# Format proposal for the organization of neighbourhood forums in the five European countries selected for the project *Concordia Discors*[1] - updated after the meeting held on July 15

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December 12, 2011

## Format Hypothesis

Given the purposes of the events (presentation of research results, interaction aimed at testing research hypotheses, and identification of policies), the format must consider phases of both **communication** and **dialogue**, which in some cases could take the form of a **creative dialogue**.

The format must be realised with a **limited budget** (2000 euros), to be allocated for the organisation of the meetings. In addition, it must consider an **heterogeneity of partners** and of their respective contexts of intervention, which imply the use of a model that must be highly adaptable and flexible to the available resources.

The meetings, sized according to the quarter, can involve from a minimum of 30 up to a maximum of 60 participants per event for a half-day meeting. Each partner will be asked to define the number of participants to involve, to be identified among local stakeholders, actors and people interviewed during the research study. Also local institutions may be involved (like decentralised administrations). It is fundamental to include people with different points of view, even opposite, specifying that these will not be sessions for the mediation of conflicts. Thus, participants with different positions must be prepared to adopt an attitude respectful of all participants.

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### Intervention proposal

Below we present the format each partner should follow in order to guarantee the homogeneity of the events. Partners can implement the format according to their needs and experiences (e.g. photography expositions, video screenings, performances, readings, etc.) and include it in other events (like quarter festivals or events taking place in the city).

### *Setting of the meetings*

In order to have a structured, but creative and participative event at the same time, we put forward two different options of informal setting, to be chosen on the basis of the features of the selected venue.
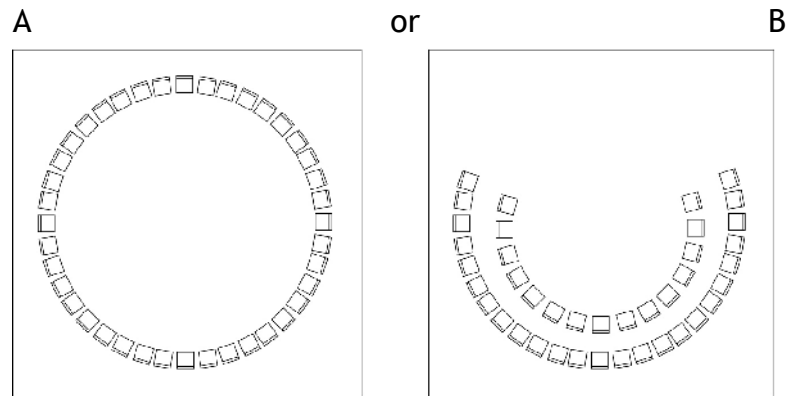
Option no. 1_ venue with one big room: both plenary sessions and discussions in small groups must take place in the same space. At the beginning of the event it is advisable to put chairs in a semicircle (A) or circle (B) and, only on a second stage, to ask participants to form small circles (C) for group discussion.

*NB. Chair arrangement*: if the audience is made of rather informal participants, the change from "plenary setting" (A or B) to "group work setting" (C) can be made by asking participants to bring their chairs, otherwise the change of arrangement must be made by 2 persons in charge of the organisation of the event.
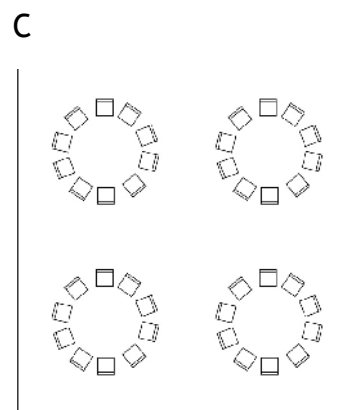
**Option no. 1: venue with one big room**

PLENARY HALL

A                                  or                                  B



DIVISION IN GROUPS

C



Option 2_venue with one big room (plenary hall) and 2 or 3 small rooms (for about 15 participants): for the plenary session it is advisable to put chairs in a semicircle (A) or circle (B), and for group work it is desirable to arrange each small room with chairs in small circles (C1, C2). If there isn't a small room for each group but a second room next to the plenary hall, this can be made available for group discussion and thus arranged with chairs put in small circles.

**Option 2_venue with one big room and 2 or 3 small rooms**

PLENARY HALL

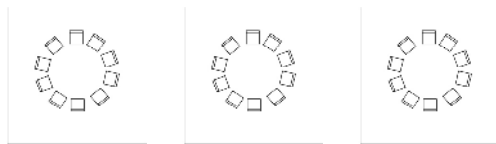A                              or                              B
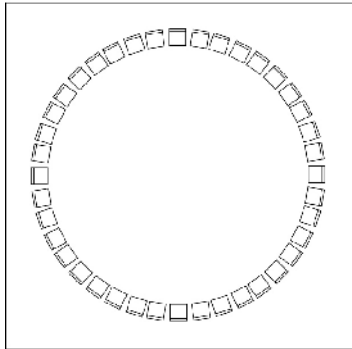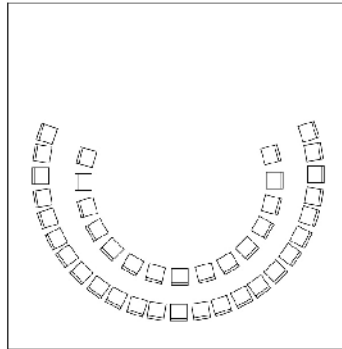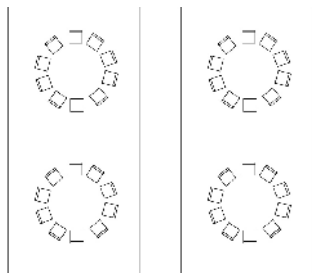


DIVISION IN GROUPS

C 1



C 2



If (round) tables are available they can be placed inside the small circles of chairs during group work, because they would turn useful for participants to lean water and snacks and for the realisation of some of the "World Café" methodological ideas.

**The World Café**

The World Café methodology takes place in a room arranged with tables covered with paper tablecloths, markers of 2-3 different colours and comfort foodstuffs. During group work participants can draw and take notes directly on tablecloths. For further and detailed information on the World Café you can visit www.theworldcafe.com

The setting will also include a participants' reception and registration desk, equipped with the poster **"where you live"** that participants will mark with stickers to point out their places of origin.

Depending on the features of the venue we will consider the need for a basic **audio system** and assembling and dismantling activities of the setting up.

Also, it will be necessary to provide appropriate **signage** both outside and inside the meeting venue in order to ease access to participants.

When choosing the meeting venue each partner is expected to prefer "neutral" venues, that is, "independent" from participants' points of view on the "sensitive" aspects of the local context. For example, venues of political parties, places of worship, institutional places, local institutions can be considered "partisan" and therefore not suitable, depending on the context. According to the partners, suitable venues may be universities or research institutes, after assessment of their logistic and technical features.

**Activities to be monitored by the coordinators for each partner:**

Identification of the meeting venue

**Features of the venue**

*Hypothesis for the development of the meeting*

We suggest that the meeting, chaired by a central facilitator supported by table facilitators during discussions in small groups (see paragraph on "meeting

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management"), should preferably last **half-day** (3.5 hours approximately) to be held, according to the target audience (stakeholders and institutions), over the afternoon of a working day, and to be divided into three parts:

1. the first part should be a brief **presentation** of a **photograph of the quarter** emerged from the research work, to be made according to a set of parameters defined by the coordinators (the **storyboard**)

2. the second part should be a moment of **interaction** with participants

3. the third part (plenary) should consist in the **presentation** of the main **outcomes** resulted from discussions.

Welcome and registration (20-30 ')

Participants enter the place of the meeting through a **filter zone** where they find the reception desk and the poster "where you live,". Afterwards they enter the plenary hall.

During the phase of participants' reception, facilitators act as "listening poles" to test participants' expectations towards the meeting and help them put coloured stickers on the poster "where you live".

Presentation of research results (15 ')

Participants will sit in the circle/semi-circle of the plenary hall and will be shown a Power Point presentation by the local research coordinator, whose paper copies will be available for the people interested.

The purpose underlying the choice for this format is to provide some **basic information about the quarter to all participants**, built around key facts emerged from the research study, and to **ask one or two questions** in order to stimulate discussion for the next phase of creative dialogue.

Presentation of the meeting agenda (10 ')

Afterwards, the person who will act as the central facilitator of the meeting will explain the schedule and timing of the work.

At this stage, it will be important to communicate the purpose of the initiative, and especially the way the meeting outcomes will be enhanced.

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<u>Division into groups</u>

Participants will be divided in order to form mixed groups. First, each group will have to contain both the public sector, the third sector, and private citizens. If one of these categories outnumbers the others, and thus groups are inevitably made heterogeneous (e.g. only the private sector, only the third sector or just private citizens), it is advisable to mix members of each group at least by gender and age.

<u>Key questions for group discussion</u>

Discussion topics and key questions will be the same for each group.

1.If you were the City Mayor for one day, what would you change of your quarter?

A second question may follow: "As a quarter resident, what would you do to improve the situation?"

2. And what would you not change for any reason on earth?

The questions are the same as the ones used for the documentary, in order to develop synergies between the two actions as better as possible. This can be done using, for example, inputs and reflections stimulated by the interviews made for the documentary in order to realise a better planning and managing of the discussion during Neighbourhood Forums.

The interaction will take place in the form of a discussion in small groups (no more than 15 people each) and will be chaired by table facilitators according to a format which will be the same for each group, to be defined before the event by each partner in order to clarify the specific objectives for each local event. The format will be built around the question* the group will have to answer collectively, nevertheless it is essential to be ready to change questions on the basis of participants' reactions. The idea is that the first 'around the table' could be a discussion on the ongoing changes of the quarter with possible references to the past, while the second could be aimed at identifying actions

to implement collectively in order to face the problems emerged during the first phase.

The written report of the discussion will be carried out later on the basis of the notes taken during the meeting by the facilitator or possibly by a facilitator's assistant. It is advisable not to register discussions to avoid inhibiting conversations.

Coffee break (20 ')

The coffee break is an important moment both to "break up" the meeting and allow participants a free exchange of ideas or to build relationships between them. At the same time it is also essential to give time to the central facilitator to collect feedback on the ongoing discussion groups from table facilitators, and possibly to adapt the agenda of the meeting.

Second phase of discussion (60')

(same features as the first one)

Presentation of main outcomes and conclusions (30')

In the final plenary session facilitators will briefly tell (5 ') about the main outcomes emerged from discussion, and later on the central facilitator will call upon the project responsible and/or institutions to draw the conclusions, in which it would be advisable to give indications on a possible continuation of the work.


**Meeting management**

The sections below have been defined after exchanges among partners:

**Staff members and roles:**

Minimum number of staff members and their roles

The minimum number of staff members needed for a 60-participant forum is of 6 persons, divided as follows:

- no. 1 central facilitator

- no. 1 event coordinator, responsible for the preparation of the event and for the reception desk

- no. 1 event coordinator's assistant (whose need should be valued on the basis of the number of people involved. If participants outnumber 40 people it advisable to have an assistant)

- no. 3 table facilitators.

If there is the chance to involve voluntaries, they may both support table facilitators taking notes on discussions, and assist the event coordinator in practical tasks (e.g. assembling and dismantling, …).

- No. 1 photographer. The role can be covered also by the event coordinator or by one of his/her assistants. A photographic reportage of the meeting can be useful to enrich the report with pictures from the event, to organise a sort of exhibition in the following moths to open to all forum participants so as to make them meet again, or to publish the pictures on a dedicated web site. It is essential, in this case, to make participants sign a model release for the use of their images. Those who do not sign will have to be marked in some way, for example using a sticky label on their clothes so that they are not photographed during the event or eliminating the photos they appear on afterwards.

**Promotion**

It is important to plan strategies for an effective promotion of the event:

- Handing out of communication materials like posters or flyers in the strategic points of the quarter

- e-mail invitation to the interviewees, the actors met during the research phase, and to the selected stakeholders

- recall to the interviewees, the actors met during the research phase, and to the selected stakeholders in order to make sure they have received the invitation, and to collect confirmation of their participation

- request to the above mentioned actors to make the invitation circulate

- involvement of associations that can make the invitation circulate.

**Equipment**

It is important to provide for the necessary equipment and materials: the materials required vary according to the venue chosen by coordinators and to the presence or not of a second working area beside the plenary hall. Stationery instead will vary on the basis of the choices made by each research team.

Equipment and setting up checklist:

**Venue with one big room** (option 1 of the section "Setting of the meetings")

Reception area:

- 1 reception desk with 2 chairs
- 1 board to hang the poster "where you live"

Plenary hall:

- A chair for each participant and facilitator
- Round tables for group discussions (optional)
- Audio system equipped with sound boxes and microphone (if needed)
- A flip chart for each group
- A video projector with projection screen or white wall
- A table for stationery, snacks, water and coffee

**Venue with one big room and 2 or 3 small rooms** (option 1 of the section "Setting of the meetings")

Reception area:

- 1 reception desk with 2 chairs
- 1 board to hang the poster "where you live"

Plenary hall:

- A chair for each participant and facilitator
- Audio system equipped with sound boxes and microphone (if needed)
- A video projector with projection screen or white wall

- A table for stationery, snacks, water and coffee

Rooms:

- A chair for each participant in the group/s hosted in the room
- Chairs for the facilitators
- A flip chart.

**Stationery kit** (to be adopted in both options):

- Pads of post-it notes (one pad for each group)
- Pens (one for each participant + some more for staff members)
- A ream of white A4 sheets of paper to be handed out to participants for taking notes
- Sellotape to scotch-tape posters
- Paper for the flip chart and permanent markers to write on the boards (of 2 different colours for each facilitator)
- Coloured stickers for the poster "where you live"
- White sticky labels
- Lists of participants in alphabetical order
- Model release for the use of personal information (name, surname, email, telephone no.) and images.