



How to organize a knowledge share fair

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Objective and target audience

The objective of this good practice fact sheet is to help anyone organizing a knowledge share fair consider the various steps needed before, during and after the event. The key areas to consider are content, communication, logistics, and facilitation. This fact sheet will highlight lessons learned from previous share fairs to show what leads to success, and how to avoid the pitfalls when organizing such an event.

Geographical coverage

This good practice fact sheet is based on experiences and lessons learned from share fairs in Niamey, Niger (2010, 2012); Rome, Italy (2009, 2011), Cali, Colombia (2010); Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (2010, 2012); Founzan (2012) and Ouagadougou (2013), Burkina Faso; and Amman, Jordan (2013).

What is a knowledge share fair?

A knowledge share fair is a buzzing, interactive and collaborative workspace, with lively discussions and practical demonstrations. There are facilitated sessions to learn how others have improved the effectiveness and quality of their work, and opportunities for networking, allowing people to connect and link ideas as well as exchanging opinions in a natural way and relaxed setting. A share fair is not a goal in itself, but the beginning of a process. It will create new partnerships; new exchanges between people that would like to work together, in a different way.

Events such as a share fair, that include the application of knowledge sharing tools and methods, encourage interaction and thus need careful planning. Even though a fair aims at spontaneous and informal exchange of ideas, improvisation should reside in the flow of thoughts and content, not in the approach.



Plenary session, Niamey, Niger, 2010

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Introduction

Share fairs are an excellent opportunity to foster informal networking and problem solving, to bring the concept of knowledge sharing to life, and to show participants what is being done to share knowledge. The goal of the share fair can be to highlight the unspoken, to detect tacit knowledge and know-how: what might be evident for those who are used to a certain practice, but unknown for others.

But where do I start when I want to organize a knowledge share fair? How much time will it take me? Which people do I bring together? What do we want to take away after the share fair? What approaches of knowledge sharing can I use? These and many more questions will pop up, when you start planning. As we go through the different steps of organizing a knowledge share fair, you will find answers and many useful tips to make your event successful.

Stakeholders and partners

The principal actors of a knowledge share fair are:

1. Organizing side: teams for content, communication, logistics, and facilitation;
2. Resource persons: subject matter experts and presenters;
3. Facilitators for each session, whether plenary or technical;
4. Participants.

Having a strong and dedicated organizing team (secretariat) is crucial. Make sure enough people are willing and able to support the initiative over a long period of time, with a peak during the weeks around the event. Do not forget the more technical aspects, like IT support, which will be crucial.

Having a diversified group of participants and presenters will create a more dynamic knowledge sharing environment, and add value to the learning and knowledge sharing experience of the share fair. A range of people and organizations may be interested and invited for their potential contribution to the exchanges, for the benefit they might derive from the presentations and for their interest in the overall theme, which needs to be determined early. Try to think broader than the people who would generally attend your seminars, to make sure that also less obvious knowledge on the different subjects can be brought forward.

Depending on the overall theme selected for the share fair, and venue capacity, invitees may be internal staff only, or may include governmental officials and technical experts, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, producers' organizations, development projects, UN agencies, students and researchers from universities or specialized agricultural training centres, and representatives of financial and technical partners. These can also be encouraged to make presentations. Furthermore, inviting resource partners could facilitate later discussions on resource mobilization.



Timeline and programming

Ideal timeline:

As this is an ideal time line, if you shorten the timeframes, you will need additional resources to ensure everything is in place in time.

- Ideally **one year before** share fair: establish the steering committee. Decide theme, date, and venue. Book the venue. Establish the content team, logistics team, communications team (at least identify team leaders). Prepare call for proposals. Send preliminary note to key partners, so they have advance notice.
- **Six months before** share fair: appoint teams. Send out call for proposals. Draft schedule. Confirm room bookings. Order facilitation materials. Order any logo merchandise. Communications team starts work. Set up basic Web site.
- **Four months before** share fair: review the proposals. Recruit more people (session volunteers, facilitators.) Open for general registration.
- **Three months before** share fair: confirm the proposals. Fit accepted proposals into schedule. Confirm IT needs and arrangements. Within communications team, identify rapporteur(s), establish social reporting team, agree on hashtag. Establish facilitation team. Establish training team, if being used.
- **One month before** share fair: confirm availability of all facilitators, rapporteurs, room assistants, social reporters and catering. Make last changes to schedule, and post on Web site. Verify rooms, IT, security and catering.
- **During** share fair: discuss, organize, facilitate, report, and communicate. Participate and enjoy!
- **Just after** share fair: do an After Action Review, and share summary with key stakeholders. Thank all involved, and congratulate your team on a job well done.
- **Within a month of share fair ending:** write final report, with conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.
- **Thereafter:** keep the momentum going! The share fair is not the conclusion of a process, it is just the beginning.

Time management and programming

The overall programme of the share fair should seek to have a balance of different types of sessions. Examples:

- Foire aux savoirs sur la résilience à l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle au Sahel et en Afrique de l'Ouest, 5-7 November 2013, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
foireauxsavoirssahel.wordpress.com/programme/
- Horn of Africa Agri-Knowledge Sharefair, 23-25 October 2012, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
sfhoafrica.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/agriknowledge-sharefair-agenda4.pdf
- Second Global AgriKnowledge Share Fair, 26-29 September 2011, IFAD, Rome, Italy
www.ifad.org/events/sharefair/programme.pdf

Make sure you issue your draft programme online at least one if not two weeks before the event. The content team will have screened and grouped submissions, but close follow-up is needed to confirm all presenters and key resource people are indeed attending. Finalizing the programme requires intense preparatory work, and last-minute revisions may well be needed. Include room designations, and remember to translate the programme as well. Managing time during and in between sessions is crucial for a successful event: allow time for people to change between sessions, to relax and chat in the coffee/tea breaks, to visit stands and to have the possibility to discuss with other participants.

Methodological approach

The methodological approach section provides information on the methodology to use for each aspect of the organization of a knowledge share fair. At the same time, the different steps to follow during the organization period are explained.

1. Constitute a steering committee

The steering committee has a governance role before, during and after the event. It decides on themes, date and venue of the event, provides leadership and liaises with senior management. The committee has an oversight role on financial arrangements. With the content team, they will prepare the call for proposals and send a preliminary note to key partners. Some partners may be invited to join the steering committee.

2. Agree on date, venue, budget and theme

- **Timeframe:** Three days is the ideal length for a share fair. For example, it might be held from the second to fourth day of the working week, keeping the first day for preparations, and last for evaluation. Be careful to consider cultural specifics, like working days and days of worship. Are there local holidays that may affect travel? The choice of the season is also important; it is better not to organize a fair during the warmest or coldest periods. If you want to include a field visit or several training sessions, the agenda may need to be expanded with another day.
- **Venue, location:** It is important to decide on the location of the venue as soon as you start planning a knowledge share fair. The venue will be important information for all organizers and participants but will also determine what kind of sessions you can organize, how many participants you can host, how many parallel sessions you can organize, etc. Is the location easily reachable for most participants? Are there security considerations that may impact the event? Can the site accommodate the intended number of participants? Are there rooms or spaces suitable for facilitated events? It is convenient to have one large room for the plenary sessions and several smaller rooms for other sessions. An open space is also needed for the stands/market place. Are there smaller rooms to accommodate steering committee, communication team, facilitators, session reporters and rapporteur, secretariat, and the press? Does the venue have medical staff and security staff on-site? Is WiFi and on-site photocopying available? Are there hotels available to accommodate many participants?
- **Themes:** Defining the focus and objective of the event is necessary at an early stage. It is important to reflect on the specific technical areas the participants would like to discuss and learn more about. Common areas of interest may set the boundaries within which themes will be agreed, and these are the base for inviting proposals and contributions from participants. Within the overarching objective, more specific themes can be defined. The aim is to facilitate exchange between specialists working on similar themes. All partners will be invited to contribute tools, methods, publications, case studies to a thematic area.



- **Budget and resources:** While preparing the share fair, you need to allocate a specific budget for each of the activities. The total cost can be difficult to quantify, as it will depend on what is done by existing staff or consultants who needed to be recruited specifically for the occasion, what is outsourced, existing facilities and numbers of participants.

For example, the share fair in Niamey, Niger in 2010, which gathered 250 participants from Western Africa, had a total budget of about 100,000 USD, without taking into account staff time and their travel. However this budget included bus transport, fuel and drivers, international travel and lodging for some participants, coffee and lunches for all the participants, rental of meeting rooms and equipment, photocopier and secretarial fees, stands, Internet connection, bags and promotional material, as well as facilitation and reporting. This would not be the case for all share fairs. However, the question of budget and expenses should be carefully considered for all aspects of a share fair (communications, logistics, facilitation, and coordination) to stay within budget.

You should also check if cost-sharing between organizations or groups is foreseen: who will make decisions and approve expenditures? Is the event free or should participants pay a registration fee? Would there be a charge for stands or tables? These are just a few questions you can start asking yourself while preparing.

Examples of focus and themes:

Near East and North Africa Land and Water Days, Amman, Jordan, December 2013

Focus: Land and water management - technologies, approaches and modalities to secure sustained improvements on the ground and improved resilience.

Foire aux savoirs sur la résilience à l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle au Sahel et en Afrique de l'Ouest, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, November 2013,

Focus: Strengthening resilience to food insecurity and malnutrition in the Sahel and West Africa, and reinforcing institutions knowledge in good practices for food security in Sahel and West Africa. Themes: Sustainable management of natural resources and climatic changes; Livestock management focused on pastoralism; Reduction of food and nutritional insecurity; Risks, threats and crises management; Social protection

Mini-fairs for the exchange of good practices in Niamey, Niger, and Founzan, Burkina Faso, December 2012

Focus: opportunities for exchanging and sharing good practices, while drawing lessons on how to identify,

3. Define purpose and agree on desired outcomes of the knowledge sharing aspect

Ideally, participants will discover new methods for sharing knowledge and will be ready to use these as part of their professional activities. They will take back insights and lessons learned on how knowledge is being created, exchanged and put to use within and across organizations and with rural communities. They will be able to attend training sessions and get to know possibilities to implement various knowledge sharing tools and methods in their own daily work. They will have an opportunity to share what they do in their technical work, and make connections with others working on similar projects. Participants will share and discover new practices and experiences. The participants will want to continue sharing with others who were not present.

4. Appoint teams: Who do you need?

Ideally, the people organizing a share fair can be divided into five teams. These teams with activities include (but are not limited to):

Steering committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decides on theme, date, venue - Provides political leadership and guidance, and liaises with senior management and higher level officials - Agrees on budget and financial arrangements - Prepares call for proposals - Sends preliminary note to key partners - Decides on format for final report (document, annexes, only online?) - May identify and hire rapporteur and facilitators
Technical content team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has technical knowledge of key subjects - Drafts guidelines for topic selection, call for proposals - Writes concept note, technical thematic notes - Evaluates and selects proposals (for presentations, contributions) - Drafts the agenda and the programme - Prepares session reporting template, and collects session reports during event (with communication team). - Works closely with rapporteur
Information and communication team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functions: Social reporting, press, technical session reporting - Works on the visual identity and graphic design of the Fair - Plans communication / promotion / public relations strategy - Advertises the event through different channels / media - Creates and updates the Web site and may provide content - Prepares press briefing kit, press releases and news items, and liaises with press (also newspapers and TV if needed) - Coordinates the social reporting team, who use and coordinate social media to encourage discussion and report before, during and after about the event. - Organizes session reporters (in collaboration with the content team) and provides the session reporting forms to final rapporteur.
Logistics team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plans and reserves facilities, meeting rooms, IT devices, Internet connections additional security if needed, and catering - Recruits, instructs and coordinates an IT/audio-visual support team managing audio-visual issues, video demos, music, IT requests, power cables - Recruits and instructs room/session volunteers/messengers, in collaboration with the facilitation team - Orders facilitation, stationary and promotional materials so it is available before event begins - Supports participants with visa, travel and accommodation information - Manages registrations, organizes badges, and finalizes the list of participants
Facilitation team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyses the proposals to design and facilitate the sessions, in collaboration with the content team - Structures the facilitation of sessions applying the appropriate methods and tools - Prepares guidelines for sessions, with content team - Meets with the resource persons to clarify the objectives of the sessions - Compiles detailed session planning forms for each session, for use by all teams.

Note: Team members can work from different locations. Using email, discussion groups, wikis, phone calls and online conferencing can all facilitate contributions from team members based in different locations and time zones. The teams will need to work closely with each other, and having an agreed team leader/focal point for each group is helpful. It is very useful for someone from the core teams (organizers, content, facilitation, logistics and communications) to be on location and working together a week before the event, especially if multiple organizations are involved. This improves teamwork, mutual understanding and helps clarify roles and expectations.

5. Liaise with partner organizations: How can partners participate?

A share fair is also a good opportunity for collaboration with partner organizations. They may co-host the event, and may be invaluable event partners. They should be invited to join the steering committee, to share experiences and possibly contribute to funding of the event.

Contributions can take various additional forms:

1. Provide their experts as technical resource persons
2. Nominate their staff as session reporters or social reporters
3. Provide documents and tools (guidelines, manuals, toolkits) to thematic areas
4. Prepare posters (learning posters, good practices from project/case studies)
5. Organize short information/training sessions: “using tools in practice”, or propose other sessions or activities
6. Facilitate sessions

If potentially sensitive matters are to be discussed at the share fair, it may be helpful for a preparatory meeting between partner organizations to clarify differences and common ground in approaches. This is an example of where the guidance and knowledge of the steering committee is essential.

6. Call for proposals

Having a standard form for submitting proposals and projects (to be filled out and submitted by those who wish to present or share their story) will help you sort and prioritize information. Include the themes you have defined for the share fair. By going through an open process of soliciting proposals from a wide range of stakeholders in selected topics, there will be an opportunity to collect a more diversified spectrum of contributions. The selection of proposals and projects needs to be done according to a set of clear criteria that help direct the selection towards the major aims. The content team has a crucial role here. They may need to get in touch with the long list of presenters to narrow it down, and discuss how sessions can best be grouped. Do not exclusively rely on the written proposals.

It is important to consider the format and layout of call for proposals. Also, will the information from forms for submitting proposals be online forms or downloadable documents? How will the information be dealt with? Who will sort this? Good planning saves time later.

Minimal information to provide by organizers in call for proposals: Date, venue, location, organizers, share fair themes, deadlines, possible session formats, special requirements, languages for submission and event, organizer contact information.

Minimal information to request in call for proposals: Contact details (name, organization, email). Presentation: title, synopsis, what theme(s) it falls under, preferred format of presentation.

7. Ensuring gender balance and diversity in the fair's organization

When the invitations are sent out, urge the partners to ensure gender balance when choosing people to represent their organization at the fair. Make sure diversity and gender balance is considered when suggesting panellists, speakers, facilitators, group leaders and when engaging in participatory discussions. The gender aspect should also be addressed during various sessions. At the end of each session, the feedback of men and women can be recorded using different coloured paper, so as to distinguish between the opinions of men and women. This should be noted by the session reporter, and captured for later use by the rapporteur and possible post-event analysis.



Amman, Jordan, 2013

8. Registration

At least two months before: It is important to consider how registration forms and participant information will be managed. Will the registration forms be online forms, downloadable documents, or on paper? How will the information be dealt with? Who will sort and update participant data, print badges, and liaise with venue security colleagues, if needed? Ideally, online registration is recommended, as it can save time for the organizers. For example, Eventbrite was successfully used for online registrations for the IFAD FailFaire in Rome, Italy in October 2013. However, for some events and participants, online registration may not be possible. How will this be accommodated? You will then need to allocate resources for someone to type out the information for the participant list to a database, if using that. Will some participants need invitation letters for visas? These aspects all need to be considered to ease preparation.

Minimal information to provide in registrations: Name, email, organization, languages spoken/capacity to follow a session in a specific language.

Have name tags for participants, with their name and organization. It can be helpful to use colour codes enabling to identify those who have or haven't to pay for meals (if applicable) etc.

9. Logistics

Facilities reservation: It is important to decide on the location of the venue as soon as you start planning a knowledge share fair.

Travel/Hotel/Visa for participants: If resources allow, make sure someone is available to assist participants to arrange their travel, hotel and visa. This can be quite hectic, but it is important to ensure all participants get there and in time.

List of participants: A duly filled in list of participants will be of great help for the whole duration of the organization of the event and after, for follow-up. Make sure the participants provide as much information as possible: contact details, travel information, lodging, languages spoken, etc. If registrations are done online in advance, it won't be necessary to re-enter the data from other formats. This will also make it easier to generate an updated list of participants and badges, if needed.

Kits for participants: It is always useful to welcome participants with a **bag with the share fair logo** (or logo of organizers) and a **folder** with the essential documents so they have a printed copy of the programme, a map of the infrastructure, a map of the town, and such. Cotton bags are the best. Prepare these welcome bags and folders in advance. In addition to the folders, send the same documents to the participants before the event for those who have time to read them.



Facilitation material: Each facilitator should have a facilitation kit and a flip chart at her/his disposal. In each room, there should be a facilitation kit that needs to be always ready and refilled during the fair. A facilitation kit is usually composed of coloured markers and paper, thumb nails, small cards, post-its, glue, rope, scissors, a stapler, adhesive tape, name tags and other small stationary.

Specific needs for specific sessions: Make sure you have a complete list of specific material the presenters and the facilitators need for their session, like a laptop, video projector, a microphone, sound system, extra tables, etc. Check the material with the presenters and the facilitators before each session. It is important that they do not have to go and look for something at the last minute. Do a sound check before the session. Make sure that all required training material is made available on a table in the session room. Ideally, it should also be posted on the fair's Web site beforehand. If moveable tables, chairs, tents, power, and additional WiFi are needed, this also requires advance planning.



Poster session with simple equipment, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 2013

For sessions requiring hardware, it may be better to do it in a room (not an outdoor space) to protect the equipment and enjoy the air conditioning.

Language: According to participants needs and language skills, arrange for interpretation facilities or language back-up (informal whispered translations and translated summaries) if possible. Interpretation is a high cost and should be arranged at least in plenary. Sessions which need interpretation can be held in plenary as well. See the constraints section for more solutions.

IT, electricity and Internet (WiFi) connectivity: Beware of electricity cuts caused by high demand for electricity in hot/cold seasons. For this reason, it is essential to have a generator in the event of a power cut. Easy access to WiFi will be crucial for social reporting, and appreciated by participants. Make sure people have access at the different locations of the share fair. WiFi can be costly but is necessary. Extra power cables and extension cords can also be very useful.

It is also a good idea to have screens, for example at the market place where people can follow the social reporting. Installing temporary WiFi or setting up screens to see tweets are examples of issues to be discussed with your IT colleagues as early as possible. Microphones may be needed for some sessions.

Catering: A small bar providing or selling coffee, tea, water and other drinks is appreciated by participants. A bar open all day at the share fairs in Cali, Rome and Amman was a good gathering point. Will participants pay for their own food and drinks? Will a meal/drink ticket system be used? You may wish to consider setting up a system of meal tickets, for example, for participants whose expenses are paid. This needs to be decided and communicated well in advance, with both caterers and participants. Apart from selecting the caterer, make clear that participants have to register on time. Otherwise it is not easy to plan a precise number of meals to prepare.

10. Agree on event and session formats

The share fair itself is normally a blended selection of several different sessions. At the share fair, sessions should last from between 75 and 90 minutes. As much as possible, sessions should be facilitated using knowledge sharing approaches, which can take many different forms such as interactive discussions, brainstorming, mapping, interviews, fish bowl, or world café. The facilitator will have discussed the session with the presenters and resource persons in advance. Use of PowerPoint presentations should be limited. During each session, an appointed rapporteur should summarize the session, using the agreed session reporting form. At the same time, social reporting (blogging, Twitter) can help bring the event to those unable to attend in person. All of these aspects need to be planned for. See later sections on facilitation and reporting for further details.

The different types of sessions can be:

- Plenary sessions
- Discussion sessions
- Projections, screenings (clips, videos, slide shows...)
- Video sessions
- Poster sessions
- Training sessions
- Theatre plays
- Demonstrations
- Stands and information booths

Theatre play as a methodology to share knowledge



Rome, Italy, 2011



Cali, Columbia, 2010

Plenary sessions: Start by presenting the programme, the organizers, the use of participatory methods, and topics and themes that are covered during the fair. Speeches should be short and limited to 15-20 minutes. Limit plenary sessions to maximum two a day. Consider having one or more inspirational speakers for your plenary session the first day. If having daily plenary sessions, the morning session should sum up what happened in the different sessions the day before. The closing plenary session on the last day will look back at what was achieved, in contemplation.

Discussion sessions: Discussion sessions are designed to allow people to share their experience in an interactive format and to learn with participants who work on similar topics. A facilitator should be assigned to each session to prepare the session format with the presenter. Framing the objectives of the session clearly helps to keep the discussion interesting and focused.

Projection and screening sessions: Allows a person or an organization to submit a video, a story or an audio magazine in connection with the issues addressed by the fair. A presentation and discussion with questions can be prepared.

Facilitated video sessions: The film duration should be shorter than 10 minutes. The presenters should be provided adequate guidelines on the appropriate format. It is essential that the video session is properly introduced, contextualized and facilitated. Assuming to offer a sharing/learning experience by simply showing a video is not sufficient.


Poster sessions: Include time on the agenda for a poster session. Ensure these sessions are organized in an area where participants of the share fair will pass by, next to the coffee place for example. This session might include a facilitator, who walks from one poster to the other asking questions to the presenters. Another option is to organize an interactive poster session, a poster competition and/or an informal session to support interaction between poster presenters and fair participants.

Training sessions: If training sessions are included, the organizers should clearly frame the objectives and the level (basic, intermediate, advanced) of the training in order to aggregate a homogenous group of participants that will feel comfortable with the content of the session. Hand outs and guidelines (also in electronic form) are very much appreciated to revise concepts that are unclear. The rhythm of the training should be kept lively to maintain participants' attention high.

➤ Session planning sheet

Prepare a session sheet template where all information is provided for each session. This can be done by the facilitator and the resource person.

Example of session sheet for the Ouagadougou Share fair (2013)

	
Agenda détaillé - Fiches signalétiques pour chaque session	
Atelier 1	
Jour 1	5/11/2013
Horaire	14h30-16h
Salle	Salle Participative (B2)
Thème (Foire)	3 – Réduction de l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle
Sujets de la présentation (Titre)	Actions des Organisations de Producteurs dans la réduction des risques et la réponse aux crises alimentaires et nutritionnelles
Présentateurs	- OP et ONG
Piliers résilience(FAO)	3
Personnes ressource en charge de la session (co-leads)	- CILSS : Moussa Cissé - FAO : Daouda Yahaya
Social reporter / communication	Nadia (FAO) + Ahmadou Sankaré (CILSS)
Social reporting	Blog + tweet
Rapportage session	Ilyya Miko (FAO)+CILSS
Facilitateurs/trices	Bintou + Frédérique
Méthodologie de facilitation	Carrousel! préparer 3 problématiques/ 3 sous-groupes Questions possibles : 1. Quelles sont les pratiques que vous connaissez pour faire face aux 4 types de crises/chocs 2. Quelles sont les contraintes spécifiques pour une OP rencontrées pour mettre en oeuvre les actions de prévention des risques ? 3. Quels sont les avantages d'une OP pour la réponse à une crise ?
Langue(s)	FR

Information needed

Day
Time
Room
Title of session
Main theme of session
Type of session (workshop – round table – demonstration – stand – film with discussion – training)
Material needed (projector, computer, WiFi, paper, flipcharts, markers, etc.,)
Goal of this session
Description of this session
Proposal or presentations submitted
Facilitation method(s) being used in this session
Resource person(s) in charge of this session
Trainer/facilitator
Session Reporter
Social reporter
Points of discussion
Reference materials

Market Place

The market place can be the heart of a knowledge share fair. It aims to be a meeting place where exchange can happen informally around an exhibition with technical booths, posters, demonstrations, training sessions and more. This is also a place where participants can organize informal meetings. In addition to exhibits, it is therefore useful to include informal seating and meeting points (sofas, chairs). A coffee/tea point should ideally be available.

The market place sessions should be well organized to stimulate exchanges and interaction. Presentations or discussions around a theme, thematic coffee sessions, training sessions and storytelling can be organized. This interactive and participatory process will be facilitated by a team of facilitators. This is specifically the case for the first day and the last afternoon which are usually dedicated to the market place. A quiz can be organized so that people look more carefully at the various tables. A prize will be given to the participant who will have replied to all questions correctly.

11. Facilitation and knowledge sharing methodologies

Knowledge sharing is more than just sharing. It involves working together and helping each other, using creativity, collaboration and participation. Each session should be facilitated using a tool or method for knowledge sharing. This enables to discover participatory options for sharing experiences, also visually, without specifically using PowerPoint presentations. Resource people and facilitators will need to use their creativity to share their knowledge with the participants. This requires advance planning.

It is useful to discuss facilitation options before the call for proposals goes out. Consider what can be done in the spaces, and who might be able to facilitate sessions. Will facilitators be available to participate in preparations the week before? Besides excellent facilitation skills, will multiple languages be needed from them? Including local facilitators can be very beneficial. It is important to provide the facilitators some freedom to design their session, and for them to be able to contact presenters to agree on session formats. It is also important to clarify roles and responsibilities between facilitators, resource persons and organizers in advance. At least one facilitator is needed per session, so if you have three sessions in parallel, three facilitators are the minimum. Ideally, premises should be organized so that facilitators can make preparations or carry out assessments of sessions already held. A small facilitation kit should also be made available in each room, to be updated after each session.

The facilitator will be present for the entire duration of the session. Before the beginning of a session, the facilitator should make sure the participants feel comfortable with the tools and methodologies that will be used, and explain the steps they will go through.

Sessions should be kept short: clear and concise concepts are more likely to be retained than long sessions which are too rich in content. Encouraging participants to exchange seats or move within the room, and diversifying the session's activities by involving the sense of sight, hearing and touch, helps keep attention high. It is advisable to reserve appropriate meeting rooms or spaces where participants are encouraged to discuss freely, informally and non-hierarchically. These would be rooms with round tables or spaces where people can sit in circles and/or aggregate. Facilitation material is essential for the success of these sessions.

A knowledge share fair can raise awareness on the concrete benefits that knowledge sharing can bring to our day-to-day work. A share fair can showcase real and practical examples where knowledge sharing has made a difference. There are very specific methods, tools and approaches to help tacit knowledge become more explicit. Here are some methods that may be useful for sharing knowledge at a share fair. More information can be found on www.kstoolkit.org:

- **World Café:** Each table has a host figure. Participants answer questions in small groups on a common flip chart size paper and move from one table to another. The host remains at his or her table to collect the answers.
- **Carousel** is a variation of the World Café. There is no host, the same question is asked to everyone, and groups which pass from one table to the next supplement the answers already given by others.
- **Peer Assists** enables a person to present the challenge he or she faces and ask his or her peers to help find some solutions. This method has the advantage of bringing out the know-how and experience of peers,



Using a timeline, Founzan, Burkina Faso, 2012



Knowledge sharing in Cali, Columbia, 2010



Carousel, Niamey, Niger, 2010

comparing these forms of knowledge and determining if the suggestions can be applied to the particular case presented.

- **Storytelling** involves relating an experience and holding the audience's attention right up until the outcome of the story is revealed.
- **Chat Show** can be used in the plenary to provide a review of sessions held the previous day by posing questions to guests (resource people) and getting the public to interact.
- **Tree of Knowledge:** a huge drawing of a tree made available to all participants, so that they can give their interpretation by adding leaves to the branches of what is meant by the word "knowledge", or a similar question.
- **After Action Review** can be used at the close of each session or day, to explore the opinions of participants. Each evening, the organizing committee can then identify what had worked well, what had worked less well, and what is needed to be changed for the following day. A similar exercise should be held after the fair ended, in order to draw lessons from the experience.
- **River of life/Time line:** is a visual narrative method that helps people tell stories of the past, present and future. It can be used to build a shared view compiled of different and perhaps differing perspectives. River of Life focuses on drawing rather than text, making it useful in groups that do not share a language. When used in a group, it is an active method for engaging people.
- **Suggestion Box:** offers a chance to receive comments and suggestions from participants, which can be discussed at the After Action Review session in the evening.
- **Interviews:** can be used in plenary, or with certain selected people.
- **Social Reporting:** in the form of photos, video and short articles posted on the web, it makes it possible to take the pulse of the fair, ask opinions and document the event on the spot.
- **Mapping:** can help illustrate where participants come from.
- **Field Visit:** if logistics allow, participants could visit a local organizations or a village association
- **Practical demonstrations:** if the space allows, a demonstration like the creation of a micro-garden can show how small vegetables can easily be cultivated on a table at home. In this way, tacit knowledge can become explicit for those who watched, had their questions answered and put their hands in the earth to plant seedlings.
- **Open space technology:** a method which enables people to suggest topics they would like to discuss, which are not yet considered yet in the main agenda.
- **Communication booth** or a quiet space to enable interviews for radios or videos. Focus could be on documenting "good practices" and "lessons learned" from the region, or what the participants thought of the share fair experience.



Tree of knowledge, Cali, Columbia, 2010

Be flexible and pragmatic: agendas change, the space you had planned for may not be available, but you will find a solution. You may need to adapt an approach to suit a session or space. For example, at the 2013 Ouagadougou share fair, a "marché aux idées" was planned. This could have taken several forms: an interactive marketplace with stands or tables, or a large World Café, or something else entirely. In the end, time was short and options were limited, so an adapted Round Robin was used, with four thematic corners with the question: *During the Fair, what is the key innovation you have discovered to increase resilience?* Four groups of participants were split into smaller informal groups, discussing to find a common answer, with seven minutes for each question round.



« Marché aux idées », Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 2013

Every participant was a resource person. Answers were collected on cards, and only shared in each corner after all rounds were completed, when the answers were read with great interest. It was lively, noisy, participatory, and very much enjoyed by the participants.



12. Information and communication

The information and communication functions can be divided into three separate teams: communications, social reporting, and session reporting. For some share fairs, the organizers chose to have these three functions covered by only one or two teams. Either modality is possible; it is up to your resources and preferences. The key issue is to agree on roles and respective responsibilities. Some roles should not be mixed: facilitators should not be expected to also do session reporting.

Communication



Good internal and external communication is essential to organize a successful share fair. Appoint a specific person from the beginning to coordinate all communication activities as well as coordinate the social reporting team. A press liaison focal point may also be needed.

Internal communication will be essential to ensure a coherent and fluent workflow within the organizing team. Good external communication will ensure the event attracts the right participants and gets enough media attention to disseminate information on the event and its results. Press conferences, press releases as well as radio and TV coverage are also important and need to be planned.

Participants may ask for copies of the presentations, or video clips if available. Plan for this: will they be posted on the Web site, emailed, or shared via USB keys (taking care to avoid computer viruses)? They should be provided to organizers in advance. Often presentations are provided at the last minute, so a focal point and plan is needed to systematically collect and share the presentations. See page 6 the specific tasks of the communications team.

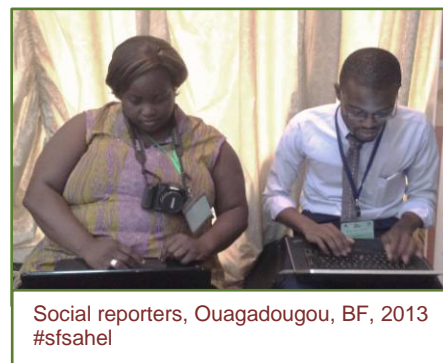
Social media

The social reporting team should be set up at least a month before the event in conjunction with drafting the programme. This enables better planning of full coverage of sessions, seeking out needed skills in the social reporting team and build-up momentum and sharing of ideas amongst the team members. The social reporting team coordinator (if one exists) can recruit social reporters through a call for volunteers. This can

be done as people register to the event. Ideally, event coverage should start at least two weeks before the event (blog, Twitter) to build awareness and interest.

During event, social reporters should meet daily to evaluate their outputs in terms of timeliness, quality of delivery, and to discuss the media plan of the following day. Social reporters should ideally be familiar with the subject, and not only work quickly, but be able to count on a good infrastructure, with access to WiFi so that they can connect easily to the Internet.

Throughout the share fair event, social reporters can document the fair, producing a variety of reports and audio and video interviews, as well as photos, which can be posted on the fair's Web site or bulletin. This can be very useful for people who are not able to attend the event. Agree in advance who is responsible for taking photos and managing audio-visual content, so that sessions are not just documented but that photos and interviews are organized and identified by session and person (name, organization). A selection of photos can be used for a slide show on the last day. The social reporters can also carry out audio and video interviews to ask the opinions of participants, in order to present the key points in each case. It is important to keep the "social" in social media, which means engaging in conversation and not just one-way broadcasts. For the weeks after the event, several activities need to be planned such as follow-up posts, post-production of audio and video materials, and proper filing of the outputs.¹ Make the sure the Web site/blog is available also after the event.



Session reporting team and final report

For each session, a session reporter (or a session reporting team) should be appointed. This function can also be covered by a social reporter, but ideally these are separate roles. This needs to be agreed on before the event. The facilitator should not be doing session reporting, except from the section on the methodology used during the session. At the end of each session, the session reporter, who needs to be aware of the content in advance, should summarize the session. Ideally, the summary, or a short social report, should be published on the same day as the session is held. The reporters need clear instructions on deadlines, and where/how to deliver the session report. A standard form can be helpful for session reporting, paper or electronic. This can also be done through blogging or micro-blogging (see: Social reporting), if enough trained people are available. It's very useful if the reporters can also take some photos during the session, and take pictures of any flipcharts or notes produced during the session. Flipcharts should be marked by the facilitator by session, title and date, so they can be photographed, identified, and organized by session. Well-written session reports can be annexed to the final report, though the content may benefit from being reviewed by the presenters or resource persons before being finalized for that purpose. The session reports can also be used to feed the blog and newsletter of the event. For that purpose the social media team and the session reporting team need to liaise and coordinate their activities.

Basic data requested for session report: title of session, date and time, name of resource people and facilitators, name of reporters, type of session, how many people were present (men and women), main conclusions and lessons learned. Also useful: comments from participants, good practices, resource materials.

Final report: Early agreement is needed from the steering committee and organizers to appoint a rapporteur who will be in charge of the final report and on what the deadline and format for the report will be: document, annexes, or only online. Final report content may include conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned, and list of participants. If a formal report is being produced, the session reports are also needed by the rapporteur, who will need to be briefed well in advance.

Think of also numbers when reporting. For example: "The Share fair brought together around 300 participants, from which 143 were men and 157 women, representing 15 countries; 36 good practices were shared, grouped in 7 thematic areas; 14 focused discussions as well as 5 panel discussions took place and around 30 booths were showcasing experiences from various partners. The evaluation showed that the Share fair was considered a success by the vast majority of participants".

¹ See www.kstoolkit.org/Social+Reporting for more information.

13. Monitoring and evaluation : After Action Review

At the end of each day, there needs to be a session for the core team of organizers, facilitators, resource persons, information and communication teams to meet to debrief, evaluate the day, and do an After Action Review (AAR). The After Action Review is an excellent knowledge sharing method to assess how things went. It allows you to benefit from collective perspectives, experiences and learning of organizing and participating in a particular event. The end of day AAR for a share fair has a monitoring purpose and can be centred on a few questions to collect people's feedback. Examples: "What worked well and why?" and "What should we do differently tomorrow?". The different teams may also wish to meet at the beginning of each day to discuss, harmonize approaches and learn from each other's experiences.



After Action Review with the team, Amman, Jordan, 2013

After the share fair itself, it is very useful for the group of organizers, facilitators and resource persons to come together to do a final After Action Review (AAR) for the event. The AAR is an evaluation exercise and it allows discussing the impact of the event. It is important to plan this session right after the share fair if possible, otherwise it can be difficult to find the time to bring everyone together. The questions which can be asked are "What surprised you?" and "What advice do you have for future share fair organizers?".

Impact

As the share fair is not an end in itself, it is important to clarify the objectives from the beginning, in order to obtain the expected impact. To assess impact, it is helpful to look at summaries of the sessions, the notes, cards and articles written specially for the fair, as well as other reports collected by the organizers to document the various themes. All of this material needs to be assembled, handled and made available, where possible. Documenting the experiences and good practices exchanged during a share fair takes time and requires know-how that cannot be improvised. This lengthy process can only be carried out effectively if the team which prepared the fair also takes on the task of its follow-up and capitalizing on the event. After attending a share fair, many teams report that they organize workshops differently, using more participatory methodology. Team members have integrated the new methods and adapted them to suit their needs. Ideally, the impact of share fairs for participants is that participating in a share fair is a starting point for future collaborations.



Founzan, Burkina Faso, 2012

Innovations and key success factors

Innovations in terms of participation and knowledge exchange

Share fairs are a different form of social gathering. Everybody knows something. Looking at all the different sectors that are present at a share fair; we can see that everyone, in a specific field, has specific knowledge. With many different participants, a lot of different types of knowledge come together. All kinds of development actors from the field are present and actively participate in the important exchanges at the fair. It is very difficult in some countries to see the grassroots population participate that way in exchanges, but a knowledge share fair has proven it is a good way to involve them actively.

Key success factors

- Share fairs are a team effort, and require a considerable amount of planning.
- Have a clear vision of why you are organizing a share fair, and what you would like to achieve (for organizers and for participants.)
- Ensure that you have support from your top management.
- Be strategic and invite groups or projects who can show what they learn from their success and failures.
- Build common understanding of concepts like “good practices”, “scaling-up” and “capacity development”. Sharing presentations and discussing these concepts more thoroughly ahead of the share fair with those in charge of the various technical knowledge sharing sessions will improved the consistency of these sessions by improving common understanding. It is important to create a strong linkage between theory and practice, by discussing these concepts in the context of real life experiences.
- Collect experiences (good or bad) or good practices: information collection formats for these good practices should be prepared early and discussed with those charged with collecting and compiling the good practices.
- Identify and inform facilitators well in advance, to allow them enough time to interact and prepare with session presenters.

Constraints

- **Too many parallel sessions:** While people may enjoy the luxury of choosing from over thirty to sixty events in three or four days, there may be too many parallel sessions competing. Some several sessions may have very few participants, and participants may be frustrated that there are too many events they cannot attend.
Solution: Consider quality versus quantity, and do not plan too many sessions. No more than three sessions in parallel is preferable. Try to merge related topics into a joint session, using for example a chat show. Allow space for open sessions to evolve, and time in the schedule for discussions to continue informally over coffee breaks.
- **Large groups:** You may have 100-150 people in a session, and the meeting room layout may also pose challenges in what session types and facilitation approaches may be possible.
Solution: Consider breaking a large room of 100 participants into smaller groups, using World café or other participatory methodologies. Consider how best to ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute. Can brainstorming be done on cards? Can tables be rearranged?



Cali, Columbia, 2010

- **Languages:** Will this be a multilingual event? Consider linguistic diversity. Will interpreters be needed, and will the budget allow that? Can participants help each other with translating?
Solution: Provide interpreters and ensure that interpretation is scheduled at least in the plenary. Scheduling parallel events using each a different language is another option, but not ideal.
- **IT, WiFi and electricity:** Plan ahead for electric power needs, which can be substantial if computers are used. Power cuts may be frequent in some countries, especially during extreme heat, when demand for electricity exceeds supply. Plan to have technicians on hand when (not if) something break down. Does WiFi need to be installed?
Solution: Talk to IT and infrastructure colleagues at the venue well in advance. Is back-up power or a generator available? Installing WiFi at the fair location can be a costly but necessary expense, since Internet access may be needed for knowledge sharing web tools.

Lessons learned

Advance planning is essential. Effective collaboration between the organizations (facilitators, rapporteurs, support staff) during the preparatory stages and daily wrap-up meetings will contribute to the smooth running of the fair, in spite of any logistical challenges. Explain who is responsible for what, and clarify expectations in advance. Provide session reporting forms and other templates in advance, and make sure all teams are supported.

Themes: People handling similar themes should be grouped together in the same session, so as to make comparisons and see where their approaches complemented or differed from each other. That will focus the exchanges and debates. This option involves upstream preparatory work with the session's facilitator, choosing the method that is best suited to the type of exchange sought. Another possibility would be to use an "Open Space" to negotiate an opportunity for those handling similar topics to combine their sessions.

Market place, stands and demonstrations: Grouping the stands together in the centre of the fair means that people have to pass by them, and as a result they attract more visitors. Dividing up the stands by theme also gives a better overview of the fair. Some form of game, such as a quiz, could be organized, with a questionnaire in which participants ask questions of the exhibitors, giving a fun twist to another form of knowledge sharing.

A **detailed programme** is needed at the time of registration, at the very latest. It should not be changed afterwards, except in exceptional circumstances. This process takes more time, but it enables participants to make an informed choice.



Market place, Amman, Jordan, 2013

Include feedback time or flipcharts for comments in each session: this will enable participants to provide their views, and allow others find out what had happened in other sessions.

Time-keeping: Facilitators need to be well prepared in managing their time, or should arrange to be helped by another person who could be in charge of timekeeping. Punctuality is crucial for both organizers and participants in this kind of meeting, since any delays cause a knock-on effect. One way of relieving this problem is to plan longer breaks between sessions, so as to allow participants to have the discussions they need and return to the following sessions on time. Among the golden rules that should be respected throughout the fair, punctuality and keeping to the allotted time for speakers are essential. Discreetly indicating time being overrun to the speakers in the most appropriate manner is a challenging but essential task.

Be flexible: Planning is crucial, but so is flexibility. You may well need to change your plans at the last minute, due to an unforeseeable schedule change, lack of equipment, or such. Adapt, explain, and do the best you can – participants will understand.

Replicability and scaling up

A knowledge share fair can be replicated at local, national, sub-regional level or international levels. It can also be organized in the same region on a different subject, or on the same subject but tackling the specificities of a different region. What is important when replicating an event or a process such as a knowledge share fair is to build on experience gained and lessons learned by previous organizers. That is why organizers of each share fair have an important role to play in monitoring and taking part in outcomes of the fair and follow-up activities, and in sharing information that will be easily retrievable in the future.

Not only do these post-event activities contribute to the impact and cost-efficiency of the event, they are also very important if the event is to be repeated in the future, or replicated in another region. Follow-up activities include formal and informal networking, facilitation of partnerships, evaluation surveys and information sharing after the event.

Evaluation surveys for participants can include questions of preferences to identify what the participants preferred method of staying in touch would be (wiki, online platform, blog, email list, follow-up meetings, etc.) or questions on areas of possible future training needs. The organizing team should in any case ensure information on the event; good practices and contact details of the “owners” should remain available (for example through a website) as well as the reports of each session and the overall report.

Conclusion

A share fair should be prepared well in advance, with the first contacts often needing to be made one year beforehand. Preparations should become more intensive at least four to six months before the event. The share fair is not an end in itself, but the start of a process. For that reason, it is important to lay the foundations for future activities throughout the preparations and be ready to take action as soon as the fair ends, for this moment will mark the beginning of partnerships and new exchanges.

Organizing a fair and taking on board all these lessons requires resources in terms of finances, staff and time – far more time than might be imagined, because it is not just a question of preparing the fair, but also of ensuring its smooth running and arranging follow-up. This is just the beginning, the moment when you will start to reap the fruits of the fair.

Testimonies

- *We learned a lot and most of all we exchanged ideas and addresses between ourselves ..., which means that people are interested in each other. We are very satisfied and we expect to enhance our participation in spreading the fruits to our colleagues who remained in the country and to other organizations that did not get the chance to be invited to the fair. (Participant, Ouagadougou 2013)*
- *What struck me was the combination of theory and practice – the theory in the workshops and the practice in the stands. (Participant, Niamey 2011)*



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