting materials from the event on the website of your school or institution). You should also find time to summarise the event and identify key successes or failures during its implementation, so you do not forget about it when preparing your checklist.

Let's assume that you have already collected basic information about a given competition or initiative. The next step is to look at whether you have enough time and resources to complete the initiative. It is worth asking yourself a few questions first that will realistically assess your capabilities and indicate areas in which you will need to seek support. Below is a set of questions to ask yourself before jumping into the deep end:

- Do you have sufficient theoretical/practical knowledge to implement the event? If not, do you have access to information, teaching and support materials that will support you in this regard?
- Are there people in your institution who can support you with their knowledge and experience during the preparation and im-

plementation of the event?

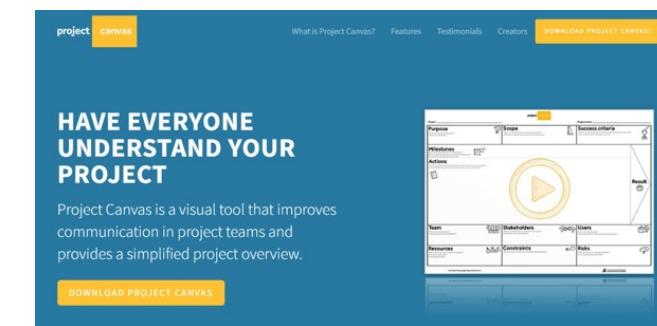
- Will you find people in your institution who would like to take part in a given initiative as participants or volunteers? Where can you find such people?
- Do you have access to additional funds for the purchase of appropriate teaching aids or for adapting the rooms to the planned activities?

We left the most important question for last:

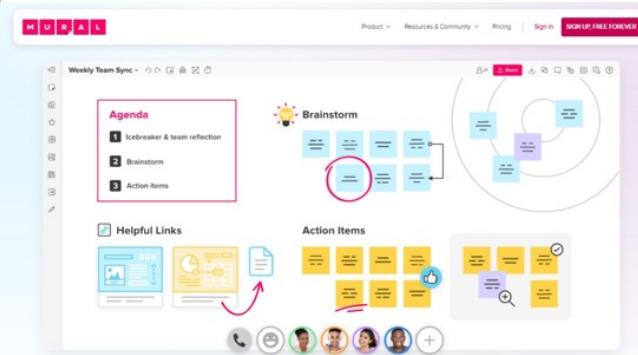
- How much of your time are you able to devote to the preparation and implementation of the event or to participate in the initiative?

Regardless of whether you take part in a competition organised by third institutions or engage in activities at your facility, time will be a key factor that is often decisive for the success or failure of the entire project. Working on a project or competition means irregular working hours, answering phone calls at strange times of the day and night, dealing with various situations that will often turn all your plans and graphics upside down. You must also be aware that no matter how many tasks you delegate to other people in your team, you will still be fully responsible for the implementation of the initiative, and this again involves the need to find time to track all the activities, implement corrective actions and prepare the appropriate documentation. Therefore, it is worth considering this issue at the beginning of your preparations.

Two interesting and fun-to-use tools caught our eyes when we were preparing this chapter:



[www.projectcanvas.dk/](http://www.projectcanvas.dk/) - A visual tool that improves communication in project teams and provides a simplified project overview.



[www.mural.co/](http://www.mural.co/) - A space for your team to collaborate visually and problem-solve faster with an easy-to-use digital canvas. No ordinary online whiteboard, MURAL has powerful facilitation features, guided methods and the deep expertise organisations need to transform teamwork.

If you already have a clear idea of what you want to do but you lack adequate funds to implement it, you might want to consider the following:

- Employee/student contributions to a given initiative
- Targeted fundraising
- An individual budget for the testing phase of your initiative, separated from your institution's budget
- Subsidies from private or public funds obtained under special local and regional programs
- Donations and in-kind gifts (e.g. materials for the required installations or promotional and informational materials)
- Sponsorship
- Running a paid activity, the profit from which will be allocated to the implementation of a given initiative (e.g. a baking fair, thematic festivals)
- Crowdfunding

Let us elaborate on two ways of getting the finances for your goal, fundraising and crowdfunding, in the next section of this chapter.

Fundraising can feel like a difficult task, but it doesn't have to be stressful, especially if you change it from a chore to a fun activity that anyone can participate in. [www.signupgenius.com](http://www.signupgenius.com) has many great ideas for fundraising activities in schools. We noted down some of them that are really spunky and interesting:

**Bake sale:** Parents, students and staff can contribute baked goods for a one-day sale. Children and/or parents can be invited in to buy these treats.

**Raffle:** Sell tickets for the chance to win a particular prize. This could be a basket of goods, a 50/50 draw for cash, or another prize donated by the community or school.

**Gift card sales:** Working with a known provider, you can sell gift cards for local retailers and a portion of the proceeds will go back to your fundraising efforts.

**Bingo:** Organise a bingo night and participants can pay to play with an opportunity for the winners to get small prizes.

**Pancake breakfast:** Sell tickets for a delicious breakfast hosted in the school gym one morning before school starts. Offer food and refreshments for a set price.

**Popcorn sales:** Rent a popcorn machine and offer a special treat over lunch one day or at a school game or concert.

**Summer/winter carnival:** Come up with fun outdoor activities and events that will draw in the community to buy tickets and participate. Consider selling entry tickets or having each activity valued at a certain number of tickets.

**Flower or bulb sale:** Sell flowers or bulbs to school families and the community to get ready for spring.

**Pizza day:** Organise a special lunch and collect orders ahead of time from each classroom.

**Flea market:** Promote a school-wide flea market where families can bring in items they want to sell from their homes, such as old books or toys. Consider having specific tables for each type of item to keep it organised with proceeds going to the school or charity.

**Fun run:** Organise a Fun Run or Fun Walk that the students can participate in. Encourage them to raise pledges from their families or ask for a specific donation amount. Make it a fun event with music, snacks and high energy.

**Car wash:** Generate awareness around the community for a car wash hosted in the school parking lot. Offer to wash the cars of parents and people driving through the neighbourhood for a donation.

**Dance-a-thon:** Invite students and families to partake in a dance-a-thon. They could collect pledges based on how long they stay on the dance floor! Ensure you have a good playlist of upbeat songs and consider selling snacks and refreshments for an additional cost.

**Talent show:** Showcase the talent of your students and faculty by hosting a talent show. Encourage individual or team participation and sell tickets for family and friends to watch.

**Gift basket bidding/auction:** Gather donated items from local businesses and create gift baskets that students and parents can bid on. Example: a "movie" themed basket with cinema tickets, speciality popcorn and candy.

**Teacher charity concert:** Round up your teachers for a musical concert for the students! Sell tickets to watch the teachers perform songs, either as a big group or in small groups. Teachers could get creative and invite well-known performers to join them or have community sponsors.

**Multicultural fair:** Showcase the many delicious foods and unique talents of your students by hosting an event where students are encouraged to share their cultural traditions with one another.

**Recipe book:** Have students contribute family recipes and create one school-wide recipe book. Sell the book to parents and community members.

**Charity ball:** Host an evening event for students and the community to attend and contribute part of the proceeds to a local charity. Have volunteers ask for decoration and refreshment donations from local businesses and develop a specific theme for the evening.

**Parents Night Out:** Plan an evening where parents can drop off their little ones for a couple

of hours. Coordinate some games or a movie for the kids and charge a babysitting fee per child.

**School sleepover:** Working with a team of volunteers, host a school sleepover in the gym. Create a detailed list of what each student needs to bring and plan fun activities, games or a movie for the kids to enjoy. Provide snacks and breakfast in the morning. Charge a specific amount and anything above the costs can go towards the school's fundraising needs.

**Spa Night:** Organise for various spa professionals to give a day or evening of pampering! Seek nail technicians, makeup artists and hairstylists to donate or discount their services to benefit your school.

**Online crowdfunding:** Try an online crowdfunding platform to get donations for your cause. Think of creative incentives that you can give to people who donate, with bigger incentives for larger donations.

Here are some extra tips on how to become a great fundraiser:

- Plan the fundraising ahead so you can gather more money.
- Build a good team that pushes the whole process forward.
- Set clear goals so that the money givers know what they are sponsoring.
- Set a realistic schedule and plan the activities accordingly.
- Make sure that everyone is aware of your fundraising action by proper communication and information.
- Use fundraising as a tool to bring the pupils, teachers and whole school community together.
- Combine your fundraising activity with your institution's goals and mission so that it is clearly recognizable.
- Remember to advertise your actions outside the school.
- Do not forget to thank all the money givers.
- Do not be afraid to ask for help or advice from other schools that are already involved in fundraising activities!

A very interesting form of obtaining funds is the so-called crowdfunding.

Crowdfunding is a model for financing projects. Raising funds under this initiative is possible through dedicated portals. A description of your initiative is placed on the website that allows you to collect money, and Internet users interested in supporting it can donate any amount, even the smallest one. In order to attract more supporters, it is necessary to include a well-formulated description of the project, photos and multimedia presenting your initiative as well as information about the funds already raised. The supporters will also expect a report on the collection progress, and if the appropriate amount is collected, information on the progress of the project they have supported. Some collectors offer supporters special benefits, including their data in promotional materials, access to special materials, participation in the test phase of a given initiative or access to its end products. If the entire amount is not collected, donations should be returned to the donors or their consent should be obtained to cover some of the activities planned during a given initiative.



When you have analysed the data about your event and you are sure that you will find the time to implement it and that you are ready to take the bull by the horns, it is time to assemble a team that will allow you to implement the initiative. That is exactly what we will look at in the next chapter.

Here are the biggest and most-renowned platforms you can visit to get more information on the crowdfunded projects and initiatives:

- <https://www.kickstarter.com/>
- <https://www.indiegogo.com/>
- <https://www.patreon.com/>
- <https://www.gofundme.com/>
- <https://circleup.com/>

Most countries also have their own crowdfunding platforms, so do check their respective Internet websites for more information on the ideas they support.

# BUILD A GREAT TEAM

Talent wins the game, but the group wins the championship



## In this chapter:

- We describe where to look for your team members.
- We point out some key elements for building and maintaining a team.
- We share some interesting Internet sites that offer some great team-building games and exercises.

You already know what you want or can do (or at least have an outline) and when the event will take place. You have determined where it will be implemented, what its scope will be and when it will take place. You have also determined all your logistic, educational and additional needs for the event. Now it is time to select participants and/or supporters that will help you both prepare for a specific action and achieve success. Below, we present you with some proven methods to help you reach your goals.

Check your environment. In every institution, organisation and local community, interest groups and support groups are formed where additional activities are carried out. Perhaps the interests or activities of a given group are related to the subject of your project. Check if

the representatives of these groups would be interested in supporting your activities, sharing their knowledge or having a representative join your team.

Define your needs. Take the time to think about what people you need in your team to successfully implement your project. It is worth creating a list of roles to be filled in your project and considering what tasks will be entrusted to them. This will help you avoid duplicate positions, allow better planning of the division of tasks between all the participants and minimise the involvement of too many helpers at the very first stage of preparation. Recruiting according to real needs allows you to not only shorten the group building process, but also to quickly reach people who have the skills you want.

A list of positions in your group may look like this:

Position	Responsibilities	Desired Skills
Team Leader	<b>Building a team, supervising the work of the team, making key decisions, close cooperation with other team members, supervision over the proper implementation of the initiative, supervision over the schedule and budget of a given event...</b>	<b>Good organisation of own work and teamwork, the ability to work under time pressure, creativity, coping with stress...</b>
Participant 1	... <b>collaboration with the team leader and other group members</b>	...
Participant 2	... <b>collaboration with the team leader and other group members</b>	...
Participant...	... <b>collaboration with the team leader and other group members</b>	...
Person responsible for communication	<b>Conducting and supervising communication with various groups involved in the project, preparing documentation supporting these activities, preparing reports on the activities carried out for the project leader...</b>	<b>High linguistic and stylistic skills, fluency in speech and writing, knowledge of foreign languages (if required by a given initiative), open and friendly personality...</b>
Person responsible or logistics	<b>Implementation of transport, supplies and additional activities</b>	<b>Conscientiousness, technical skills, driving license...</b>
Person responsible for promotion	<b>Running a website, blog, creating graphics for the promotion of a given initiative, close cooperation with the group leader and the person responsible for communication...</b>	<b>Computer skills, Office + Wordpress environment, graphic skills...</b>
...	...	...

As you have probably noticed, although the above list is still very general and includes examples of positions that can often be found in competition teams, each of the positions described involves performing different activities and has different requirements for the desired skills. Our experience shows that the greater the separation of individual functions, the smaller

the fear of internal conflicts related to the division of responsibilities. We also described the responsibilities of individual participants/group members as they depend on the nature of the initiative. If it is, for example, a knowledge competition or a thematic debate, each participant will have to have different knowledge and skills. If you want to create a monothematic compe-

tition, participants will have to have a similar level of knowledge and skills to actively support the group leader.

Make a contract. Bureaucracy is not as bad as it is made out to be. Sometimes it is even helpful when working in a group. Create a contract in which you clearly describe the purpose of your group, the duties and privileges of each participant, the time frame of the cooperation, and all the points that are important both in terms of the implementation of the project and cooperation in the group. Such a document will allow you to avoid misunderstandings in the implementation of the project and will be the basis for resolving potential conflicts related to the implementation of individual activities.

Set realistic goals. Investigate exactly what the initiative you want to take part in will require from your future team and adjust your goals accordingly. No team member will be happy to have to master a large part of the teaching material in a short time or to spend many hours on long and complicated activities. Dividing them into smaller, shorter stages (crowned with some common celebration of their achievement) will not only allow for a more effective organisation of the work of the entire team but also ensure high-quality activities during this work.

Be transparent. In creating transparency, you are providing all the information or resources they need and making them readily available to everyone. Being transparent means explaining the “why” behind the set goals. In not only knowing what you are doing but why you are doing it, you are providing a deeper understanding of the collective goal you are moving towards as well as a better vision of the bigger picture. Finally, remember to be open and honest with your team about any foreseen obstacles or challenges that may arise so that you can equip them as best as possible beforehand.

Organise the communication. There are hundreds of ways to communicate between team members. That being said, it is extremely challenging to keep on top of your responsibilities if the information is distributed all over the place. Try to organise your communication channels and set clear expectations regarding which

channels should be used for what reasons.

Encourage respectful communication. In order to foster an environment of respectful communication for successful teamwork, people need to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, opinions and insights with the rest of the group. That is why one of your responsibilities as a leader is to promote active listening and respectful communication amongst team members. You will know that your team has strong communications established when each individual feels like they are given the same amount of attention to be heard, as they give listening to try to understand. In trying to understand, your team members are likely going to ask questions and really think about what their colleague is saying to better understand them and learn from them.

Create a sense of commitment. In order to create a strong sense of group commitment in your team, you need to spend some time together to build a relationship. It is much easier to gain a strong sense of group commitment when individual accountabilities and responsibilities are clearly defined for each member of the group. When your team understands the scope of their colleagues’ work, they are able to support each other and hold one another accountable. This is going to create an overall deeper commitment to the group’s decisions and actions.

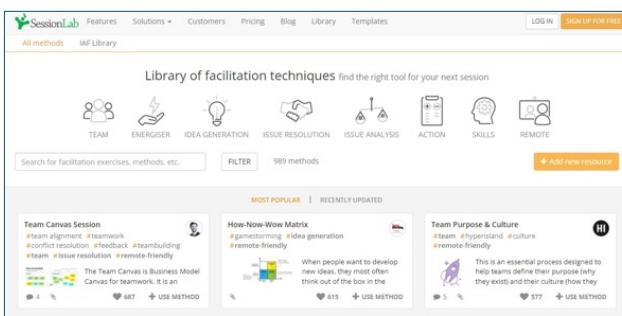
Foster innovation in problem-solving. There are many ways to approach problem-solving and it is usually based on our own personalities and perceptions. For that reason, it is important to give the floor to your team in order to listen to different approaches to problem-solving. In listening to other perspectives, you are likely going to learn from the individuals in your group and adopt practices that promote effective team work. It is also important to give your team members the chance to solve challenges on their own (by coaching them and asking open-ended questions), instead of trying to give them all the answers and information they need.

Give your team the power to make decisions. Giving your team the power to make decisions is a great motivation for teamwork. As a manager, you often rely on the expertise of your team for your own decision-making. So why not shift

and share the power with your team? This gives them the autonomy and confidence to make decisions that allow the team to move closer towards the overall goal.

Remember to have fun with your team. There is nothing that cements the team more than having fun. Don't be afraid to turn regular meetings into team building activities. Turn the class into a trip together, exchange boring tables and documents for an online tool and between activities, find a moment for a coffee together or a quick stress relief with games and activities. Of course, not all your team members may be comfortable with this type of interaction, so introduce these elements slowly, ensuring a good atmosphere inside your team and allowing those who do not want/cannot participate in them to integrate with the group in a different way.

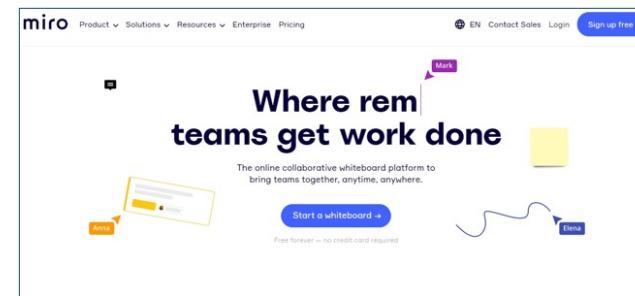
While preparing information for this chapter, we stumbled upon a few very useful websites when it comes to team-building, motivation, inclusion and even trivia that can be used to build a strong and empowered team of giants that will take the sky as the limit and make your ideas and plans thrive. Here are a few that really caught our eye:



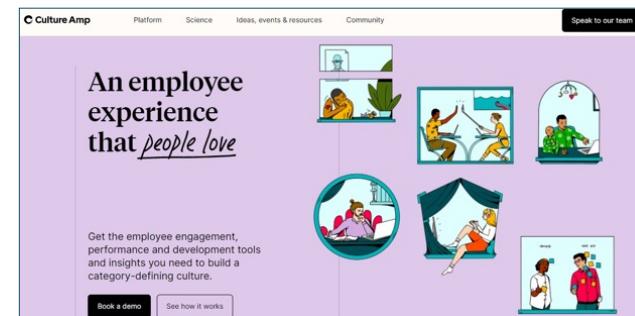
[www.sessionlab.com/](http://www.sessionlab.com/) - Check out its Library section.



[www.signupgenius.com/](http://www.signupgenius.com/) - Check out its Resources section.



[www.miro.com/](http://www.miro.com/) - Check out its Resources section.



[www.cultureamp.com/](http://www.cultureamp.com/) - Check out their Ideas, events & resources section.

# WORK OUT A PLAN

A goal without a plan is just a dream



## In this chapter:

- We concentrate on ideas how to create a work plan.
- We present some useful online tools that can be used for planning and organising bigger initiatives and competitions.

Experienced implementers of various initiatives say that an hour of planning can save 10 hours of work. It is hard to disagree with that, especially nowadays, when we live in times of overabundance of information, deadlines and things to be supervised. A good, but not overloaded action plan will allow you to not only achieve the intended goal (in this case, to organise or participate in a given competition or other initiatives), but also to optimise the work of the entire team and minimise the waste of your team's energy on tasks unnecessary in a given phase of preparation.

No one will expect sophisticated and detailed plans from you if you want to implement

some small-scale initiative (e.g. meeting with an activist working for migrants, organising an exhibition on workers' rights, an art competition related to the current humanitarian crisis, etc.), but in the case of larger initiatives, it is worth preparing an action plan so as not to get lost. This is especially important in initiatives involving many different entities or carrying out many activities in different locations or on different topics.

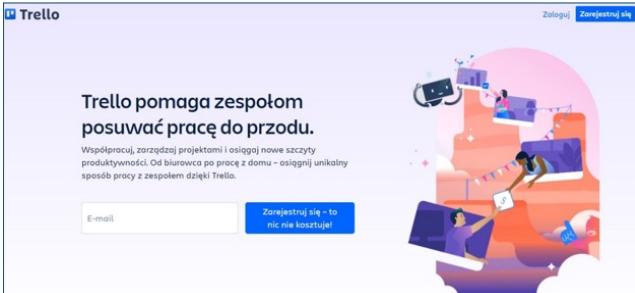
The easiest way is to divide the work plan into goals (or stages), tasks, time frames in which the tasks should be performed and the persons responsible for their execution:

Goal (Project Stage)	Action/ Task	Person in Charge	Planned Completion Date	Status	Remarks

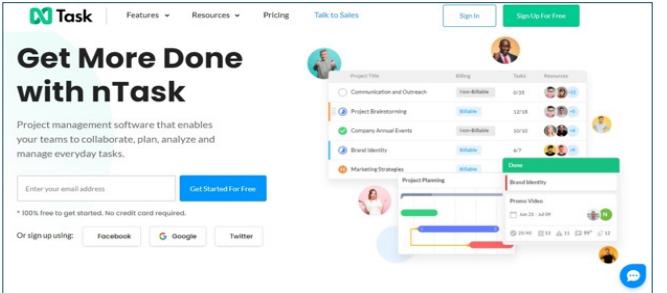
Depending on the time you have to prepare for a given competition or initiative, your plan can be divided into months, weeks or even days. To create it, you can use both the checklist that we presented in the previous chapter and the information collected from members of your working group. Information about what you want to achieve by participating in a given initiative, the results you expect and the number of people involved in your activities and their availability will be of key importance.

Remember to include some team-building group activities, tasks related to monitoring the work of the team and activities promoting your activities within your institution and local community into your plan.

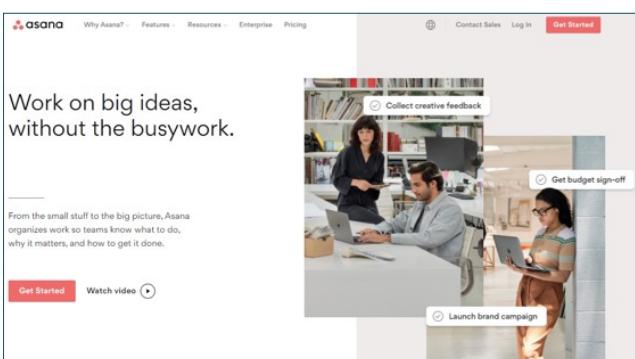
You can use online tools as well as standard paper solutions to plan your activities. Here are some of the best free online management and work plan tools:



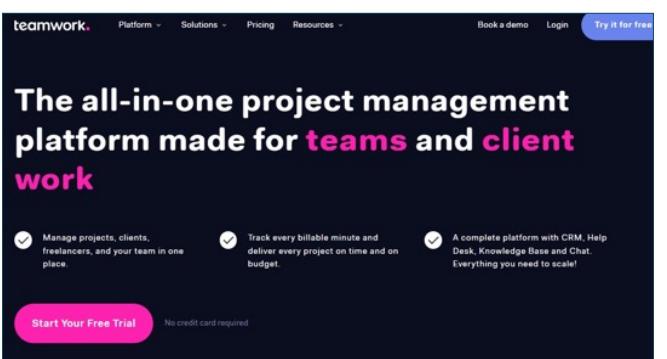
<https://trello.com/home>



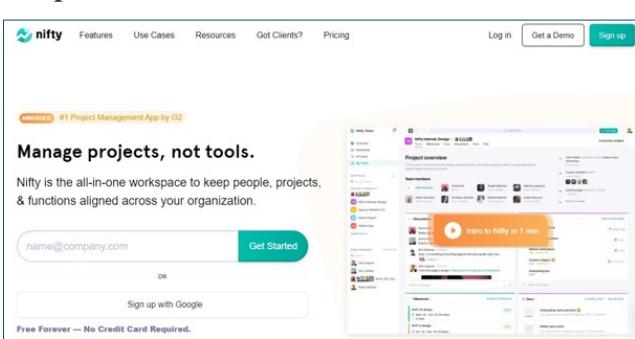
<https://www.ntaskmanager.com/>



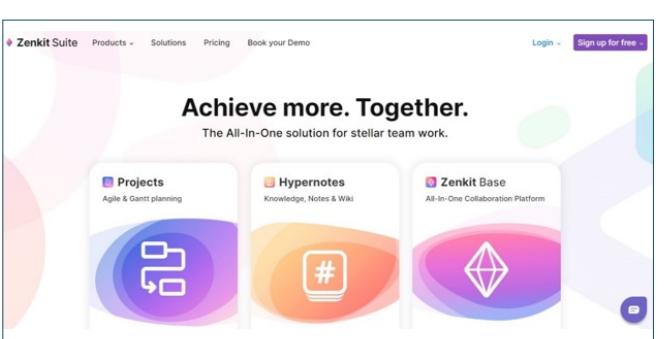
<https://asana.com/>



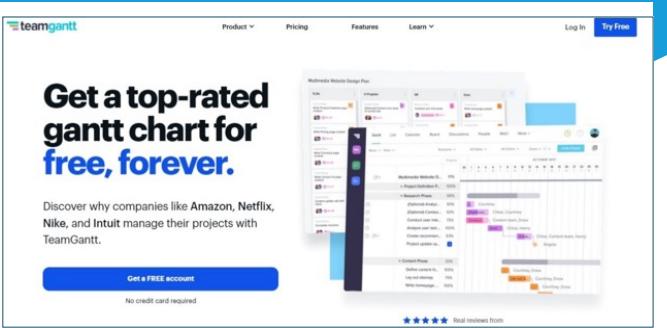
<https://www.teamwork.com/>



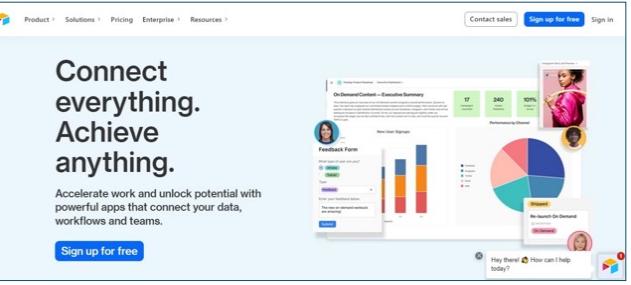
<https://niftypm.com/>



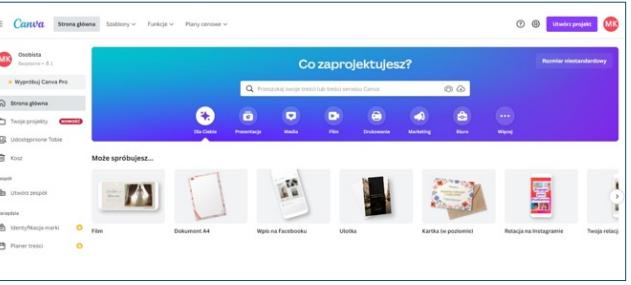
<https://zenkit.com/>



<https://www.teamgantt.com/>



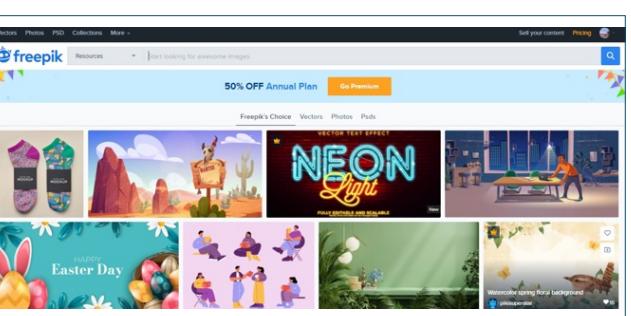
<https://www.airtable.com/>



[www.canva.com](https://www.canva.com)



<https://teamdeck.io/>



[www.freepik.com](https://www.freepik.com)

You can use most of these tools for free, as long as your workgroups do not exceed 10-15 people. However, if you prefer to work with paper documents, you can download the appropriate templates for such documents from free websites and adapt them to your needs. An interesting set of „ready-made“ items can be found, for example, here:  
<https://www.smartsheet.com/free-event-planning-templates>  
<https://templatelab.com/work-plan/>  
<https://templatelab.com/event-planning/>

Interesting and simple solutions in this area are also offered by well-known internet platforms (Google, Opera) and office programs (Office, WPS). If you do not like simple tables and everything must have an artistic finish, check out [www.canva.com](https://www.canva.com), where you will not only find a huge library of ready-to-use templates, but also many graphic designs that you can use in informational and promotional activities. Freepik is another great site for graphics, pictures and vectors that will enhance your sheets, documents and presentations.



No matter how motivated and involved your team is, always include a few „spare days“ in your plan. Life can thwart even the most refined plans, so it is better to have a few extra days to use at each stage of your activities than to worry about meeting the planned deadlines!

# MOTIVATE, ENGAGE, APPRECIATE

If everyone is moving in the same direction, success comes by itself



## In this chapter:

- We list methods to motivate your team members.
- We breeze through ways to engage your team members more.
- We show you ideas on how to thank your team members for their work.

The effective work of your team will determine the success or failure of your entire initiative. In the previous chapters, we focused on building your team, now we will briefly discuss some good strategies for motivating and appreciating your team members at different stages in your work together.

### Motivate

1. Show respect: No matter what type of team-work you do, all your team members deserve respect. Team members devote their free time to helping you, so showing them respect for what they do is an integral part of building trust and a sense of belonging to the group.
2. Talk: Regular meetings with the entire team are essential to establish and implement a course of action, especially at the beginning of your work together. Make sure that all your group members can have their say and that any issues that are not understood are cleared up.
3. Keep your door open: Try to be available for your team. Team members should not feel embarrassed to ask for advice or additional guidance. Additionally, you should initiate contact with them from time to time.
4. Define common goals: As we emphasised in previous chapters, most of your group members will share the interests or values related to your initiative. During one of the joint meetings, think about what tasks would best fit their attitude and meet their individual needs and include them in your work plan for the next days and weeks.
5. Appreciate the results you will achieve: While the majority of your group members are unlikely to expect praise and applause for their work, that doesn't mean you should completely forget about it. Celebrate your team's big and small achievements to give everyone a sense of belonging and fulfillment.

### Engage

1. Define goals that can be achieved every day: Translate your goals into tasks that can be achieved during one day, week, or month. During the joint work, allocate some time to summarise your activities, present what has already been achieved and highlight those tasks that should be carried out in the near future.
2. Show concern for the work and private life of your team members: While working together, do not forget to ask about the interests or hobbies of your team members. The better you get to know each other, the easier it will be to later find ways to appreciate or motivate them to keep working. Show empathy for the problems that your colleagues may face and try to modify the work plans so that they can support your activities also within the new circumstances.
3. Focus on developing your co-workers' strengths: We have found that the weaker the skills in a given area, the less the person is involved in activities related to that particular issue. If you invest some time in developing this person's skills and making them feel confident about the tasks they are performing, it will definitely lead to better results for the entire team.
4. Ask for feedback: Be it during group meetings or individual meetings, find time for each person to express their opinion on the progress of work, the working methods used by the group and the working atmosphere. Not everyone will want to share their reflections with the whole team, so be sure to give them the opportunity to talk individually and submit their comments.
5. Reward creativity: Let the group know that you will support any new ideas they implement. Team members will know that their opinion is important to you and will be more involved in planning the action if they can think outside the box and introduce additional initiatives into your work. Even if their idea does not work out or is not fully implemented, it will be an interesting lesson for the future for everyone.
6. Leave the well-known paths: Support team members in taking on tasks not necessarily related to their current interests or skills. Make sure that all the professional help and materials needed for the specific tasks are available and give your team members free rein on how to implement their responsibilities. By allowing team members to take on new tasks, you demonstrate your faith in their abilities and motivate them to become more involved.
7. If you need to criticise, be constructive: If you notice that someone in your group is not working as efficiently or as well as at the beginning, talk it over. Do not focus on the mistakes made by the individuals concerned, rather outline the problem or recurring shortcomings and ask everyone to be more involved in eliminating them. Never criticise individuals in the presence of the whole group.
8. Offer a helping hand: Check regularly to ensure that all the group members are coping with their assigned tasks, that the division of tasks is even and that someone does not need relief or support in carrying out some activities. If there are too many tasks, consider introducing additional people to the team to take care of the side tasks, especially during the „hot“ periods of your schedule.
9. Schedule a break: Don't be afraid to quit all your tasks and announce a break to regenerate your strength or take a break from issues related only to your work. A joint trip to a place completely unrelated to your tasks to relieve stress or a few days of individual rest after a very exhausting period of work can work wonders both in terms of building motivation for further work and cementing the team.
10. Don't overdo the meetings: If your group keeps organising information or project meetings, you will definitely not be able to fully devote yourself to the tasks assigned to you. Make sure that a meeting is really necessary before calling it. Even if it is necessary to hold a meeting, keep it short and substantive.
11. Address low morale in the group: React when your team members are often absent, do not perform their duties properly or if conflicts arise in the group. These are the

first symptoms of burnout or discouragement in the group and should be addressed as soon as possible to properly remodel your working patterns.

12. Learn from those who leave your team: Not all your team members will survive with you to the end of your initiative, but their departure can be used to create an even stronger bond with the rest of your team. Ask about the good and bad experiences of the person leaving, remembering that they may not be completely objective. If you find their remarks conclusive, implement them in your future work.

#### Appreciate

1. Organise a meeting: Plan and conduct a meeting to thank all your team members. Invite speakers who can share their group experiences and give important tips. Give small gifts to all the participants. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, arrange an online meeting.
2. Record special thanks: Invite your co-workers to record a joint short clip of thanks for all those involved in your activities. Remember that members of your team often spend their free time helping you in your daily work, so you have to let them feel how much it means to you.

3. Highlight the involvement of your team: Put information about the successful work your team members have done for your event on your institution's website or on the event blog. Remember to update this information by posting photos from ongoing group meetings. On the blog, you can also post your team's progress in achieving specific goals, individual conversations with your colleagues and all the information and achievements that are important and uplifting to you.
4. Prepare a traditional thank-you letter: In the Internet age, such a hand-written and personalised letter will not only be a nice souvenir, but can also be a reference in applying for an internship, work, or participation in another event.

5. Prepare small gifts: A voucher for the cinema or a pizza place near the school, a set of cookies or candy, will not only improve the mood of the team members, but also convince them that they are important to you. If you manage to hit their individual needs and interests with a gift, they will surely feel appreciated.



If you are looking for a great place to find some motivational/appreciation activities that you could implement in your daily training routine, check out these websites for some fresh ideas:

- [www.sessionlab.com/library/appreciation](http://www.sessionlab.com/library/appreciation)
- [www.positivpsychology.com/gratitude-exercises/](http://www.positivpsychology.com/gratitude-exercises/)
- [www.wheniwork.com/blog/37-employee-appreciation-ideas](http://www.wheniwork.com/blog/37-employee-appreciation-ideas)

# ENGAGE THE ENVIRONMENT

The coolest thing about group work is that people are on your side.



#### In this chapter:

- We briefly present ideas on how to engage your community in your school activities and how to make sure that your school or institution is deeply rooted in the local community.
- We describe where to look for the potential sponsors and ambassadors of your competitions.
- We present some simple ideas on how to keep your supporters engaged and active throughout the whole life cycle of your initiatives.
- We briefly explain how an online contest can be made and how to motivate the public to take part in it.

In an ideal world, if you had a brilliant and innovative idea, everyone would immediately applaud it, shower you with inexhaustible trust and financial resources and wait with bated breath for the results of your initiative. In the real world, unfortunately, before you can achieve the support and resources you want, you will have to face many challenges, especially in terms of getting people to support and cheer your efforts. In this chapter, we will focus primarily on gaining support for new initiatives in your institution and we will answer questions on how to build the trust of those who support you in your environment.

Drawing the community closer to learning and training institutions as well as introducing the

learners to the initiatives fostered by the local community is a great way to work out how they can best support each other. Many schools are already deeply involved in the local community's activities and some communities are already part of the learning community, but it is always good to look for new ways to link them together, especially with the new challenges coming our way in the next few years.

Here are some ideas on how to nurture your connection with the local community throughout different actions and initiatives:

- Develop an inclusive and caring school culture where everyone feels cared for, accepted and valued.
- Implement programmes and initiatives that

- are sustainable and can be identified as a core part of your institution's curriculum.
- Manage the institution in a way that enables shared planning, good communication between the school and the local leaders and support for the vulnerable members of the local community.
- Encourage the development of links between students and local representatives, charities and businesses to help identify manageable projects where students can have a real impact.
- Give students plenty of time and opportunity as part of their schooling to experience and work in the wider community.
- Build links with schools and communities in contrasting localities at home or abroad to raise awareness of diversity and global issues.
- Encourage students to learn by doing and be 'creators' of knowledge with the teacher as a guide and co-learner who may not have all the 'answers'.
- Involve students in supporting the school community, including fundraising, and ensure that their contribution can make a real impact.
- Encourage parents, community organisations and businesses to bring their issues to the school.
- Take students out to experience local wildlife and community venues and invite community members into the school.
- Make the school a model for a sustainable community that can act as a learning hub and role model for the wider community.

Building a healthy and beneficial (for both sides) relationship between the school and local business is crucial for successful implementation of the vocational training and occupational preparation of the learners. Through the active integration of the business representatives into the school's annual activities (such as study visits, extra lectures on given occupations, lectures on best practices in business, judging the vocational competitions or contests that are connected to their field of work), we are not only making sure that they are supporting our activities but also building a strong relationship for the years to come.

**When looking for sponsors or ambassadors of your initiative**, you need to consider who you will turn to with a proposal for cooperation. You must decide if they should be people and institutions already cooperating with you or not related to you at all, if your initiative coincides with their mission or interests, and if participation in your initiative will also bring them tangible benefits.

**To recruit sponsors** and people to support your activities, you can use the mailing lists that already exist in your institution, your social media or personal contacts with your business partners or alumni. Don't forget that your alumni and those who have used your services before are one of the potentially most valuable groups for recruiting because they know the level of services you provide. If their experience in working with you is positive and has brought them tangible benefits, they will certainly view your offer favourably.

**If you are looking for ambassadors** to spread your ideas and support your activities, focus on people who have a strong local/regional impact, carry out their activities with passion and who are innovative and creative.

After selecting potential people and institutions, you have to face the question of what support you expect from these people and companies. How much should they be involved in your activities and what exactly are you going to accomplish with their intangible and financial help. Remember, people and institutions that share your views in a given field and support initiatives similar to yours will decide to support you sooner.

All potential sponsors and ambassadors of your initiative should be presented with a reliable action plan in which you determine whether the required assistance will be needed on a one-off or long-term basis, what great needs you have in this regard, what support you need (material or financial) and how your initiative will strengthen the mission of the sponsoring institution actions. Choose people and institutions for cooperation that are able to meet your expectations. If you are seeking to fund small non-cash prizes, local companies are sure to help. Howe-

ver, if your initiative is a long-term and quite expensive challenge, you will need to reach the bigger players on the market.

Once the list of potential sponsors and supporters is ready and the action plan is outlined, it is time to prepare an appropriate communication plan. Communication between you and each sponsor/ambassador should be personalised based on the characteristics and attributes of the contact person and convey clear and distinct messages. Prepare an individual email, presentation or brochure for each institution or person. Your correspondence should include the logo and colours of the company and phrases addressed directly to the owner or contact person, etc. A personalised approach will increase your chances that the addressee will actually see your proposal and contact you.

When preparing your personalised messages, pay attention to the style and language of your correspondence. Check how a given institution or person speaks on social media, your blog or website and use it in your correspondence. Remember, more formalised and traditional institutions may have a problem with accepting a youthful, more relaxed tone of correspondence, so it is worth devoting more attention to this issue.

If you are looking for sponsors, show them what you are offering them in return for their support. Present yourself and the institution you represent by presenting your strengths, achievements and impact on the local community. Present the benefits that the recipients can gain thanks to their cooperation with you, e.g. building a positive image of the company involved in solving problems of the local community, reaching new recipients with your mission, distributing of promotional and information materials about the sponsoring institution during your initiative, etc.

Once you have established a partnership with the sponsors and/or ambassadors of your initiative, don't forget to maintain these relationships. Invite sponsors and ambassadors to your team meetings, include them in the participant evaluation committees and send a cyclical report on the implementation of planned activities with

information on which activities were achieved thanks to their involvement.

After completing your initiative, evaluate which people and institutions supported you through to the end and come up with a special way to thank them for this support. It can be a personalised video clip, a small gadget with the signatures of your entire group or an individual gift tailored to the interests of the recipient. It is worth keeping in touch with those who supported your initiative to the end, as they may be the backbone of your support team in other similar initiatives.



When you are in the process of attracting sponsors, creating packages, and convincing people to invest in your activity, think of it as a journey of discovery. Prepare to engage in lengthy and sometimes frustrating negotiations that may fail at any moment.

Finding sponsors is more like running a marathon: the strategy and preparation matter just as much as the execution. You are embarking on a new relationship with an organisation and it means much more than just money!

#### **Let's move to how to engage the Internet users and your web page visitors to promote your initiatives or ideas.**

User-generated content makes up about 25% of almost any Internet resource, be it a news portal, a scientific public forum, a comedy group or an online store.

If you carefully look at the materials posted on a given website, you can see that a significant amount of it is created by the audience. The traffic on those pages rises significantly when contests or giveaways are being organised and promoted. You can use this incentive to make people more interested in the topic you want to promote, make them create the content for you, promote your idea or share it with their friends and other web surfers.

## You could consider organising a contest or a giveaway to:

- Increase the number of your subscribers and raise awareness about the theme you are promoting.
- Launch a new initiative in your organisation or local/regional community.
- Increase interest in your organisation.
- Increase your website traffic.
- Expand the target audience and attract new listeners or co-workers that will share your ideals.
- Revitalise your way of acting in a daily teaching/learning process.

## What kind of contest can you organise?

There are various options you can choose, from a writing contest (an essay, a review, a personal story), to an art event (making a photo, creating a collage, creating an online presentation) or direct participation in an online contest. There are also multiple ways to engage the public to respond to the content you put onto your website, from writing a review, posting a photo related to the issue, to more elaborate activities such as submitting a thesis, preparing an online presentation or a video clip that supports your thesis or elaborates on the given topic. The sky (or the imagination) is the limit in this aspect.

While implementing the contest itself is a little bit challenging, the judging can be really problematic. One has to balance out the rules of the contest and expectations of the person or group that is sponsoring the rewards, set up realistic judging criteria and choose and prepare the judges so they can do their utmost best to pick a winner. We will be elaborating on the judging issues in the next chapter, so we will just highlight a few important points here:

- Distribute the judging criteria equally.
- Talk to the sponsors of the contest and set the rules of the content in line with their goals,
- Select the judges based on their experience. Ideally, they should belong to the industry sector that your contest is about,
- Make sure that judges are familiarised with the scope of the contest and its goals.
- Make sure that the juries understand the judging criteria, are consistent in judgement, stick to the set rules and judge in an unbiased manner.

## What about the rewards?

We know that as a vocational training organisation or a small company, you may not necessarily have the money to offer grand giveaways in the form of hotel vouchers, exotic trips or VIP gift baskets, etc., In truth, we do not even encourage such prizes. It is the idea that counts and the prizes or awards that could be obtained in the contest should always be related to your abilities and means. If you have your own training restaurant, a voucher for lunch/dinner would be a great option. If you excel in organising catering - an assorted plate of your „best and favourite“ snacks would definitely make someone happy. If you have a car workshop in your school or a beauty department or provide extra training sessions or workshops, a voucher for such an event would also be a great treat.

Everything that brings your institution and community together will be a great award.

# SELECT A PERFECT JURY

Believe it or not, there are people who want to be on juries



## In this chapter:

- We take a look at the different judging criteria.
- We describe ways how to ensure that the judging criteria match your needs.
- We write some ideas on how to pick and invite the judges.
- We write down some rules on how to be a good judge

In short, judging criteria are a set of pointers that a judge or jury should take into consideration when evaluating the competitions or submitted entries. These pointers are set before the competition starts and are intended to be an indicator for what kind of entry should win a given contest. They are also a handicap for the judge or jury that allows them to evaluate all the entries in the same, unbiased and easy to check way.

The judging criteria for a contest or competition should:

- Follow the scope of the idea behind the contest/competition, including the outcome the contest organiser wants to achieve.
- Be clearly described (preferably in an official document) and made known to all the judges.

With the innumerable contests and diverse competitions being implemented everywhere,

there are many resources on what judging criteria to use for diverse actions. We will try to give you some pointers on the competitions that are easily organised in schools and training institutions.

## Writing competition:

- A fresh take on the given topic
- Originality
- Ideas and concepts behind the thesis
- Word limit (if applicable)
- Grammar
- Writing style
- Creativity
- Descriptive language, etc.

## Visual art contest (creating a video clip, flash mob clip, audio/song recording)

- Fresh take on the topic, originality
- Idea behind the clip
- Creativity the clarity of thought process
- How the video is perceived by the audience

- Visual appeal of the video
- Overall impression
- Audio/video quality
- Attention to detail, etc.

#### **Photo competition:**

- Innovation and originality
- The idea behind the photoshoot/photo/series of photos
- Precision and overall composition
- Creativity
- Inspirational power (whether the photo is a thought-inducing tool)
- Accuracy with regard to the topic of the competition
- Quality
- Clarity in the thought process
- Impact on the potential audience, etc.

#### **Art contests:**

- Originality, artistry
- Adherence to the theme
- Composition and design of the work
- Overall presentation
- Does the art stand in line with the ideology behind the competition?
- Colour scheme
- Aesthetic value, etc.

As organisers or sponsors of a given competition or a contest, you will also have to think about these questions when evaluating an entry:

- Does this entry contribute to the goal that I want to achieve?
- Will it be possible for me to use it in the long-term to promote the idea behind the contest?

Since the competition or a contest can be used as a way to promote your institution, its actions and attitude towards diverse topics, the winning entry can play a crucial role in your future informative and promotional campaigns. Therefore, more thought should be given to whether you really can use it in your long-term plans.

Now, what about the judges? Ideally, your jury (or individual judges) should come from the field of the theme that your competition is about. This is not a requirement, but it helps the contest organiser select the winner. The contestants also gain a sense of fair play when they

see the winner was chosen by experts. If you can't find expert judges, then individuals or a group with a clear understanding of the judging criteria and no conflicts of interest or bias could serve as judges. Beyond the judging criteria, the judges should have seen enough examples of the work being judged to determine what is considered poor, average and exceptional within the criteria.

Here are some pointers on how to prepare your judges for their important task:

- Ask them to familiarise themselves with the judging criteria, scoring rules and other issues that you think are necessary.
- In case of an on-site competition, make sure that judges are seated separately and are not influenced by the audience preferences during the judging process. If possible, minimise the communication between the judges during the judging process.
- Ask the judges not to discuss or reveal any information about the contest and judging methods to the contestants, other jury members or audience until the contest is over.
- If the evaluation is done in writing, ask the judges to return all the documentation directly to the person in charge of the competition when they are done.

A different method to evaluate the entries in your competition is to use social media networks to judge on your behalf up to a certain degree. For example, you can run your contest on Facebook and have the fans vote for the top five entries. From there a more formalised judge or contest organiser can select the winner based on the judging criteria. This can work well, but there are risks associated with fan voting. One of the risks is that participants can simply ask their friends to vote for them regardless of the quality of the work. It undermines the promotional effort when a poor entry gets lots of votes. This is why we don't recommend that fan votes make the final decision on who wins.

How should the judges judge? As the organiser of the competition, you are in no way compelled (or encouraged) to tell the judges exactly how they should evaluate the contestants or their entries. That said, giving them some important points will definitely make their work easier.

Your judges should:

- Understand the judging criteria
- Be consistent in their judgement
- Stick to the rules of the competition
- Choose the entries that fit the main theme of the competition best
- Judge entries in an unbiased manner

We have listed some of the most common judging criteria previously, but generally speaking, the judges should make their evaluations based on the following questions:

- Is the entry creative and original?
- Does the entry fulfil all the terms and conditions of the contest?
- Is the entry impactful and does it represent your idea?
- Does the entry represent and fulfil everything that you were looking for in an entry for your contest?
- If a particular entry wins, will it be able to make a long-term impression with regard to the issue you want to promote?

Once you select the final winner(s) of the contest, it is time to give out the rewards. Remember, you do not have to spend loads of money on prizes. Recognition, a publication of the win-

ning paper on your website or a small memento are also suitable rewards, especially when your contest is connected to awareness-raising ideas.

While looking for the information for this chapter, we came across a unique web tool designed especially for judging different contests and managing awards. We hope you will find it useful, especially if you want to dabble in online contests and writing competitions:



[www.judgify.me/l/](http://www.judgify.me/l/)

# YOU MADE IT! ... NOW WHAT?

A project is finished when it starts working for you, not when you work for it.



The day has finally come. The day on which you submitted your first project application, conducted a knowledge competition in the field of tolerance, inter-school sports competitions or implemented new rules on anti-discrimination in your environment. You may think that after many months of preparation, constant planning and checking if you have forgotten anything, it is finally time to rest and celebrate a job well done. However, before uncorking your well-deserved prosecco, it is time for a professional closing of your initiative, especially if, like most of us, you are already planning your next one.

Closing your initiative is the last phase of your work, the final step in the cycle, and like all the other steps we've covered before, it requires a special procedure. We will discuss it briefly below.

## Organise a summary meeting:

The implementation of an initiative is not only about the tasks and resources you spend, but most of all about the experiences and practices that you collect every day. Summarising the activities in the project is a great opportunity to gather all these experiences together. Call your team and ask them for feedback on what worked well and what did not work as well in

your initiative. Encourage honesty. The collected information will allow you to better prepare for the implementation of subsequent projects and initiatives.

## Complete the documentation:

This is a particularly important process when your initiative is also supported by external funds. Re-examine your check-lists from each phase of your initiative and check whether all the tasks have actually been completed. Make sure that all the settlements are signed by the people responsible for them. Finally, prepare a report on the activities carried out and organise photos and other materials documenting your work.

## Free up resources:

This applies to both funding from sponsors and your internal resources. Make sure that all payments have been made and that you have all the receipts confirming these transactions. If people from other departments have been delegated to your team, it is time for them to resume their duties. The same applies to all unused funds and materials. They should be returned so as not to block other initiatives or activities in your institution.

## Archive important data:

You will learn lessons from every activity you organise, so it is worth archiving your notes, plans, schedules and reports on critical events. In short, you should archive everything that can help you and others in organizing similar events in the future. Remember, no project or initiative is a one-off activity. Often they are only an introduction to further activities and involve more people. Your notes and experiences will allow you to avoid serious crises in the implementation of similar activities and indicate the best solutions in case of problems. It is also an excellent source of knowledge in the case of external control or audit, even months after your initiative has ended.

## Celebrate your success:

There is no better way to appreciate your team than through a celebration. A joint farewell dinner or a trip out of town is a great way to close the entire stage, summarise your activities, hand out small gifts (we mentioned them in previous chapters), and give individual thanks to team members. These less formal meetings are what build team morale, make people feel appreciated and motivate them to more readily take part in your next initiative.

If your initiative involved many people from outside your institution, organise a special meeting to summarize everything for them as well. This will not only give you the opportunity to present your success, but also to present your ideas for the continuation of activities or completely new initiatives, and obtain further support and financing.

Be sure to show your success on your institution's website, in the local press and in media with a larger reach. We often forget about this very important element. We report on the course of the project but then neglect its completion. In the report, you can use the archives you have just created and ask the participants of your initiative to share their observations with viewers/readers. This will give your initiative a new „face“, namely the face of those who actually took part in the initiative. Don't forget the voice of sponsors, ambassadors and people who are deeply involved in the idea of your project.

Now that you have been successful... it is also time to ask yourself some key questions.

- Are you satisfied with the results you have achieved?
- What lessons and experiences have you learned from your activities?
- What areas were not covered by your activities or were these activities too shallow, or insufficient?
- Would you do something differently? Use other methods? Focus on a different target group? Or maybe in the course of your work you came across a completely new topic, as of yet unexplored or discussed that you would like to bring more into the light?

If you can answer yes to most of these questions, all you have to do is roll up your sleeves, create a group and develop a new plan! :)

We'll keep our fingers crossed!

