



# Guidelines for Social Hackathon Events



**Innovation Paths**  
Create your own path to innovation



This guidebook has been developed by the organization  
Innovation Paths on behalf of DAISSy Research group of  
the Hellenic Open University.

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## Introduction

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This guidebook aims to help anyone who would like to organize social hackathon events in their local community, in order to create and develop solutions to pressing societal challenges.

Despite the fact that hackathons were software developers-exclusive events for more than 20 years, they have evolved into much more diverse and extensive events in both civic and corporate fields, working with an ever-increasing list of topics and problems.

In the modern world, hackathons have several advantages over the traditional process of innovation planning and management. Hackathons tend to promote collaboration, are agile and inclusive. They stimulate innovation and various crowdsourced solutions in an attempt to solve a specific social challenge or a real-life problem(s).

The social hackathon method was developed within the framework of the REInSER - Refugees' Economic Integration through Social Entrepreneurship project.

Participating organizations were:

- DAISSy Research Group of the Hellenic Open University
- Innovation Paths



# Theoretical Background

Keywords: Social Innovation, Co-design

## Social Innovation

“If you look at history, innovation does not come just from giving people incentives; it comes from creating environments where their ideas can connect,” says Steven Johnson, an American author.

When thinking of innovation, we usually think of new technologies developed by companies as means of their own growth. However, there is more than that to innovation. It doesn't just help companies grow; it also helps the society prosper. Social innovation is mistakenly seen by some as charity. It should be acknowledged that social innovation is actually adding an extra dimension to innovation, sustaining economic and social growth.

Social innovation refers to a new way of doing things, an innovative element in a given context. It represents a breaking away from the usual solutions offered and provides a creative response to social and economic challenges that cannot be solved by the market or state. It thus improves individual and collective well-being.

According to OECD, social innovation refers to the design and implementation of new solutions that imply conceptual, process, product, or organizational change, which ultimately aim to improve the welfare and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Many initiatives undertaken by the social economy and by the civil society have proven to be innovative in dealing with socio-economic and environmental problems, while contributing to economic development.

In today's hyper connected world, one country's societal problems can become another's rapidly. Nations are facing slow economic growth, financial instability, political turmoil, hunger, poverty and disease. These are all social issues that have to be addressed, one way or the other, and such big problems generate big business opportunities. In fact, more than 80% of economic growth comes from innovation and application of new knowledge.

## Co-design

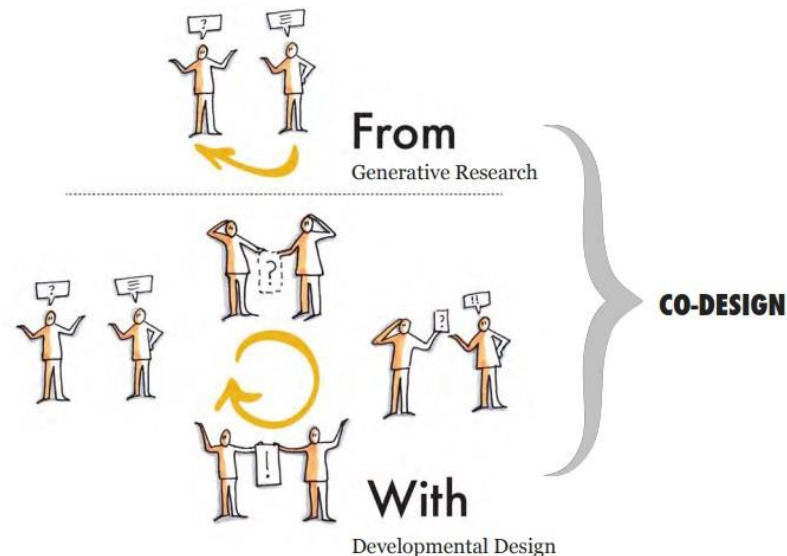
As the world evolves at a rapid pace, the issues we face become more and more complex. These complex problems can be too challenging for a single person to fix and so, by inviting others to take part in the creative process, the best solution can be designed.

Co-design quite literally means 'collaborative design'. It is a methodology for actively engaging a broad range of people directly involved in an issue, place or process in its design and sometimes also in its implementation. It is about engaging people into the design of improvements, innovations and impacts - drawing together their collective experiences to build services and outcomes that are as good as they can possibly be. Co-design is not focused only on including the voices of end users - but on building mutual understanding across the service system. In order to change complex and entrenched social issues we



need to incorporate the skills, knowledge and experiences of ALL people involved (Burkett, 2017).

This is exactly the goal of a social hackathon. It aims to combine the "voices" of all participants in order to achieve the best solution for the social challenge. Admittedly, involving multiple stakeholders throughout the process can be challenging, but through a guided process of discovery, ideation and development, we can give a voice to both end users and the people who serve them. By doing so, informants turn into participants, contributors, and partners- and that can have a powerful and meaningful impact on the outcomes.

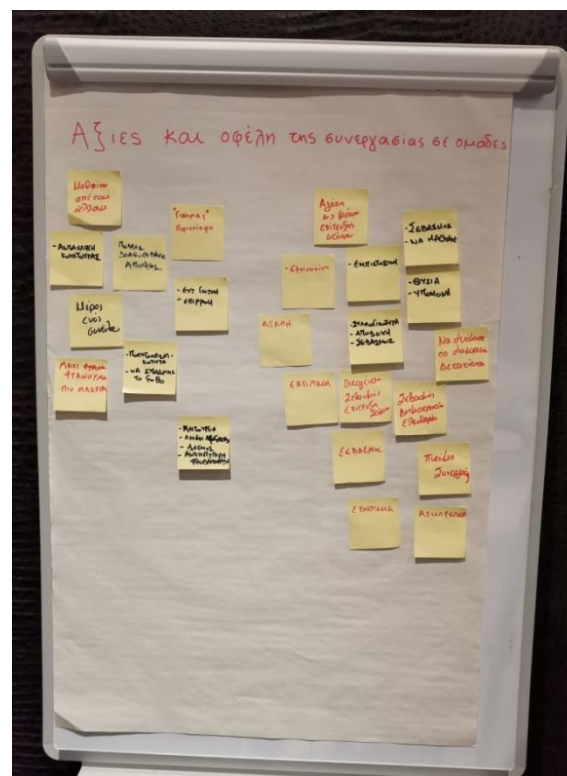


Source: Burkett, 2017

## Social innovation through co-Design

Although co-design has been practiced in new service and product development for some years, it has only recently begun to appear in the burgeoning field of social innovation. It appears to be well-attuned to this new context, offering an open-ended relational process to generate novel solutions to problems whose very definition seems to escape more conventional approaches. Finding solutions to the problems that affect our societies involves changing the way we think and we tackle them. In different spheres people tend to apply the same logic and patrons that most of the time lead to the same mistakes and the same problems.

Co-design by its nature is collaborative and can respond to the cultural demands of a society eager to participate. These demands require significant research to better understand how the practice of co-design can be a catalyst for social change and social innovation.





## Mission

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### The main purpose of the social hackathon event.

The main goal of a hackathon is to find an effective solution to a social challenge. Hackathon is a tool to drive sustained innovation and crowdsource solutions to address pressing real-life business problems and social issues. It is the way for everyone to ideate, design, execute and lead social initiatives that address injustice in their community through compassion, courage and collaborative leadership. Consequently, developers, designers, engineers or anyone else involved in the event work to find this solution. A hackathon can be used by a company to get employees to work together, to devise a solution to a problem or participate in new product development or it can be applied to social issues that seek a solution. NGOs, local municipalities, ministries, etc. announce a social issue and by implementing a social hackathon, they look for the solutions. Every hackathon, regardless of the type or reason for organizing it, has only one specific mission. The collaboration of teams with a common goal of providing solutions.



### The main purpose of REInSER's Social hackathon for refugees' integration through Social Entrepreneurship.

REInSER's Social Hackathon for refugees' integration through Social Entrepreneurship purpose was to provide solutions to the pressing challenge of low refugee economic and social integration rates. In other words, the main objective of Social Hackathon was to motivate multicultural teams to develop social entrepreneurship initiatives, which address the need for refugees' and asylum seekers' integration into the local community. During a 4 day experience the participants had the opportunity to join one of the multicultural teams that were created and co-design business ideas, which will aim to improve refugees' prospects for economic and, more broadly, social integration in the country, as well as their contribution to sustainable local and regional development through the creation of socially responsible businesses.

## Team building

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A social hackathon brings teams together for 48 hours, but there is a lot of effort and organization behind it. Depending on the scope and size of your event, you need at least six months to adequately prepare for your hackathon. You should think about the number of attendees that you will have, the number of activities, and the general scale of your vision. No matter how long you think it will take to plan, always add an extra week.

After you have defined the activities and a date for your hackathon, you can start building the organization team. Throughout this period of 6 months you should have a team of 5-6 people by your side, because most of the times it is very difficult for one person to organize it alone, due to the many responsibilities and obligations that they will have to carry out.

A hackathon requires some roles and stakeholders to take on responsibilities. Here is a quick overview:

- Organizational team: takes care of all administrative tasks and tracks the progress of the hackathon.
- Social Ambassadors: each challenge should be connected to local stakeholders (social ambassadors) who have deep knowledge of the challenge and could act as enablers for the solution developed to prosper. Ideally, social ambassadors will provide videos to explain the challenges in more detail and consequently make them more tangible. They can be included in the implementation afterwards.
- Evaluators: create a jury that evaluates ideas and teams during the hackathon. At a minimum, they are evaluating pitches at the end. It also helps to have accredited people in this role as it establishes the hackathon's credibility.
- Mentors: help participants throughout the hackathon and are vital to participants' success. They can be assigned to specific ideas and carefully follow the progress of each of their assigned teams.
- Interpreters/Cultural Mediators: In case of multicultural teams interpreters/cultural mediators can be a vital part of the hackathon, as they can understand the motivations and incentives of the participants, and establish the proper code of conduct in order to ensure mutual respect.



## Partners

Identify and onboard key stakeholders as soon as possible. Stakeholders are the people who will be impacted by the results, who will support your efforts or even sponsor a challenge or the entire hackathon. Some of your stakeholders might be involved in the implementation of specific ideas.

The Social Hackathon for Refugees' Integration was the result of collaboration between a university and a non-profit organization. Many other partners, such as NGOs, local administrations, government institutions, companies, etc. can participate in their own way and in different fields. Each of them can be very useful, because of their network and experience, and can open doors to audience that otherwise could not be reached.

A key ingredient to successfully organizing a social hackathon is continuous and effective communication between key partners.

As you may not be in nearby areas or may be very busy, online meetings are a useful solution that will keep you in touch and save you time.

In our social hackathon, online meetings were the most common choice because of busy schedules and difficulty of facilitation of often physical meetings. However, physical meetings took place, as well as info days for actively engaging stakeholders (local authorities, companies, NGOs and active citizens).





## Pre-events

Pre-events are a great opportunity to invite partners, social ambassadors, sponsors, decision makers and other stakeholders, as well as a great opportunity to inform the media about the hackathon. At least 2 pre-events lasting a few hours are required to familiarize participants with the process and for first-time participants to understand the goal of the hackathon.

The main functions of pre-events are:

- For the organizers:
  - To inform and resolve any question regarding the rules and methodologies to be used.
  - To collect the reactions and suggestions of participants and collaborators in order to establish a sense of community.
  - To understand the participants' personal motivation and drivers for participation, as well as their fears.
  - To gather different groups of stakeholders and through discussion to highlight potential partner gaps that might exist.
  - To increase visibility of the event and boost dissemination through the creation of multimedia material (photos, videos) and sharing of the pre-events to social media, local press and other media.
- For participants:
  - To ask questions and gain a deeper understanding of proposed solutions so they can choose the right team to work with.
  - To strengthen their motivation.
  - To be acquainted with working in groups.

Our first pre-event was organized in collaboration with a local NGO and the participation of migrants and refugees, in order for them to be informed about the hackathon, its goals, its methodology, training opportunities prior to the event e.t.c. and for them to express their feelings, concerns, dreams and hopes. During the event the participants were confronted with the challenge of the hackathon and they were asked to provide their opinion and ideas on addressing the challenge or entrepreneurial ideas they already had and could possibly contribute to the solution.



Source: ASB Hellas

A second pre-event with local authorities, academics, local social enterprises and representatives of NGOs supporting refugees and migrants was organized in order to document their perception of the challenge, concerns on the process, support opportunities or intent for taking over a supporting role after the termination of support by the project.

The project and the concept of the social hackathon were presented, as well as the outcomes from the previous pre-event. Finally, in order to ensure wider and stronger integration in the local community, local challenges and/or local market gaps that refugee's entrepreneurial activation could address or fill, were collected.



## Venue

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It is very important to book the venue as early as possible and check for any fees and regulations.

Some important considerations about the venue:

- You need to choose the right location once you know how many participants are likely to be there. You will need enough space to seat the social hackers and other participants and place equipment. So, arrange for chairs, banquet style tables, circular or rectangular tables depending on what you want.
- The venue must be easily accessible via public transport and with provisions for the differently abled, elevators, spaces to relax and sleep (in case the hackathon is 48 hours full-time), and restrooms
- The area must be safe for people and equipment; ideally there should be security in case of fire or theft.
- Fast, secure and reliable wi-fi.
- You will need power strips or extension cords for each table, audio visual technology and equipment (flip charts, pens, notepads, etc.), and 2-3 large screens.
- If your participants are under the age of 18, you must comply with any relevant legal provision and have staff to supervise in the event of an overnight stay.
- Separate room for mentors for meetings and discussions.
- Parking lot.
- Catering or canteen services for meals, coffee and snacks.
- A closet.

Finding the right space to host your hackathon is very important. We've found that hotels and school buildings are the perfect venues because they combine most of the above. After all, if people are going to be there for 3-4 days, we want them to be comfortable, right?



## Marketing

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Marketing your hackathon is another one of the major areas of focus while planning it out. The aim here is to reach as many people as possible with the focus on the right audience targeted for the event. But before that, it is necessary to evaluate your target community and region as the focus of marketing.

- Create a brand for your hackathon
  - It is worth creating a unique logo for your hackathon, representing its cause and core values, as well as aligning all promotional material accordingly.
- Tell Your Hackathon's Story
  - The more tailored your message, the better.
  - Use the same messaging to stay consistent and build momentum.
  - Highlight hackathon benefits perks and the ease of attending: it's free of cost, transportation will be provided, etc
- Why is Marketing so Important for Hackathons?
  - More applications.
  - Selling your event to sponsors
  - To show everyone how fun your event is. We forget that people who have never attended don't know how fun hackathon's are. You want to show potential participants that there is more to your event than just hacking and finding jobs.
- What is the main goal of your marketing strategy?
  - Having a strong online presence is even more beneficial when reaching out to potential sponsors.
- When will you market your hackathon?

This one is pretty straight forward, as most of your marketing should be happening during your applications period. This is when your most valuable and convincing content should be going out and you should be closely monitoring your platforms for any questions your potential participants may have. If you're able to, we recommend keeping your social media platforms (or whatever you're using to reach your participants) going year round to maintain engagement and continue growing your audience for the next year. You can use content from your previous events, engage with past sponsors, and share other hackathons and events or anything else that keeps your participants engaged.

Publicity of the hackathon is very important as already mentioned and can be done in many ways.

Inform the media that you are launching your hackathon. This is step one. A well-written and well-targeted press release will have a huge impact on participation in your hackathon. You should make sure you set out your aim, the issue you are addressing, the theme, the timeline, the benefits for participants, and the prizes you have on offer.

Social media: It is crucial that you create a publishing schedule for your social media posts throughout the hackathon. Organizers and participants interact most via social media. Participants will contact you whenever they encounter problems.

Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram ads: To maximize your hackathon's visibility, it is highly recommended that you use social media advertising. For a small cost, you can easily extend the reach of your marketing efforts using ads, which give an excellent return on investment.

For hackathons aimed at students, developers, and startups, the best platforms are Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. When creating your advert, keep your target audience in mind and don't forget the best practices, including:

- Use targeting features (age bracket, interests, location) to the full
- Test different versions of your ad to see which have the best conversion rates on different social media sites

- Create adverts with mobile in mind.

Communication with universities, incubators, accelerators, etc.

If you are targeting startups: Contact incubators and accelerators, and even co-working spaces. It is a win-win situation. They spread the word about your hackathon and encourage startups to register, and the startups that they are incubating get a visibility boost and have the chance to secure new partnerships.

If you are targeting students and developers: Contact teaching and administrative staff responsible for the courses, universities, and colleges you are hoping to target and tell them about your hackathon.

Events: Invest in events that will attract your target groups. Depending on your needs, these could be info sessions, student fairs or public exhibitions, startup conferences, or tech and recruitment events. Being physically present is essential and has a huge impact. It means you can build real relationships with your target groups and create a strong impression. Make sure you have physical media you can display and hand out at the event, such as posters, banners and flyers.

Some tips about the question guide you should follow in order to build a Marketing Strategy.

1. Why do people come to your hackathon?

This is the most important question to ask yourself when building your strategy, what is the main reason for people to join your hackathon?

2. What is the best way to reach your participants?

We are talking anything from social media, to email newsletters etc.. We recommend you pick 1 platform for contacting your participants and make sure that all of your calls to actions direct them to that platform.

3. What is the main goal of your marketing strategy?

This is what you hope to achieve from your marketing strategy.

4. When will you market your hackathon?

This one is pretty straight forward, as most of your marketing should be happening during your applications period.

The one thing we would like to establish is that marketing is a Hackathon's requirement that you must, not just should, give effort to. It is as important as any other aspect and building a strong online presence will add value to all other organizing aspects of your hackathon.

For REInSER's Social Hackathon we tried to establish a unique brand, aligning all promotional material accordingly, with a separate unique logo, other than the project's, in order to familiarize the local community with the event's cause and values in a short and concise way. Press releases and social media posts took place throughout the organizing period, regarding the pre-events and the MOOC (Massive open Online Course) that was taking place prior to the event. We made sure all stakeholders remained engaged, through frequent updates via e-mail regarding the evolution of the works done for the event. The main promotional material such as the call for applications, posters, banners, flyers, event's schedule e.t.c. were provided in 4 different languages (Greek, English, French, Arabic) in order to reflect the diversity of our targeted groups. Our promotion efforts during the event were also significant in order to maximize visibility, with frequent social media post of the work done during the event, local media were invited and videos and interviews were taken.



## Mentors

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Mentors play an important role at hackathons. They may be hanging around team tables, rotating on a timetable, or stationed at a table to answer any inquiries. Mentors are basically the glue that keep teams together and focused, and it may be the crucial difference if they finish a project or not. The primary responsibility of mentors is to motivate and assist participants in coming up with fresh ideas and attempting new things. One of the most crucial aspects mentors sometimes do not get is that the hackathon is not about them and getting their ideas come to life, it is about helping the team. It takes the ability and willingness to put their ego in the background and think what is best for the team and how they can learn the most.

Mentors are also available to help teams connect.

Social hackathon events are relatively different from IT and business hackathons. The selection of mentors should be done with great caution and according to the needs of the hackathon. We recommend inviting mentors representing different sectors: business, technology, marketing, NGO representatives, media, university professors, etc.

Hackathon mentors are tasked with guiding a team towards victory. Their goal is to mentor a team to improve their ideas, enhance their skills, and troubleshoot problems that may occur. Aside from having an open communication channel, mentors should also know how to communicate with the team. This is an indispensable quality of a mentor. There should be an easy flow and exchange of ideas between team members and mentors. Smooth communication will help get the message across easily and it is one of the best foundations for teamwork and collaboration.



Also, an essential quality in mentors is their ability to encourage the team. Mentoring is not just about imparting knowledge and experience. It is also about encouraging and building the team's confidence in their abilities.

Aside from helping the team win the top prize, hackathon mentors can provide a lot of knowledge from their years of experience in their field. Participants can gain valuable insights into the field of expertise of their mentors.

For our event, mentors that were experts in social entrepreneurship and competent in team building and empowerment were recruited. Mentors guided the creation of the teams and supported participants to organize their thoughts, fill in the templates given to them (business model canvas template, swot template, etc.) and finalize their presentations. Throughout the event mentors boosted the connection of the team members and their self-confidence through interactive and creative exercises, bringing to the surface and making them realize about competences and skills they already had and could contribute to their idea's success. Each team had a dedicated mentor, but mentors were rotating in order to share insights based on their personal background and expertise.



## Timing

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A successful hackathon should last for 3-4 days at most, in order to give participants enough time to design their solutions.

Choose the date of your event carefully. Avoid summer, holidays and other important events. Regardless of the group of participants that the hackathon is aimed at, the availability of these people should be taken into account, as they may be working or studying. For this reason, we suggest you organize the start of the hackathon on Friday evening after 5 pm or Saturday morning. Another option would be to start the hackathon on a Sunday to allow participants a rest day beforehand.

The introduction, pitching events and team building can be done on the first afternoon and direct development work can start the next morning around 9:00am. The most important thing is to make the opening and introduction speeches as short as possible and the hacking time as long as possible. There is never enough hacking time at a Hackathon event, so don't waste participants' time.

On the last day, you should plan the presentation of the solutions. After 5pm the teams can start presenting their ideas to the judges and after that the winners can be announced, receive their prizes and celebrate their victory.

Our hackathon was organized from Sunday afternoon to Wednesday evening. The invited jury chose the best project to win after first watching a short presentation of all the projects. The first day started with the kick-off session and the presentation of the project, social entrepreneurship best practices, inspirational speeches and presentation of participating members. The rest of the day was dedicated to the team formation and team building. All the remaining days up until the final event were dedicated to group work interrupted by intercalary training sessions on the different aspects of their pitch decks.

## Introduction, Kick-off

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The event starts with a kick-off event welcoming everyone and laying out the day:

- Introduce the organizers
- Thank the venue and sponsors
- Explain the history and purpose of the event
- Mention the code of conduct
- Encourage people to take and share session notes and to record progress on projects
- Keep opening speeches short. Some people tend to talk for as long as they can, so you may need to cut them off after some point to be respectful of the audience's time.

If you organize a small hackathon (up to about 30 people), you can have all of the participants introduce themselves.

The kick-off event is also the perfect occasion to introduce and involve sponsors and supporters, to give the floor to local influencers or local entrepreneurs, and to encourage local citizens and vulnerable members of the community to make their voices be heard.





## Ideas presentation & Brainstorming

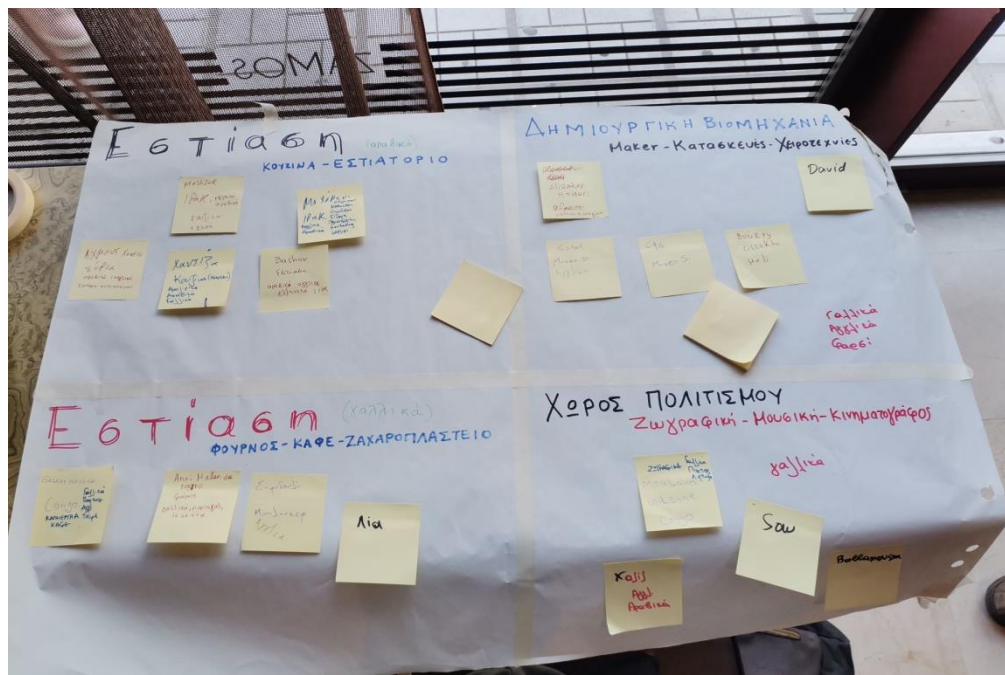
During the kick-off event an idea presentation & brainstorming session should take place.

During this session all participating groups will be given the floor in order to present their ideas. These groups can be:

- Social Ambassadors: The ideas can be represented by a social ambassador, i.e. NGOs, incubators, local authorities e.t.c., which might have a personal or institutional interest in the development of the specific solution
- Organizing team: Organizers can present a set of ideas collected throughout the organizing period, the pre-events and the contact with stakeholders and target groups.
- Social hackers: Participants who have expressed ideas in their application can present them during this session. In addition, time should be given to participants that had not expressed an idea through the formal hackathon channels, but might have conceived during the session.

Each presenter can have 1-2 minutes for summarizing the key elements of the idea, in order to capture the attention and interest of potential team members. When we work mostly with inexperienced people, we recommend extending the time to 3 minutes. There are a lot of ideas in hackathons, so the time should be controlled. One best practice is to display a timer that is visible to everyone and signal the end of the time period with a sound. This suggestion may be strict, but the large number of ideas that will need to be presented makes a timer almost necessary. Presenting all the ideas at length stealing much time, can tire the audience and make them lose interest.

We also recommend that no slides be used during the ideas' presentation, or if it is necessary only one, in order not to distract the participants.



## Team building

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Most hackathon teams typically consist of four to six people. Based on the number of members per team that will be decided and the total number of participants, the number of teams will be defined. Usually, a team should be consisted by members with complementary skill sets and backgrounds in in order to ensure a holistic approach on an idea/project/problem e.t.c. For this reason, we recommend each team to be diverse in terms of:

- Gender
- Age
- Cultural background
- Skills and competences e.t.c.

The groups are created based on the preferences of the participants regarding the ideas that have been presented and always with the aim of fulfilling the conditions that have been set. After all the ideas have been presented, participants express their desire and interest in a specific idea. There is a high possibility that in this way, initially, an uneven distribution between ideas will occur that does not meet the team structure conditions. Based on the defined number of teams, and in the case more ideas than the number of teams exist, the ideas with the highest participation will proceed to the next stage. The participants that had selected an idea that was rejected, are asked to choose again between one of the remaining ideas. After that the participants will be asked to move to another idea as many times as needed in order to achieve the required team structure and the number of team members. The process may take a long time, but the goal is for the participants to feel comfortable with the idea they will work on and their team.

Each team that will be created should have its own name so that they can present themselves throughout the hackathon. They should also have their own space so that they can work as a team and everyone can freely express their thoughts.



## Development work

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A major aspect of hackathons is pushing the limits of knowledge. Participants will be working hard for long hours. Hackathon standard operating procedure often includes coffee, water, and food. Remember, this is similar to a marathon, in that you're in it for the long haul and it is important to replenish your mind, body, and spirit throughout the adventure.

It's important to provide food options with dietary restrictions taken into consideration, as well as caffeine and snacks. Order more than enough food for the hackathon. In order to keep event participants happy and productive, they'll need to be well fed. Plan to have a light breakfast spread when participants arrive each morning, and provide a filling lunch around 1 or 2 pm. Ask participants in advance about any dietary restrictions you will need to accommodate.

Moreover, teams need a sprawling space. Hackathons are driven by team-style innovations that require small clusters or rooms for groups to spread out and get to work, connecting and collaborating.

In addition, teams need an extensive space. Hackathons are made up of small teams that need the right rooms to spread out, connect and collaborate. Also, the space where you will implement the hackathon is very important to provide rest options for the participants. The teams will be in the venue for many hours every day and it is very important that they can rest for a while. An organized gym or outdoor sports area, a ping pong table or a rest room, are very helpful.

Also, many participants may come with their family or children. Having an organized space where children will be safe and can participate in creative activities will make the participants feel calmer and work without stress.

During our hackathon, the participants worked very hard throughout the day, leaving the venue late at night and returning early in the morning, full of ideas they wanted to share with their team.



In order to facilitate the project development process, the tools and methods prepared by the mentors are extremely important. To be able to work as a team and effectively, teams should

have the right tools. The right equipment, templates of key parts of the solution (for example a template of swot analysis or business model canvas) or post-its so that everyone can add their ideas on large worksheets. All these tools should be given to the participants on the first day of the hackathon so that they have the necessary time to familiarize with the material before start working in groups.



## Final presentations and closing ceremony

On the last day, from 17:00p.m on, all the participants gather in a large hall for the final presentations. The most important difference between a traditional IT hackathon and a social hackathon is the expected outcomes. An IT hackathon usually ends with a prototype application that provides a solution to a problem, unlike a social hackathon where teams present their idea regarding a social problem. The social problems that usually seek a solution are quite complicated and involve many different members of the society, with the result that it is impossible to create fully working solutions in a few days.

The teams are asked to briefly present their ideas within 20-30 minutes, in front of the jury, which usually consists of government representatives, local municipalities, corporations, investors, and entrepreneurs who might be personally and directly impressed.

The final presentations of the teams can be theoretical concepts and presented to the audience and the jury using slides, or they can be ideas that involve the creation of a product, which may have been created in the previous days and the jury can see it.

In our social hackathon, teams were asked to create a business plan for a social business that would contribute towards refugees' integration into the local community. The first group developed the idea of a bakery-café and had made traditional bread which the judges tasted. The second team created a business where it will manufacture clothes and accessories from recycled materials, and they had sewn a jacket from recycled plastic. Finally, the third team presented the business plan of a traditional Arabic restaurant, while the team members had cooked traditional Arabic food which they offered to the jury and the audience.



Once you have selected your winners for the event, it is time to announce them in a closing ceremony. Having a closing ceremony ensures that participants get enough recognition of their achievements and the mentors or the stakeholders also get a chance to say a final word to the participants. It also helps everyone to sum up with the same energy they had during the start of the hackathon and reflect on the great experience they had overall.

In the closing ceremony is the perfect time to give the awards to the participants. Nothing draws people to a competition as the promise of awards and recognition. Giving all participants something, rather than awarding only the winner, can be more motivating.

Depending on the goal and sponsors, you can offer valuable chances of getting into incubator or accelerator programs, internships, and scholarships.

In the social hackathon for refugees' integration, the two ideas that received the best reviews from the evaluation panel will be supported to transform their ideas into business plans. One of them will also take the form of a funding proposal, which will be ready to be submitted in governmental funding programs.



## Horizontal dimensions

### Accessibility

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When planning and delivering events it is important that you take some time to consider the needs of those who may wish to participate in order not to unintentionally exclude anyone. It is important to stress that as an event planner you are not expected to be an expert on all disabilities, but we it is expected that you will take the time to find out if people do have any access needs, and do your best to meet them.

The most important part about getting this right is the conversation with the person who knows what their needs are and how best they can be met.

#### Event registrations:

So that you know if anyone disabled is attending your event, we would advise that you ask attendees to register and include a question asking if attendees have any access needs.

There are many different types of disability and many more access needs that people have. Some requests may be simple, such as a person requiring anything printed to be in a certain size or on a particular color paper, or they may be more complex such as needing to book a sign language interpreter.

#### Wheelchair accessible:

Is the venue you have booked able to be accessed by a wheelchair user?

- You will need to consider whether there is a route into and around the venue for wheelchairs, including lifts or ramps if necessary, and whether there is an accessible toilet nearby.
- Avoid designating a single area “for wheelchair use”. This segregates and stigmatizes individuals using wheelchairs, prevents them from having the same choices as other attendees, and prevents them from being seated with friends and colleagues.
- Provide sufficient places with no seats for people in wheelchairs or scooters to use. If possible, scatter these throughout the venue.
- Where seats are movable, provide areas by the aisles with no chairs so people with mobility aids can maneuver into these spaces.
- Ensure aisles between seating rows are wide enough for people using mobility aids.
- Provide sufficient space between tables for people using mobility devices and assistance dogs to go between.
- Have one chair missing from each table for people using mobility aids.

#### Seating:

- Provide seats near the front of the room for people with visual or hearing needs with clear access to sign language interpreters and speakers.
- Ensure there are chairs directly in front of the real-time captioning screen for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

#### On-site assistance

- Sign language interpreters.
- Reserve space on stage and microphone for interpreters when speaking for a deaf person.
- Real-time captioning. Provide a large screen in front of room and seats provided in the front for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- Provide interpreters and real-time captioning with prior information on program content and length, copies of speaker notes, and PowerPoint presentations, titles, and any technical language or unique features.
- Arrange escorts to the stage for attendees who are blind or partially sighted.
- Provide interpreters

#### Staff and volunteer training

- Designate a person trained on accessibility issues as a resource to staff, volunteers, and attendees for any questions, issues, or emergencies both before and during the event
- Provide orientation to all staff and volunteers on accessibility features of the event venue
- Provide training on assisting seniors/elders and people with disabilities about seating, mobility, bathroom, food, drink, getting items, and escorting to the stage.



## Data Management

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The organizers of the social hackathon should follow a clear policy regarding the protection of personal data. Participants must have given their consent for their personal information to be used. In an online platform this can be achieved by using online forms. At face-to-face hackathon events we recommend using printed forms that participants can sign.

The policy for the protection of personal data should include:

- The way personal data is collected
- The kind of data to be collected
- The right to request deletion collected data,
- The reason they are collected
- Detailed list of individuals and organizations that will have access
- The duration and mechanism of archiving the collected data.

## Open Data And How To Use Data And Statistics During Hackathon Events

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Using available data and statistics, scientific studies and research evidence can improve team results.

In a social hackathon each team member is very likely to add personal experiences in the results. This method is very nice and very helpful in making final decisions, but using statistics will help approach the problem in a more general view.

Open data helps groups adapt their solutions to society as a whole, thus having the possibility to communicate and converse with the local competent authorities.

We therefore suggest that, during the hackathon organization period, you implement a short desk research, gathering all the relevant available data, studies and research results about the hackathon topic and/or the geographical area where the social hackathon will be organized. You can record this data in paper or electronic form and have it available to the participants throughout the hackathon. We also recommend that you instruct the teams that the final presentations should include statistic data that the jury will include in its evaluation.

Open data is one of the instruments in the hackathon's toolbox. Open access usually provides online access to scientific information – research data and articles – free of charge

## Policy Perspective

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After a social hackathon is completed, there are no products or services seeking investors on the market, as there are with traditional IT hackathons. In the case of a social hackathon, we might have in hand a policy perspective which is ready to be proposed to public authorities, local municipalities and government bodies because of their regulatory role or because the issue under consideration falls within their domain or a social business plan.

In most cases it is quite difficult for a single attempt to reach this level. For this reason, we would recommend that you combine solutions that may have emerged from previous hackathons, or incorporate other policies that may have been adopted to a lesser extent or more individually. This way you will create a network through which the policy you want to propose can follow an easier path to its actual implementation by local competent authorities.

## ICT

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After the covid-19 pandemic, the use of alternative forms of remote communication with the use of the internet and more general technological tools became part of everyday life.

In a social hackathon where people from different geographical areas or from different social backgrounds are invited to participate, the use of ICT tools can make their collaboration and communication better and easier, both during the hackathon (in case it is implemented online) but also after its completion. The teams that have been created are likely to want to continue working together after the hackathon ends to develop and share their proposed solutions.

There are several widely used ICT tools that our hackathon teams have used for co-creation:

- Skype, Zoom, MS Teams, Webex for video chat and file sharing
- Facebook or Messenger groups for closed group communication
- Facebook pages to brand and engage different stakeholders and the public
- Project management tools (Basecamp, Miro)
- Online survey tools (Google forms)
- Document sharing opportunities (Dropbox, Google Drive, Excel, Google doc, WeTransfer)
- Smartphone-based communication platforms (WhatsApp, Viber).

### Impact measurement

The last part of organizing a hackathon is measuring the impact. We recommend that you determine in advance the way it will be done, in order to follow the correct procedure from the beginning and in the end to be able to capture the real results of the hackathon.

Some of the indicators you can record and measure are:

- The number of registrations.
- The number of participants who finally took part in the hackathon.
- The characteristics of the participants (age, gender, profession, etc.)
- The number of teams created and how many of them managed to complete the mission and present their idea.

Measuring the results will also help you in case you want to organize another hackathon. By recording the results in detail you can easily find the mistakes that may have been made, in order to correct them, or the correct steps that you followed in order to develop them even further.

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