

## Concept paper: Workshop

Workshop is a facilitated meeting with a set of clear objectives. The tool focuses on participatory hands-on learning, small-group activity and problem solving, pair and small-group discussions, etc. The active rather than the passive nature of the experience motivates a larger number of learners to participate and learn. When organising a workshop, the main question is what we want as outcome from the workshop and therefore, what methods to choose for the workshop in order to get the desired results. The objectives should be clear to the participants. During the workshop, the participants engage in intensive discussion and activities in order to reach the agreed objectives.

A special form of a workshop is the so-called “**future workshop**” based on the concept of R. Jungk. Its main aim is to foster collective creativity and problem-solving capacity and is often used in city planning in order to find new solutions for urban issues.

What methods/other tools/ techniques can be used while implementing the tool?	Main aims while using the tool
<p>A workshop can be part of bigger conferences, seminars, living labs, living streets, mentorings.</p> <p>Other methods and techniques used during a workshop depend on group size, theme, topic, time, aim, etc. E.g, world café, brainstorming, ranking, voting methods, pros and cons, problem tree, games.</p> <p>In a future workshop, different creative techniques are useful.</p>	<p>To gather the user group together to participate, work with a certain topic and share their views.</p> <p>To involve the user group in planning and implementation stages of developing public transport and to get feedback from the seniors. Enables gathering ideas for different phases of the development process and supports setting priorities.</p>
How can the tool be used in each phase of the process (when developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions)?	
<p>Very useful and widely usable during the <b>planning stage</b> as it enables involving (a specific) user group in the planning process. Depending on the stage of planning, it is possible to map problems to deal with or find solutions to problems important for the user group.</p> <p>It is an important and very useful tool to involve the user group in <b>developing</b> services for them so that their ideas, hopes, restrictions and challenges can be brought to planning and development before the <b>implementation stage</b>. <b>In this stage, a future workshop might be especially suitable as it enhances creativity and innovation.</b></p> <p>Workshop is a good way to involve the user group in the <b>implementation stage</b>. The user group can test the services at a workshop or they can continue working on the ideas and challenges around a certain theme or topic.</p> <p>Workshop can be a good tool to <b>evaluate</b>, for example, the services the user group has used during the implementation stage. The participants’ experience and comments are valuable in evaluating the process, services etc. and to get ideas for further developments.</p> <p>For example, a workshop organised after or during the implementation can help the user group to give their <b>feedback</b>, discuss the matter together, and evaluate the process, services etc. Also, workshops enable to get feedback for any situations and ideas, independent of the phase of the development of transport.</p>	

What is the aim of engagement with this tool?	
<p><b>Inform:</b> During a workshop, it is possible to give information about the current situation, ongoing processes, changes, development plans etc. Workshop can also be a learning experience as people/experts can share their views and teach each other. Workshop can <b>increase the understanding</b>, and in this case change the behavior and the <b>use of services</b> such as PT.</p> <p><b>Consult:</b> During a workshop, it is also possible to get ideas about pros and cons of some potential solution or development idea. This tool gives an opportunity to learn about the user group's point of view and ideas which can be further developed in the next stages.</p> <p><b>Collaborate:</b> Workshop supports open discussions, sharing and development where all voices are heard. As people with similar interests are brought together, collaboration between participants is also realistic and happens often in a workshop setting.</p> <p><b>Empower:</b> As the user group can express their ideas, make their voices heard and have thorough discussions, this can be a very empowering experience. Participants have the power to influence things that matter to them, such as public transportation or city planning.</p>	
For how many people and how is the tool suitable (for one-time use)?	How much effort is required from the participant and what influences that?
Size of the optimal group depends on the chosen method or activities of the workshop. It is often referred that <b>3–5</b> is the <b>ideal group size</b> for group work. <b>6–10</b> can be <b>sometimes</b> more reasonable. Groups of <b>10</b> or more should <b>be divided into smaller groups</b> .	<b>Considerable effort required</b> – in order to have a successful workshop, participants have to be in the same place at the same time, online or face-to-face. Depending on the location, there may be travel time. Additionally, participants have to be active during the whole event: they have to discuss, plan, contribute, sometimes write, etc. connected to the topic(s) given.
Time needed to <u>prepare</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?	Time needed to <u>implement</u> the tool and what influences the time needed?
<b>Considerable preparation required</b> – workshop has to be always well prepared so that it is effective and productive. Preparing includes choosing the tools and techniques to be used; also, depending on the topic and target group of the event, finding, informing and inviting the participants may be time-consuming. In case the workshop is organised as a part of some other (user group) event, cooperation with this organizer is needed. Quality communication is important to reach the desired target group.	<b>Considerable set-up and preparation required</b> – depending on the chosen method and activities of the workshop, 2-8 hours for preparation and implementation at the venue is needed. Such tasks are registration, grouping tables, catering, cleaning etc.  <i>A future workshop</i> usually takes a full day or more. Half a day might be enough if the participants already know each other and if they deal with a limited and clearly defined problem.
Time needed to <u>summarize</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?	Price for the user of the tool and what influences the price
<b>Some or considerable summarizing required</b> as workshop results have to be summarized and usually sent or presented to the participants and stakeholders. It is very important to let the participants know the way forward and how their input is considered.	Price for the user is <b>low to moderate</b> . Possible costs come, for example, from catering, venue rent, external facilitator, technical support and materials for the workshop, sometimes participants' transport costs or vouchers/gift cards (if it is needed to offer these to increase the motivation to attend the workshop).

SWOT on using the tool	
<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <p>People-oriented, participatory approach, engages user group, can be used with different aims of engagement.</p> <p>Many different techniques can be used – can be used for variety of problems.</p> <p>Few people's experience can represent a bigger user group, can include many different user groups and ages together (youth, seniors etc.).</p> <p>User groups' thoughts, ideas and feedback are heard.</p>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <p>If the tool and methods are not well planned, the workshop might not be successful and outcome not clear.</p> <p>The results may remain lean, if there is not enough time allocated for summarizing and doing follow-up with the participants. Poorly implemented workshop may alienate participants instead of engaging.</p> <p>Facilitator's abilities can affect on the outcome.</p>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <p>Increases communication between and within the user group (also target group can be involved in workshop).</p> <p>Participants have the opportunity to learn something.</p> <p>May increase the impact or value of other tools when used in combination.</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <p>Participants are not very active or they do not participate in the workshop.</p> <p>Some people might dominate the workshops or working groups.</p> <p>Workshop does not lead to wanted outcome.</p>
How to use the tool?	
<p><b>How to prepare using the tool?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know your user group; what kind of people they are and with what restrictions; what kind of techniques are good and easy for them to participate</li> <li>• Be sure that chosen tool/techniques are best to reach your aims</li> <li>• Plan well for the techniques that are chosen, test them if possible</li> <li>• Prepare the time schedule and agenda of the workshop</li> <li>• Plan the communication and invitations – how do participants get the invitation? How are they engaged to join the workshop? What do they need to know in order to join?</li> <li>• Think through how people register their participation, how tables will be grouped, how the place will be prepared for the event, what kind of equipment is needed (e.g. paper, whiteboard, pens, post-it notes), etc.</li> <li>• Decide how to evaluate the workshop, incl. what kind of information you need to collect for the evaluation, when and how</li> <li>• Check the venue, catering and practicalities</li> </ul> <p><b>How to implement the tool?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration and welcome, introduce the topic, objectives and schedule of the event</li> <li>• Give the participants an opportunity to introduce themselves</li> <li>• Try to stick to the agenda and the time frame</li> <li>• Collect feedback from the workshop and let participants talk, comment and give feedback</li> <li>• Closing: end the workshop by explaining the way forward and future plans</li> </ul> <p><b>How to follow-up using the tool?</b></p>	

- Summarize the results
- Send a thank you message
- Spread and present the results (incl. outcomes and impact) as needed – to the participants, stakeholders etc.

#### Tips and hints for using the tool with people in silver age

- **Combine workshops with different tools** – for example, in Finland, Valonia used the world café tool in combination with the workshop. The participants were divided into smaller groups, the facilitators rotated between the tables, gave instructions and told each group what the previous group had discussed. The topics covered included the ins and outs of local PT services, accessibility, etc. and groups were asked to write down challenges along with possible ideas to improve the matter. The result and outcomes were very useful and they were used to developing the first peer coaching trial.
- **Start inviting your users early and cooperate with local organizations** – e.g. if you wish to involve seniors, it is a good idea to involve local senior groups and associations both for spreading the information and recruiting participants.
- **Let participants know what happens after** – be sure to send out a thank you email or note to participants and if there are any other future developments or events, let them know.
- **Regular workshop vs future workshop** – the latter may be most useful if you are looking to design new services and/or thoroughly re-do old ones. As future workshop uses three phases (criticism, fantasy, implementation), it provides a good framework from conceptualizing the desired situation to implementation. Additionally, if creativity is your focus, future workshops may be the better option as they allow participants to be as creative as possible.
- **Use external experts, if necessary** – depending on the topic, including other experts to comment and aid in facilitating may be useful. E.g. in a future workshop organized in Hamburg, engineering experts helped the groups to work out possible solutions.
- **Keep introductions short** – e.g. about a project or planning should not be too long. The language should be easily understandable, specific terms should be explained (like e.g. “stakeholder”).
- **Use short plenary sessions and long workshoping stages** – some of the more talkative participants are easier to guide in smaller working groups than during long sessions.
- **Offer refreshments and drinks** – as sessions can last multiple hours, small snacks or a coffee break helps break the routine and create a communicative and friendly atmosphere.

#### More experiences from GreenSAM partners

Read [here](#) how Hamburg has used workshops to co-create possible solutions at intermodal transfer hubs. From [here](#) you can read how Valonia used workshops to map seniors’ views on the local public transportation system, their challenges and needs.



Workshops (Photographer: Heta Laiho)