Who needs to be involved in the planning and designing stage?

Think about your team, your community and wider network, and tap into the pool of talents, skills, creativity, imagination, and inspiring work you all are already doing. Some general questions that can help facilitate the main workload distribution and help you plan if you need additional people on board are listed here:

- What talents and skills are needed in different stages of the event? Think of graphic design and illustration, PR, text and content design, facilitation, tech support, documentation, translation, etc. The teams guidelines that are shared below can help you expand on these.
- Who is comfortable using technology, which technology and to what extent in your team? Will you need external support at some stages of the process? Check the teams and roles below.
- Who can contribute from your community or external network based on their talents, interest and skills (if they are not involved yet)? They might be already members of your organizing planning committee and have helped the initial thinking.
- Who are your participants? How can you learn from them? What are some ways they can benefit in other ways than participation during the event, and feel valued and welcomed? Think how to involve them throughout the process, for example in the documentation process, survey, program design or possibly offer an option to propose a session of their own.

Roles and responsibilities

If your community members are involved in the planning stage or if it is only your core-team, and/or you are collaborating with another organisation - make sure you are all on the same page when it comes to the amount of workload, expectations and role distribution. It’s good to keep in mind that roles and workload will differ before, during and after the event and that there might be an overlap. As to prevent burnout and (some) frustration, it’s best to make your own list of roles with detailed assignments during the planning phase. Other factors to take into account during your workload distribution are language and time zone considerations, especially if you are working globally or cross-regionally wise.

The teams and roles for organising and planning online events can have different types of functional hierarchies. That means that besides the roles assigned within the organisation, there is also a natural or more of an organic hierarchy where for certain roles people recognise knowledge and capacities with which they can contribute. For example, some of our coordinating team members oftentimes sign up for facilitation team or support the documentation team if there are additional slots to be covered, etc.

Based on our experience, the main teams and roles during online events are:

Coordinating team. This is a permanent team (a team of 3-5 for smaller events, a team of up to 7 for large-scale events). They handle program, content, logistics and the entire internal and external communication flow throughout the entire process. They respond in various areas around content/issues (including tech and budget) and support facilitation team, documentation team, translation and interpretation team, participants and speakers, etc.

Tech team. This team is part of your coordination team. They are responsible for the overall tech support for teams and participants, including advice, manuals, adjustments and responses before, during and after the event. They set up the platform(s), accounts, registration forms, boards, etc. During the event they are also tech moderators in the sense of monitoring who comes into the space, and responding in case of harassment, violation of safety or principles of participation, and also providing tech support to all participants.

Facilitation team. They are responsible for content and flow of the event. In terms of roles, they are lead facilitators, care facilitators, chat and time moderators. This team is expected to be different each time, and your organisation's team members are encouraged to get engaged, share and learn new skills. Members will look at both the content and the design of sessions (exercises, presentations, care, facilitation). This team is supported by the coordinating team (including tech) for all their related needs.

Documentation, translation, interpretation and closed captioning team. They are responsible for documenting your event (note taking, illustrations, summaries, etc.), translation, interpretation and provision of closed captioning. This team also has a communications role, meaning that they update the participants by sharing summaries (if it's a longer event), or possibly share tweets and short pieces (if it's a public event). They are supported by the coordinating team for all their related needs and are also connected with facilitation team.

Social event/party team. They are responsible for designing the social and artistic part of the event (creating playlists, curating artwork and content, designing and imagining parties, connecting with and inviting artists who can share their performance, etc.).

Alongside these teams, are also speakers, who are responsible for delivering all relevant material in advance, and participants, who can be involved in different stages of your event planning and preparation.

Check in

"What about your own safety?" Take some time and also think about your team and make sure to take your own safety into account. Is there a safe space from where the event will be organized for facilitators and community organizers who are already exposed? If it is a live streamed event, are there some landmarks that can expose the location during the event and whose account/credentials will be used?

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