**STEP-BY-STEP: DESIGNING AND DELIVERING CHILDREN'S GAMES AND EVENTS**

**SECTION OVERVIEW**

The objective of this fourth section of the 'Protect Project' toolkit is to develop knowledge and competencies in key areas of designing and delivering children's activities, games and events. Some of the session plans in this training toolkit are introduced with a brief summary of important information that will support the delivery of each session.

This section's contents will support participants to:

* Learn how to plan a children's activity and build an agenda
* Gain practical skills for team-working and to create group dynamics that enable participants to work in teams
* Be able to plan and develop an educational activity on different subjects, considering specific target groups' learning needs and styles
* Be able to deal with conflict during an educational activity

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**HOW TO DESIGN A CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY PROGRAMME - THE BASICS**

Before starting to design your children's activity programme, it is important that you understand that *planning* and *designing* the programme is as vital as delivering it. We would like to provide information about the key planning steps.

1. **Identify learners**Who are going to be the primary learners in this specific activity?  
   Are there any specific accessibility needs relevant to the target audience that need to be considered?
2. **Identify date, time and location of the training**  
     
   Knowing how much time and physical space you have is necessary to know before deciding upon any content or agenda for the activity. For example: How many minutes/hours/days will you have to work on the content? Do you have enough space to account for group size and needs?
3. **Determine content**Once you have learnt about your target audience and space/time considerations have been made, the next step will be to identify the needs of your community in order to determine the content of the activity.   
     
   A needs assessment will be a great tool to decide upon the content.
4. **Set the activity goal and objectives, allocate tasks**A goal is a broad statement about the projected outcomes of the activity/event. An objective is typically more specific and expressed in measurable, observable terms. It expressed what a learner should be able to do or achieve in session and afterwards.  
     
   Setting a goal and determining objectives for our children's activities helps us to be clear about what we want to achieve. We have to know where we are going before we decide how to get there.   
     
   After setting the goals and objectives, the team should be ready to build the agenda for the children's activity and then allocate tasks whilst considering the unique strengths and expertise of each facilitator.
5. **Design an evaluation and follow-up strategy**Designing evaluation and follow-up strategies prior to delivery is a must for ensuring a successful educational activity. Evaluation helps us to reflect on the activity and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programme; identify the benefits to the participants; and to assess the educational and methodological approach.
6. **Prepare training materials**When the team, date, location is settled on and the team is agreed on the content; goal; objectives; agenda; evaluation and follow-up strategy, each team member can study their own responsibilities and co-ordinate as a team.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING NEEDS of YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE**

**A NEEDS ASSESSMENT** is the process of identifying and evaluating needs in a community or other defined population of people. The identification of needs is a process of describing 'issues' within a target population and possible solutions to these issues. A needs assessment focuses on the future, or what should be done.

A need can be described as:

* A gap between 'what is' and 'what should be;' "a gap between real and ideal that is both acknowledged by community values and potentially amenable to change."

A need is generally different from such related concepts as 'wants:' "something people are willing to pay for" or, demands: "something people are willing to march for."

A needs assessment supports the analysis of the particular situation and a bigger picture of the particular issue and a general profile of the potential learners. It also informs decisions about what content, methods, techniques and time frames are the most appropriate for the course. It ensures that activity design and content are tailored to meet the real needs of learners.

**SESSION PLAN 1: NEEDS ASSESSMENT - SWOT Analysis**

***SWOT*** is an acronym for:  
  
**S**trengths

**W**eaknesses

**O**pportunities

**T**hreats

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths**   * Advantages? * Competences? * Resources, Assets, People? * Experience, Knowledge, Data? * Innovative aspects? * Qualifications, certifications? | **Weaknesses**   * Disadvantages? * Gaps in competences? * Learning points? * Budgets? * Vulnerabilities? * Deadlines and pressures? |
| **Opportunities**   * New international developments? * Industry trends? * Influences? * Partnerships? * Technology development? | **Threats**   * Obstacles? * Political effects? * Legislative developments? * Loss of key staff? * Economy? |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Goal | Need assessment  SWOT Analysis |
| Equipment List | Stationery, Flipchart, Note paper and pen |
| Duration | 45 minutes |
| Instructions | A SWOT Analysis is an extremely useful tool for analysing a problem and enabling decision-making for all sorts of situations in organizations. It stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.  SWOT Analysis` goal is to come to an agreement about the current situation of the project and to understand and appreciate the project's unique situation  Take two sheets of paper. Draw a line down the centre of both of them. Put in Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats at the top of the columns.  Specify the issue that you are dealing with. ( Today we`re going to make a SWOT Analysis of our organizations educational needs)  Take a few minutes and brainstorm individually in each of the columns. When the group is done go around the table and get out items for (Internal) Strengths. Then Weakness. Then (External) Opportunities and Threats. Ask people to add new items rather than repeat the same item.  What are the key Strengths? Weaknesses? Opportunities? Threats?  We want to divide into teams and each team will write sentences describing their key items in sentence form and give illustrations or examples from real life. When they are finished ask them to read their sentences out to the group.  Please keep in mind that we are not interested in editing the sentences but more check the content. Are there any suggestions about the content? |

**GROUP DYNAMICS**

Creating an environment where people can learn effectively from each other is a vital element of a successful training session. To move from an environment where people do not know each other and may not be comfortable enough to express their opinions; to an environment where participants can effectively learn, needs training and team support.

1. **GOAL AND OBJECTIVE of the TRAINING**Goals and objectives give the participants a real target for a certain activity. It creates a shared commitment and it is necessary to introduce the goals and objectives of any educational activity at the start of the session.
2. **CLEAR ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES**It is particularly necessary in a children's activity environment that each participant of activity team member know what is expected of each of them. In the beginning of each activity, it is vital that the team get to know the participant's expectations from the activity. It can also be useful to modify the content of the activity according to expectations if needed.
3. **GROUND RULES**Everyone engaging in the activity should agree to set ground rules and share responsibility for ensuring that they are followed. Participants are essentially a group of individuals with their unique personalities, values and experiences.It is important to allow participants to collectively create a set of guiding principles for their work and find common ground.  
     
   When learners establish rules, they will be more likely to follow them and they will feel a sense of ownership and shared purpose. Establishing ground rules in the beginning of training can be very useful to prevent conflicts during the session.
4. **TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITIES**Gathering a group of people together does not automatically make them a team. Teambuilding activities ensure them to communicate and help the group of people to solve problems together, which can build relationships and trust.

**PREPARATION AND TEAMWORK**

A group is not a team, and each activity group is different. Each group is formed of different individuals; with each coming from different cultural, social and educational backgrounds and experiences. With all different individuals coming to an activity to collaborate on a common purpose, certain steps are needed to achieve this.

In 1965, Bruce Tuckman suggested 4 phases (forming-storming-norming-performing) as being necessary and inevitable in the development of a group to a team. These phases allow for the team to grow, face challenges, tackle problems, find solutions, plan further work and deliver results.



**STAGE 1: *FORMING***

Forming is the first stage of group formation. Throughout this stage, members keep a low profile and hesitate to express themselves openly and assertively. During this stage, there is a transition from 'individual' to 'team member' status. Each member should be encouraged to come forward to interact with the others. In this stage, ground rules concerning how the group will function must be established so that objectives agreed upon by the group may be achieved.

**STAGE 2: *STORMING***

Storming is the second stage of group formation and often the most difficult. In this stage, group members begin to express themselves. This may bring to the surface conflicting ideas and opinions. Individual goals and agendas emerge, and members may express unhappiness about their respective roles in the team.

**STAGE 3: *NORMING***

During this stage, team members accept the team and team ground rules (norms); their role in the team, and the roles of other team members. Team members become accustomed to working together, and their initial resistance fades. They begin to collaborate rather than compete with one another. In the norming stage, team members express criticisms constructively and ground rules are confirmed. There is a feeling of team cohesion, and sense of common spirit.

**STAGE 4: *PERFORMING***

At this stage, the team has developed its dynamics and defined its expectations. It can now begin performing. Team members have accepted each other's strengths and weaknesses and can start moving forward together.

**EVALUATION**

Evaluation helps us to improve our abilities and activities. Evaluation tools and techniques should be used on an ongoing basis throughout any activity.

Evaluation can help us:

* Check what has been achieved as a result of our activities
* Learn how we can improve this activity experience for all participants
* Understand what happened during this learning experience
* Realise the impact of the activity on the participants

The following are some methods of evaluation that can be helpful both during and after delivering activities and/or sessions.

**BAROMETER**

An activity in which the participants are asked to formulate their mood in a creative way e.g., like a weather forecast, or a statue, key words, by drawing etc.

**JOURNAL**

A personal written reflection either free, or by using guiding questions.

**CLOTHES LINE**

An effective method for collecting the expectations of participants. All participants receive papers on which items of clothing are drawn. Each item of clothing represents a different kind of expectation, for example: hopes, fears or offers to the programme that participants may wish to make.

Time is given for participants to reflect on their expectations using the categories of clothing as a prompt. They write their different ideas related to each category on the clothing shapes and stick them on a clothes line made of string (hung in an appropriate working space in the working room), or drawn on the wall.

Everybody has a chance to look at the 'laundry' of others, and may offer their individual and shared perspectives in discussion.

**THREE POSTERS**

This method involves placing three big blank posters on a wall. Each one is given a title, for example: "What do I want to take home?", "What do I want to avoid?" and "What can I contribute?"

On sticky pieces of paper, participants are asked to write down their answers to these questions and to stick them on the appropriate poster. Remember to give the group sufficient time to review individually the answers of all the participants. A trainer can make a review and read out the most common answers given, to provide the group with a bigger picture of collective expectations. At the end of the training/session, the facilitator can use these expectations to ask participants how much they believe they were met.

**SUMMARY**

This fourth section of the 'Protect Project' toolkit presents session plans and resources related to designing and delivering successful children's activities, sessions and games. It can be more broadly applied to session participants of any age. This section can support the delivery of effective training on the subject matters related to the wider 'Protect Project' and as referenced to in Sections 1, 2 and 3 of this toolkit.