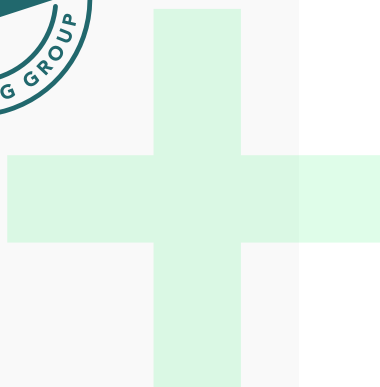




Matched – Connecting youth to rural employment opportunities

How-to-Guide for Rural Opportunity Fairs

This guide has been developed by the Global Project Employment in Rural Areas with a Focus on Youth in cooperation with the following partners:



APROMAB

Interprofession of mango actors in Burkina

Bukura Agricultural College

Training & Innovations for improved livelihood

Instituto Nacional de Empleo-I.P.

National Employment Institution

IPAM-B

Interprofession of modern poultry farming

Lake Region Economic Bloc

mHub





This How-to-Guide is a knowledge product of the Global Project Employment in Rural Areas with a Focus on Youth by GIZ. The project is applying a 360-degree approach boosting the demand for labour, enhances the employability of young people and improves the functioning of the labour market and job-matching in four countries: Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique. Improved framework conditions and strengthened advocacy of young people complement the approach.

The guide was developed in a joint effort by representatives of the four countries. The guide is based on the experiences and lessons learnt of the four countries on the design, planning and implementation of rural opportunity fairs. This How-to-Guide is a support tool for policymakers and implementation organisations on implementing rural opportunities fairs.

After a short introduction and background information, the guide starts with a roadmap representing the key steps to implement a rural opportunity fair. The roadmap provides an overview of the structure for the chapters in this guide and can be used as a navigation tool to explore the content in this guide. The roadmap is followed by the chapters each describing one of the 9 key steps of implementing a rural opportunity fair.

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The purpose of this guide is to be a practical resource for implementing rural opportunity fairs. The guide can be used as an interactive online resource, offering you pop-ups for more information, linkages within the document, as well as text boxes to fill in with your own thoughts and reflections. It is also possible to use the document as an offline document. There are two main ways to navigate the guide. The first way is through the roadmap. The roadmap presents the key 9 steps for implementing an opportunity fair, from preparation to the implementation, and lastly, the follow-up. As a reader, you can move along the roadmap and click on the step you want to read more about, and you will be directed to the relevant chapter. If you are just starting with the process of preparing a rural opportunity fair, we recommend you to start from step one and move through the roadmap chronologically.

Each chapter of the How-to-Guide follows the same logic and always includes:

- (1) an introduction to the chapter and the general explanation of the step in this chapter,
- (2) recommendations for implementation based on lessons learnt from the four countries,
- (3) highlighted examples of the four countries showcasing a certain aspect of the rural opportunity fair, and lastly
- (4) guiding questions to apply the step in one's own context.

The guiding questions are also included for each step in the roadmap for readers to gain insight into what is discussed in each chapter. Readers are invited to use the guiding questions for their own context.

At the end of each chapter a field is included for readers to fill in their own guiding questions. These guiding questions filled out in each chapter are collected at the end of the guide in one overview. This overview can be used as a worksheet to guide the reader's own implementation of the opportunity fair.

You can always jump back to the previous section through the arrows at the top of each page.



Clicking on this icon will redirect you to the roadmap.



Click or hover on the lightgreen elements for more information.



Click on this icon to be redirected to an internal link within the document.



Click on this icon to be redirected to an external resource outside of the document.



Matching tools connect young jobseekers with job or self-employment and business opportunities. An opportunity fair here is defined as a fair through which business opportunities are presented to opportunity seekers and potential matches between opportunities and opportunity seekers can be established. Here, the specific focus is on opportunities in rural areas. The youths participating in an opportunity fair are opportunity seekers as compared with job seekers.

In rural areas with low demand for (formal) wage labour, “opportunities” do not only comprise regular wage employment positions, but also niches that present an opportunity to attain additional income. To support the transition of young people from school, ATVET education, or university to work and bring young job seekers into work – opportunity fairs are a wide-spread and often used tool.

In most cases, these opportunity fairs are carried out in urban areas. These areas have a robust infrastructure, a high number of stakeholders and available wage employment opportunities. But most youth – especially in Africa – live in rural areas and have no access to the offers from the urban areas. These youths need to be supported in finding income opportunities, training offers and information about sectors, job profiles, application processes for jobs and income opportunities.

The majority of young people in Africa (11% of the total population) live in rural areas compared to 8% of the total population of young people in Africa that live in urban areas. Sub-Saharan Africa has the youngest population. 70% of its population is under 30 years old, and the population keeps growing in most countries. About 60% of the population in Sub-Sahara Africa lives in rural areas¹. Currently, approximately 25 million young people enter the African labour market each year, (thereof approximately 14 million in rural areas)². Until 2030, only in Africa, a total of 440 million new jobs need to be created to give opportunities to the youth entering the labour market.

The agricultural industry is in many African countries the engine of the economy and employs a big part of the labour force. A flourishing agricultural sector could create both - formal and informal employment and business opportunities for millions of young job seekers, improving livelihoods, ensuring food security, and reducing poverty at scale. But so far, many young people are left out and cannot find income opportunities in the rural and agricultural sector.

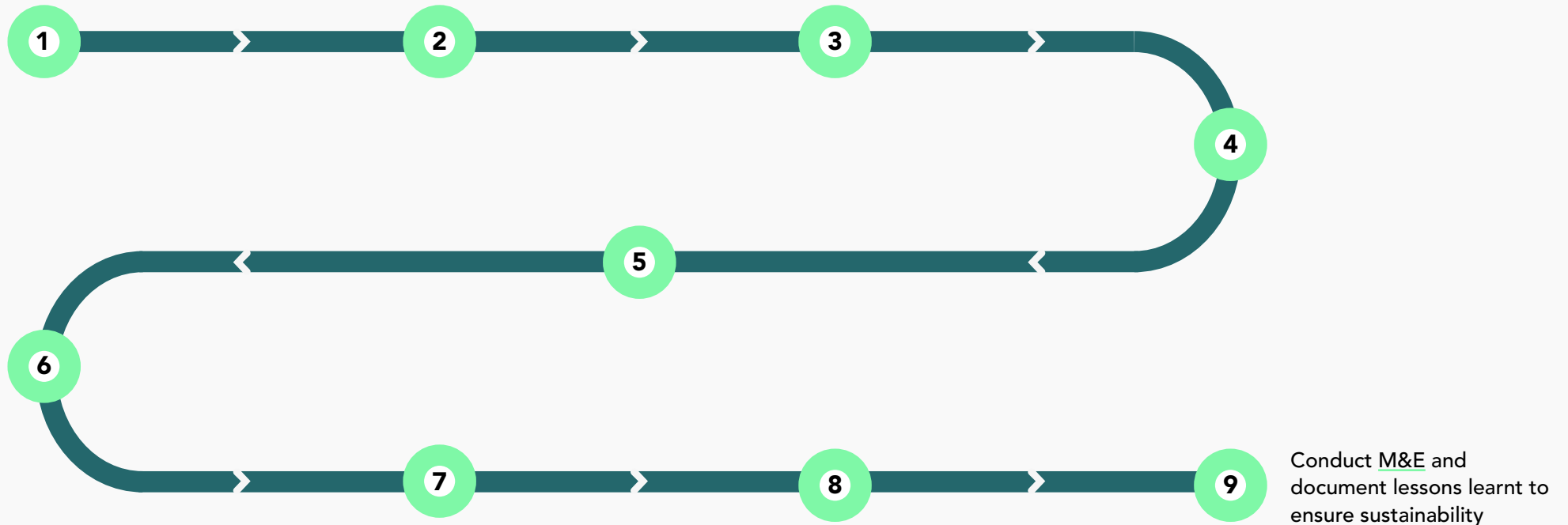
Additionally, young people often hold negative perceptions about agriculture because it is viewed as an unattractive, backbreaking, and traditional occupation, promising little more than a life in perpetual poverty. Awareness of the broader agribusiness value chains and opportunities offered by modern technologies and innovative business models remains limited. Agriculture is primarily associated with subsistence farming, not profitable agri-preneurship or gainful formal employment. For many, agriculture is perceived as a career choice of last resort.

The implementation of a rural and agricultural opportunity fair therefore serves the purpose of promoting the existing opportunities in the agricultural sector, improve the image of the sector and match the existing labour demand and supply for employment promotion. An opportunity fair creates visibility for the available jobs and income opportunities such as self-employment opportunities along value chains and other supporting activities such as agricultural courses, incubation programmes, and matchmaking platforms for young job seekers. Additionally, it provides a forum for exchange, networking, and job matching.

¹ Rural population (% of total population) – Sub-Saharan Africa | Data (worldbank.org)

² The figure of 440 million youth entering the labour market in Africa was first established here: ESCHE D. (ed.), LOSCH B. (ed.), IMBERNON J. (ed.). 2016. A new emerging rural world: An overview of rural change in Africa. Atlas for the NEPAD Rural Futures Programme, 2nd edition, Montpellier: Cirad, Nepad Agency. (<https://www.nepad.org/publication/new-emerging-rural-world-overview-of-rural-change-Africa>)

What are the concrete steps for organising and implementing a rural opportunity fair?



How to use the roadmap

This knowledge product contains the key steps to organise and implement a rural opportunity fair. The roadmap lays out the key steps involved. You can move along the roadmap and jump to the chapter you want to read more about. As a help, you can see the guiding questions per chapter by hovering over the chapter name.

Identify the objectives and type of rural opportunity fair

1



How to ...

The general objective of rural opportunity fairs is to bring opportunities closer to the rural youth and support the matching between the youths and the opportunities. The specific objectives can vary depending on the decision of the organising stakeholders.

Potential specific objectives of a rural opportunity fair

- Expose the rural youth to different income opportunities that exist and provide the opportunity to meet actors from the area.
- Create connections between the private sector, ATVET centres, the public sector, youth organisations and the youth.
- Sensitise the private sector to include youth and young women in their teams/talent pooling.
- Demonstrate to youths and specifically women the attractiveness of the agricultural/rural sector.
- Highlight available job and self-employment opportunities along specific/identified value chains and other supporting activities such as agricultural courses, incubation programmes, and digital matchmaking platforms.
- Offer hands-on employability skills training (such as CV writing, soft skills, etc.) and information sessions.
- Create a forum for employers with available opportunities for networking and experience sharing and connecting to available young talent.
- Advance the topic of youths in agri-business in the region, awareness creation and mobilisation of resources for upscaling such an event regularly among the counties.

Click the buttons to have a complete overview of the possibilities to organise the opportunity fair

Type

Open Call for all participants
Participation by invitation-only

Format

In-person
Hybrid
Virtual

Stakeholders

VC-specific
Multi-stakeholder local

Time

1 (one) day
2 (two) days

Scale

Large-scale
Medium-scale
Small-scale

Suggested Context

ATVET training centres
Public space / Fair-ground
Public market place

Funding

Fully self-funded
Multi-stakeholder funding
Financial sponsorship



Types



Type

Open Call for all participants

Potential participants are called to participate through wider radio advertisement, print advertisement and other marketing tools. The date and time of the fair is communicated, who should come (characteristics) and that the entrance is open for everybody.

Pros

- Wider range of ppl can be reached.
- Easier to advertise and lower level for invitation process.

Cons

- Uncertainty of how many people will come to the fair. Possibility that people outside of the target group are joining.

Participation by invitation-only

Participants (opportunity seekers) are pre-selected and invited to attend the fair based on their location, skill set and technical training, job readiness.

Pros

- Control over the number of attendees, as well as the job-seeker profiles. This helps to formulate a clear value proposition to the private sector and other exhibitors. It would allow for participant preparation up-front.

Cons

- The event gets an exclusive character that might be excluding certain target groups.



Format



Format

In-person

The presential format consists of bringing together all the participants in a single place chosen by all the stakeholders (young people, training centres, exhibitors, communicators, local authorities, etc.) meet physically at the fair venue and carry out the planned activities.

Pros

- Direct exchanges between participants, which reinforces trust between future partners.
- Direct appreciation of exhibitors' products, which facilitates the signing of contracts.
- Ease of deployment of logistics, in that the equipment for animation, connection and for exhibition are on site.

Cons

- The disadvantages of this format are essentially the non-participation of the actors/experts who will not be available during this period and the difficulty of controlling the time of the exchanges and the concentration of several people in one place.

Hybrid

A hybrid format combines an in-person event with the possibility of virtual participation. This could include live streams of agenda items, online exchanges, virtual booths, etc.

Pros

- Reaching larger target group enabling participants to benefit from parts of the programme who cannot participate in-person.

Cons

- Requires stable internet connection which might not be possible in every rural setting.
- Digital divide might disadvantage certain target groups.

Virtual

A virtual job fair is an event that only takes place in the virtual space. This can include virtual booths, online matching sessions, webinar sessions.

Pros

- Cost-effective since no travel, hall hire and other logistics costs are necessary.
- Enables broader outreach to participants.
- Information sessions and trainings can be recorded and made available after the event.

Cons

- Requires stable internet connection and data from the target groups.
- Digital divide might disadvantage certain target groups.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders

VC-specific

The value chains for the fair can be those in which the project or organisation is involved in terms of training or activities for youth and women. The objective of the fairs is to present and inform these trained young people about the job opportunities within these VCs and also to establish partnerships for the promotion of their products.

Pros

- Better organisation of the fair (exhibitors, panels, communication).
- Better communication with stakeholders.
- Better choice of partners.
- Better sustainability.
- Better presentation of value chain opportunities.
- Greater diversity of products from each value chain.

Cons

- Low diversity of opportunities to young people.
- Less interest from visitors.
- A lot of competition and conflicts of interest between exhibitors.
- Fair closed to other value chains.

Multi-stakeholder local

An event to connect actors from different sectors in order to promote potential job seekers to employers and job opportunities and vice versa, from a specific geographic location. It consists of bringing together large, medium and small local companies, which operate in the different value chains, with entities of interest for the promotion of employment.

Pros

- Provides the formation of a network of contacts between local multisectoral entities that operate in the job market.
- Provide the opportunity for local youth (rural areas) to participate in a job fair to seek opportunities for employment and training.
- Publicise employment and training opportunities available locally, in various sectors.
- It makes it possible to know of the activities developed between each other.
- Strengthens the relationship between local multisectoral entities.

Cons

- Limits the entry of entities of interest that are not local, which may reduce the exposure of more opportunities for employment and training and for creating networks of contacts.
- If it is not well coordinated, it can lead to a conflict of interest between the sectors the actors are involved in.



Time

Time

1 (one) day

Time determined for carrying out all activities of the event, except for the time for preparation and storage of materials and equipment. The designed programme must be integrated on this day, with planned sequence and/or complementarity. Generally, normal working hours are used.

Pros

- They tend to attract a greater number of exhibitors, especially when exhibition costs are under the responsibility of the exhibitor.
- It is very dynamic and gives participants the anxiety of visiting all the fair's compartments and activities.

Cons

- May not be enough to cover all programmatic activities of the event, especially when it comes to a large-scale job fair.
- Many opportunities may not be advertised effectively.

2 (two) days

To allow for more preparation of the different days: Day one focuses on preparing the job and opportunity seekers for the opportunities available, for example, 5 different facilitators were identified based on their expertise on the topics of business coaching, career guidance, recruitment and personal branding on day one and day 2 focuses on matching participants to opportunities.

Pros

- 2 days give room for more activities and also gives the participants a chance to go through personal development sessions, hence preparing them for the opportunities.
- The availability of the professionals: indeed, most of the time, company managers do not have enough time. Having them during 2 days allows the young people to have the maximum of information and to know about the expectations of the companies on the profile of the employees.
- Exhibitors will gain the maximum number of participants, enough time to present their products and their know-how to the visitors, and will have the opportunity to sell their products.

Cons

- 2 days require more resources and expertise to manage.
- The two days require a substantial budget as the cost of renting and supporting participants and exhibitors increases.



Scale



Scale

Large-scale (+450 pax and +50 exhibitors)

A large-scale job fair is one comprising more than 50 exhibitors and over 450 attendees. It is a significant outreach and visibility event, providing an overview of a sector.

Pros

- High visibility for exhibitors and partners.
Attractive to a larger audience of opportunity seekers.

Cons

- Large-scale events tend to require many resources (time and money).

Medium-scale (200-450 pax 20-50 exhibitors)

A medium-scale job fair is one comprising more than 20 exhibitors and over 200 attendees. It is a more reasonable outreach and requires intermediate efforts to organise as compared to the small-scale and large-scale job and opportunity fair.

Pros

- Gives a medium ground to organise a job fair and opportunity fair.
- It is not or expensive, but reasonable.

Cons

- Tend to require more time to organise still.

Small-scale (Under 200 pax 10-20 exhibitors)

A small-scale job fair is one comprising approximately 10 to 20 exhibitors and under 200 attendees. It is usually done with the intention of bringing together and interconnecting a small group of entities of interest to employability.

Pros

- They are practical and easy to organise.
- It does not involve many costs.

Cons

- They tend to limit the adherence of exhibiting entities with greater ambition.
- They can promote a reduced number of employment and training opportunities.



Suggested Context



Suggested Context

ATVET	Public space /Fair-ground	Public market place
The host of the event is a professional technical teaching school. The opportunity fair is held on the school grounds, using pre-existing resources, such as the lecture hall, furniture, electricity, sanitation, etc. Pros • Use of pre-existing material resources in TVET. • Use of TVET staff experience in hosting events (e.g. graduations ceremony). • A guaranteed number of participants (TVET students). • Knowledge about implementing an opportunity fair could be appropriated by TVET and explored on smaller scales in the future. Cons • Can interfere with the class schedule if not well organised.	Fairs should be organised in easily accessible locations where the majority of stakeholders and especially participants reside in order to facilitate the mobilisation of participants and also to reduce travel and rental costs. The most accessible and well-known venues are very often well placed in the city, allowing a large number of people to hear about the event. In addition, the venue should have all the usual amenities (water, electricity, toilets, internet connection, video projector, large exhibition space, etc.) to facilitate the proceedings. Pros • It is an open, known place. • Easy access for all participants. • Avoid conflicts of interest between exhibitors. Cons • Difficult to have a venue that has all the amenities in a rural area.	The opportunity fair can be combined with other events such as the local weekly market, or another agricultural fair. Pros • Highly frequented place with a lot of traction to have participants. • Market sellers are present, as well as commercial agents. • Easily accessible for both, youth and exhibitors. Cons • Might be difficult to have the right target group present, the space might be already busy by the sellers. • Risk of distraction. • No possibility to control who is participating.



Funding



Funding

Fully self-funded

The organising entity is able to either fully fund the event themselves without depending on external funding or they have made a business case out of the event.

Pros

- Full clarity on what is possible or not regarding event organisation.

Cons

- Usually, only limited budgets are available within one organisation.

Multi-stakeholder funding

A group of organisers is joining forces and contributing according to their ability – this can be either financial or in-kind contributions towards the joining success of the event.

Pros

- Easier to accumulate a larger budget that is easy to plan with.

Cons

- Larger coordination effort, commitments need to be formalised/followed up.

Financial sponsorship

Creating sponsorship packages to be taken up by partners not within the organising group. This can be in-kind or financial. Depending on the size of the contribution, certain privileges are granted to the partner. This can be visibility, a slot in a panel discussion, a keynote etc.

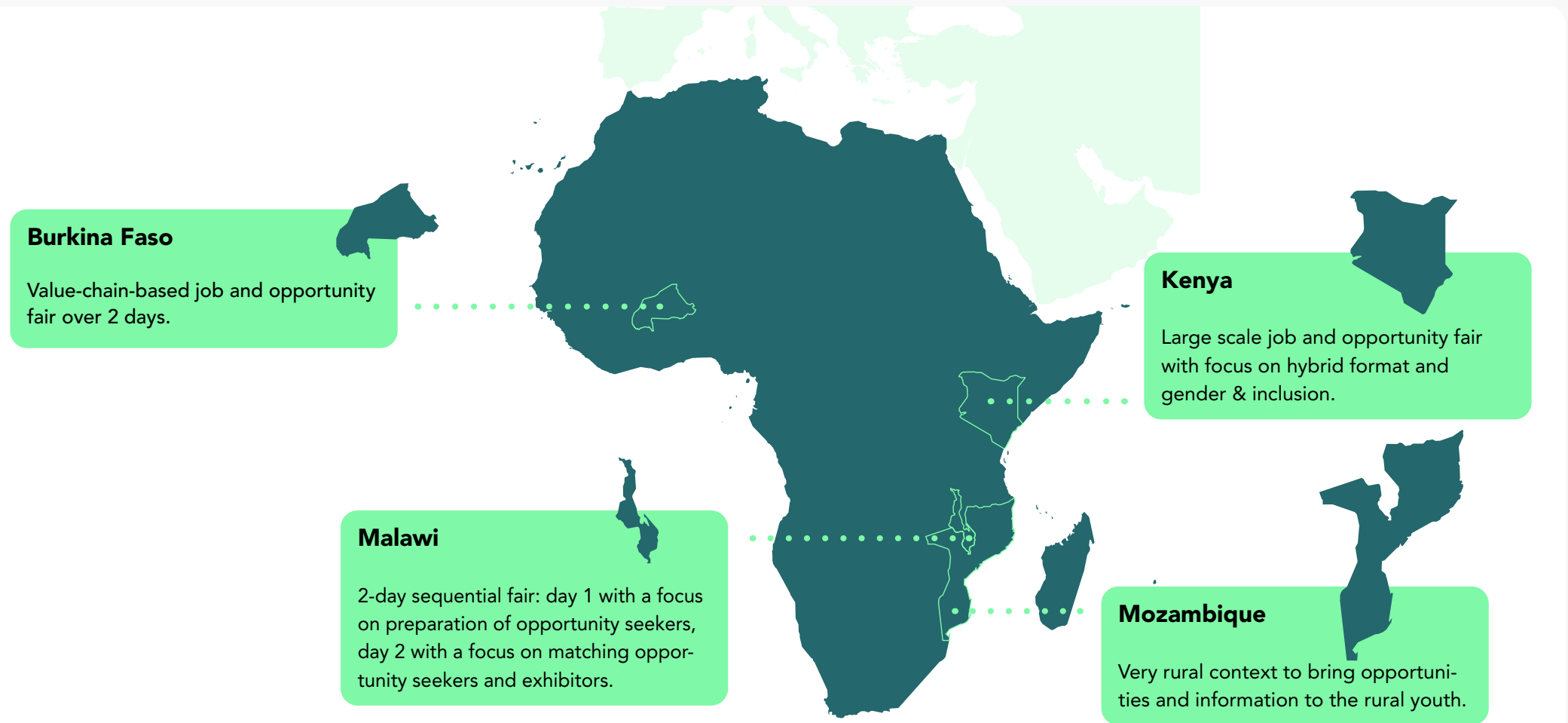
Pros

- Sponsors can help enhance the overall event experience by providing resources for additional attractions, giveaways, or services that can make the event more enjoyable for attendees.
- Sponsors often have a broader audience, and their involvement can help expand the event's reach to new demographics or partners. This can lead to increased attendance and exposure.
- Partnering with well-known and reputable sponsors can boost the credibility and trustworthiness of the event in the eyes of attendees and potential participants.

Cons

- Planning insecurity.

Overview of the 4 country examples



Country Examples



Burkina Faso

Uniqueness

Value-chain-based job and opportunity fair, with a focus on the mango and poultry value chain for two days each fair. The fairs were organised in the city where the majority of the beneficiaries reside. Due to the security situation and the limited budget, only residents participated.

Date

2nd – 3rd December (modern poultry fair) and 7th of December 2022 (mango fair)

Organisation structure/partners

The two fairs were organised in collaboration with the Association of Mango Producers (APROMA-B) and the Association of Modern Poultry Producers (IPAM-B) and with the active participation of the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Training Centre (CFEA) and Haut Bassins' youth agri-preneurs network as well as women's organisations such as Siguitimogoson and APRODEV.

No. of rural youth (opportunity seekers)

415 participants with 123 female participants (30% women).

No. of exhibitors

40 exhibitors.

No. of vacancies

250 opportunities offered for internships.



Country Examples



Malawi

Uniqueness

The job and opportunity fair was a 2 day sequential event: day 1 focused on the preparation of opportunity seekers, day 2 focused on matching opportunity seekers and exhibitors. 5 different facilitators/experts were offering services during the fair based on their expertise on the topics of business coaching, career guidance, recruitment and personal branding for day one.

Date

19th –20th December 2022

Organisation structure/partners

Malawi organised the job and opportunity fair together with mHub as a service provider, the District Youth Office, the Ministry of Labour, Network for Youth Development, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and Timveni Child and Youth Media organisation. All other stakeholders that were involved had a chance to give their input into the organisation of the fair through an information session. Timveni Child and Youth Media Organisation was a partner in publicising the fair through the radio.

They included a talk show on the radio segment with mHub and GIZ elaborating more about opportunities available at the fair, the venue and the soft skills that the young opportunity seekers would be exposed to.

No. of rural youth (opportunity seekers)

234 young people (133 female, (57% women)) participated in the fair.

No. of exhibitors

12 exhibitors were available at the fair.

No. of vacancies

74 job opportunities were offered.



Country Examples



Kenya

Uniqueness

Large-scale job and opportunity fair with a hybrid format (physical fair and online livestream) and a strong focus on gender & inclusion. The opportunity fair was hosted at a local Agricultural Training Institution centrally located within the project region in Western Kenya. Child-care services as well as sign-language interpretation were provided throughout the event to make it as inclusive as possible.

Date

25th of November 2022

Organisation structure/partners

Multi-stakeholder organising committee led by the GIZ Team. The committee consisted of the Lake Region Economic Bloc, Bukura Agricultural College (training institution), event manager, and the technical service provider.

No. of rural youth (opportunity seekers)

830 in-person participants, of which 463 were youth job seekers (41% women). Around 1500 virtual participants joined through the livestream.

No. of exhibitors

67 diverse exhibitors (45 MSMEs, 2 larger companies, 2 private sector associations, 2 business incubation institutions, 7 ATVET institutions, 5 county youth organisations, 2 sponsors, 2 GIZ partner project).

No. of vacancies

115 opportunities offered.



Country Examples



Mozambique

Uniqueness

The opportunity fair was organised in a rural place, distant from urban settings. Very often opportunity fairs are organised and held in more urban or peri-urban areas. But in countries like Mozambique – the majority of the youth is located in rural – often far to reach areas. Opportunity fairs in rural areas bring new and much needed information and awareness of existing income opportunity to the youth and support the development and growth of the region.

Date

14th of October 2022

Organisation structure/partners

Emprega/ 'Global Project Employment in Rural Areas with a Focus on Youth Mozambique organised together with the political partner National Institute for Employment (INEP), the technical training school Polytechnic Institute of Nhamatanda (IPN ADPP) and the NGO Sumburero as the service provider a rural opportunity fair. Representatives of each organisation formed a working group to decide on the range of steps to design, plan and implement the fair.

No. of rural youth (opportunity seekers)

599 participated at the fair, of which 209 were women (35% women).

No. of exhibitors

Total: 64: 29 companies were exhibiting, 12 state organisations, 9 educational organisations, 8 NGOs, 6 associations including one civil society organisation.

No. of vacancies

Total number of vacancies made available: 131, of which 116 internships and 15 employment opportunities.



Guiding questions



- What do you want to achieve?
- What are your immediate objectives?
- What are your participants' needs and challenges (voice of the youth/young job and opportunity seekers)?
- Who are the stakeholders to offer opportunities in the region?
- Who is your exhibitors' target group?
- What is your size, budget, aim for the opportunity fair?



Add your thoughts/answers here

Identify the implementing partners and other stakeholders to be involved

2



How to ...

Each fair needs to be organised and implemented together and in coordination and agreement with different partners.

Depending on the interest and availability as well as capacities the nature of the partners can be different.

Why and how to implement a rural opportunity fair with different stakeholders:

An opportunity fair can be fairly complex and different capacities and inputs are needed. Therefore, the right selection of the stakeholders/partners can ensure that the fair meets the objectives and more resources are put together.

To ensure that the different stakeholders can bring in their valuable contribution and see their vision and objectives reflected in the fair a committee of representatives of each stakeholder should be organised. The stakeholder committee should vote on person who will be given the power to take the final decisions. The committee needs to meet on a regular basis to ensure decisions are taken.

To ensure the effectiveness of the design, planning and implementation of the fair sub-working groups can be created with each responsible for a specific task e.g. stand organisation, design and layout, communication, etc.

When organising an opportunity fair, the creation of ownership on partner side is crucial as part of the sustainability strategy of such a fair. Specifically, it is important that the fair can be replicated in the future to be independently run by partners. The capacity of partners can be built up through this joint preparation process.

Possible stakeholders that could implement a fair together are:



Educational institutions (ATVET school colleges, universities): The educational institute has the contact to the job seekers/students. Those people are looking for job/internship opportunities after their graduation. ATVET schools could offer the space and ensure that the target group will be present.



National Institutes of employment promotion/ political partner/provincial government: A national body with mandate to create jobs and income for the population and especially for the youth could be present. The partner could ensure visibility, attract stakeholders and ensure structural learning and adaptation.



Private sector umbrella Bodies: The representation of the private sector is crucial to ensure that firms with the potential to hire, train and support youth are present.



Youth & women organisations: The youth and women organisations ensure that the voices of the final target group is heard. Those organisations can also mobilise the target group to participate.



Development partners (donors): Development organisations are a strong partner in financing the fair and support with technical support for the planning and implementation.

Recommendations

Composition of the organising team

Since an opportunity fair is a mini-representation of the labour market, we recommend to form a multi-stakeholder organisation committee consisting of the following functions.



A lead organising party: mandated by the group, with decision-making power to steer the process and the overall event management, as well as at least a small budget available and capacities for fundraising.



A representative of the hosting location: to coordinate logistics, potentially providing in-kind contributions such as the venue, chairs, tents, etc.



An employer representative: an umbrella body, with contacts to potential exhibitors, to facilitate the invitations, support in fundraising and sponsorship acquisition.



A representative who can facilitate the opportunity seeker invitations: supporting with communications, contacts to youth and women groups, and media.



A political representative: to ensure political goodwill and backing.

Please note that it is not necessary to have a different person for each of the functions. If the organisation or roles allow to cater for more than one of the functions named above they are sufficiently covered.

The organising team should first check if there are other events that are already planned in the area and might be suitable for synergetic implementation (trade fairs, other planned opportunity fairs, matching events, career days, etc.) to avoid replication of efforts and to harmonise approaches. This would also significantly lower the costs of implementation.

For a newly formed group of organisers it is recommended to start off small by piloting a small or medium scale event with the available resources.

Once the timing and organisation structure is clear the planning can begin. Apart from the necessary event management preparations and fundraising, the mobilisation of participants and the development of content and programme for the event are paramount.



[More about how to choose a venue and timing here](#)

Country Examples



Mozambique:

How to set up a multi-stakeholder committee



- The opportunity fair held in Mozambique was coordinated by 4 institutions, namely, an ATVET institute, the National Institute of Employment (INEP), an NGO (Sumburero) and the GIZ team (Emprega/ Global Project Employment in Rural Areas with a Focus on Youth). Initially, an implementation team composed of representatives from each of the coordinating institutions was constituted. For each representative, the responsibility and deadlines for fulfilling the respective tasks were discussed and decided upon. This team held weekly meetings to update the progress of activities, presenting the progress, challenges and solutions to the constraints that appeared.
- The ATVET institute was assigned the responsibility of hosting the event, providing some furniture and human resources to support tasks during the event, ensuring the involvement of local interest structures, supporting the implementation team in advocacy and discussions about the event, with the various stakeholders, providing contacts between the implementation team and stakeholders, and taking ownership of the event.
- The National Institute of Employment (INEP) was responsible for the coordination between the host, GIZ and the NGO, guaranteeing the preparation and sharing of final documents for monitoring and evaluating of the event, guaranteeing protocol aspects at the event, ensuring the involvement of its network of entities of interest, in the active participation of the event and taking ownership of the event.
- The NGO's responsibility was to conduct a needs assessment for the rural opportunity fair (field research), analyse the costs and benefits of the opportunity fair, prepare and promote the opportunity fair in coordination with other members of the implementation team, ensure the logistical aspects of the event, and monitor and follow up with employers after the event.
- The GIZ team advised on the creation and operation of the implementation team, advised on liaison with various stakeholders for holding the opportunity fair on programmatic and logistical matters.
- Monitoring and evaluation was ensured by a small team made up of members from Sumburero, INEP and ADPP, with GIZ supervision. To capture the M&E information needed for each institution, data collection forms were developed and were presented together with a data collection application. There was a time (before the fair) for training in the use of instruments and applications. In the end, it was up to Sumburero and INEP to follow up until a month later. Hence, the responsibility was left to INEP.

Country Examples



Malawi:

How to set up a fair with a lead organising party and other stakeholders

Malawi involved a number of partners from the very beginning on to set up the rural opportunity fair, such as mHub which is the first ever Malawi digital hub and responsible for youth development.

mHub was the main implementing partner and provided its building facilities as the venue for the fair. mHub also provided expertise and were responsible for training young people in soft skills and preparing them for the matching activity that took place on the second day. Another implementing partner that was involved is the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM). The Council exists as an implementing arm of the Ministry for Youth, currently part of the Ministry of Labour, Youth, and Sports. Another partner that was involved is Timveni Child and Youth Organisation who was involved as the main media partner. They took up radio advert roles and publicity.



Guiding questions



- Which stakeholders (private sector, public sector, NGOs, universities, etc.) can assist/ should be involved in planning/organising the opportunity fair?
- What kind of outreach and influence does each stakeholder have?
- Who among the stakeholders can contribute to the opportunity fair and what can be their contribution?
- How do the stakeholders relate to the target groups?
- What is the value proposition for the stakeholders?



Add your thoughts/answers here

Develop a funding strategy

3



How to ...

This section describes how to fund a rural opportunity, specifically addressing the different ways of funding an opportunity fair and how to obtain that funding.

What are the main costs of a rural opportunity fair?

The cost of the fair varies depending on type of the fair, the scale of implementation, location and economic conditions of the country. For the different items there might be the possibility of a higher, more sophisticated and a lower budget solution. However, the main costs of the fair to consider are as follows (with ideas on how to reduce the costs):

- **Publicity, communication and marketing materials:** for a low budget option communication students could be asked to design the marketing materials and communication strategy.
- **Venue:** explore possibility to get venue as an in-kind contribution from e.g. a TVET school.
- **Stands and visual material:** use existing material such as tables, chairs from the school/venue.
- **Transportation:** transportation of participants if they live far from the venue. Ask municipality if they could provide a number of busses and drivers.
- **Stationery:** not priority if low budget.
- **Expertise:** if planned, experts talks and discussion take place during the fair. Try to get experts from partners.

- **Special service providers such as assign language, childcare, etc.:** find childcare services from the area who would offer their service at a fair for an adequate price.

How to mobilise the budget (funding)?

When organising an opportunity fair, there are several financing models one can consider to mobilise funding, to cover the costs and potentially generate revenue. Here an overview of common financing models is provided along with suggestions on how to set them up:



Sponsorship

- **Define your objectives:** clarify the goals of your event and identify what you aim to achieve. This will help you tailor the sponsorship packages to align with the overall vision and purpose of the event.
- **Research and identify companies:** organisations (e.g. MSMEs, larger private sector players, recruitment agencies, educational institutions, or industry associations) that are relevant to your target audience and industry. Consider businesses that have a vested interest in reaching your event attendees for recruitment, branding, or marketing purposes.
- **Understand sponsorship needs:** reach out to potential sponsors to understand their objectives, marketing goals, and what they seek to gain from sponsoring an event. This information will help you customise the sponsorship packages to meet their needs effectively.
- **Package tiers and benefits:** create different sponsorship tiers that cater to various budgets and objectives. Typically, sponsorship packages include tiers such as Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze. Assign corresponding benefits to each tier based on their value logo placement on event marketing materials, branding opportunities such as branded merchandise, exhibition space, or dedicated areas for promotional materials, speaking slots at the event, digital marketing in event emails, social media campaigns, and live streams.
- **Pricing and value proposition:** determine and clearly communicate pricing for each sponsorship tier based on the benefits provided and the estimated return on investment for sponsors.
- **Personalised pitches and negotiation:** tailor your pitch to each potential sponsor, emphasising the specific benefits and opportunities that align with their objectives. Be prepared for negotiation and be open to customising packages to accommodate their specific needs.
- **Contract and fulfilment:** once a sponsor agrees to a package, draft a contract that outlines the terms, deliverables, and payment details. Upon receiving payment, ensure that you fulfil the promised benefits and closely collaborate with sponsors throughout the event planning and execution process.
- **Post-event evaluation:** after the event, collect feedback from sponsors to evaluate their satisfaction and gather insights for future improvements. Maintain relationships with sponsors for potential future collaborations.
- Collaborate with media outlets, online job portals, or social media platforms for advertising and promotion.

How to ...



Government, Nonprofit or Development Partner Funding

- Research if there are any grants or funding opportunities available from government agencies or nonprofit organisations supporting job placement initiatives.
- Identify other development partners focusing on youth development and employment and partner with them to mobilise resources together both in-kind and cash (co-financing is an element of combined efforts in resource mobilisation).
- Identify synergies among the identified partners e.g. some institutions have venues that can be used for fairs, while other institutions have a pool of experts and labour. Hence, combining these available resources makes up for some important elements of the fair covered without encountering huge costs to outsource them.
- Prepare grant proposals or reach out to relevant organisations explaining the goals and impact of the opportunity fair.
- Follow the guidelines and requirements specified by the funding organisations.



Partnerships and Collaborations

- Collaborate with educational institutions, training centres, or professional organisations.
- Establish partnerships that involve shared resources, joint marketing efforts, or co-hosting the event or in-kind contributions.
- Share costs and benefits to make the event financially viable for all parties involved.

If you consider developing a business case for your fair, consider the following:



Exhibitor Fees

- Charge participating companies or organisations a fee to set up booths or stalls at the opportunity fair.
- Determine the fees based on factors such as booth size, location, and facilities provided.
- Offer additional benefits like promotional opportunities, inclusion in event marketing materials, preferred booth placement, keynote, etc., for higher fees.
- Introduce premium services for participating companies, such as exclusive access to a VIP candidate pool or dedicated networking sessions.
- Charge a fee for these premium services, providing added value and a unique experience.



Registration Fees

- Charge job seekers a nominal registration fee to attend the opportunity fair.
- Consider offering discounted early-bird rates or group discounts to attract a larger audience.
- Provide value-added services like resume reviews, mock interviews, or career counselling sessions as part of the registration fee to enhance the attendee experience.



In-kind Contributions of Partners

- In-kind contributions where goods or services are provided instead of monetary contributions can provide value and support where financial contributions are scarce.
- In-kind contributions can reduce costs and enhance the event experience when properly managed and aligned with the event's needs.
- Careful consideration, clear communication, and effective coordination are essential in leveraging in-kind contributions to their fullest potential and mitigating any potential challenges they may present.

How to ...



What are possible in-kind contributions?

In-kind contributions are a good alternative way to support the fair. Potential partners could or should be selected also based on their capacity to contribute to the fair. The different partners that could contribute with in-kind contribution should be reached out to with a clear presentation of the value proposition of a contribution and participation at the fair.

Possible in-kind-contribution:

- **Venue:** possible partners could be TVET schools, general schools, public spaces/ municipalities.
- **Stands:** private sector partners, carpenters and other representatives could provide stands or parts of stands.
- **Equipment/furniture stands/booth:** schools and/ or private sector partners could borrow tables, chairs, umbrellas, etc..
- **Air-time:** telecommunication partners could sponsor air-time for the participants as a promotion.
- **Food:** restaurants and/ or supermarket could offer food donation or private sector partners could pay for some catering.
- **Marketing material:** marketing and printing companies could offer discount or free marketing material.
- **Run a workshop/training:** if any of the stakeholder could offer human resources/experts that can implement an activity or a training such as CV writing, interview support, etc..
- **Expertise/moderator:** request moderator to offer services as pro-bono, request expertise from NGOs, e.g. to support the design and implementation of the fair, ask students from the school to support with registration (receive certificate).

The added value for partners and stakeholder to offer in-kind-contribution could be:

- Marketing space for their products and services at the fair and on the dissemination material.
- Stand and representation at the fair.
- Visibility and exposer.
- Access to talent pool.

Important aspects to consider when working with in-kind contributions:

Lack of flexibility: in-kind contributions are often specific to the goods or services offered, which may limit the event organiser's flexibility in utilising them. If the contributions do not align with the event's specific needs or requirements, it can be challenging to effectively incorporate them into the event.

Quality and consistency concerns: in-kind contributions may vary in terms of quality, consistency, or relevance to the event. This can lead to discrepancies in the overall event experience or compromise the desired standards. Event organisers may face difficulties in ensuring consistent quality across various contributions.

Coordination and logistics: managing in-kind contributions requires coordination and logistics to ensure they are delivered, set up, and utilised properly. This can add complexity to the event planning process, especially if multiple contributors are involved. Coordinating schedules, logistics, and ensuring proper execution of in-kind contributions can be time-consuming and resource-intensive.

Budgetary challenges: relying heavily on in-kind contributions can complicate budgeting for the event. It may be difficult to accurately assess the value of non-monetary contributions and include them in the overall budget. This can lead to financial uncertainty and hinder effective financial planning and decision-making.

Limited control and ownership: event organisers may have limited control or ownership over in-kind contributions, particularly if they are provided by external parties. This lack of control can make it challenging to align contributions with the event's vision, branding, or specific requirements.

Resource allocation: managing in-kind contributions can divert resources, such as time, personnel, or storage space, to handle the logistics, coordination, and storage of contributed goods or services. This may take away resources that could be better allocated to other critical event components.

Evaluation and accountability: assessing the value and impact of in-kind contributions can be challenging compared to monetary contributions. It may be difficult to measure the exact value, return on investment, or impact of non-monetary contributions, making it harder to evaluate their effectiveness and demonstrate accountability to sponsors or stakeholders.

Recommendations



For the development of a funding strategy there are several recommendations:

- Plan early in the year to ensure early reach-out to potential partners.
- Crowdfund finance from the multi-stakeholder group.
- Create sponsorship packages for the private sector and provide advertisement and visibility options (banners/logos).
- Engage development partners to be co-financers.



Country Examples



Burkina Faso:

How to mobilise external contributions (in-kind and monetary)

There were several contributions made by partners:

In-kind:

- Inter-profession (Agricultural Associations): the provision of a meeting room to prepare the fairs; papers, computers for the elaboration and distribution of mails and invitation letters, telephone calls for the mobilization of participants, internet connection, advocacy for the participation of local authorities which allowed the opening ceremony to be chaired by the Governor of the region and the installation of stands for exhibitors.
- ATVET centres: mobilisation and animation of the stands.
- Youth organisations: welcoming, registering participants and filling in follow-up forms.

Monetary:

- Membership fees from inter-professional organisations, especially APROMAB, and contributions from other partners, which made it possible to pay for food, travel expenses for members living outside the locality, and support for partners from neighbouring countries (Côte d'Ivoire and Mali) and the local press.



Country Examples



Kenya:

How to mobilise sponsorship

An agreement was reached with another development partner, who agreed to cover meals and transport for the participants (financial contribution) in exchange for visibility (logo representation and an exhibition booth). Additionally, a local company was mobilised that sponsored little packed snacks for participants (in-kind contribution). Other project partners agreed to contribute to the agenda by hosting talks (e.g. Q&A Session on Incubation).

Recommendations for what to do differently in the future:

- The sponsors were approached mid-year, which has proven to be too late for a lot of potential sponsors, especially for larger proposed contributions. Their financial planning was already concluded and they could not commit more funds towards the implementation of the event.
- It was discussed individually with potential sponsors to find a fitting solution for them (mostly because of the aforementioned timing in the year). In the future, the sponsorship packages would be developed beforehand that either include monetary values against set benefits or packages of items to cover to make rights and responsibilities more transparent and easier to communicate.



Guiding questions



- Which local businesses or industries that would benefit from participating in the opportunity fair can be involved?
- Which government programmes or grants are available to support job placement initiatives in rural areas?
- Which local educational institutions or training centres can collaborate on funding or providing resources?
- What local organisations or nonprofits are focused on workforce development or job placement?
- Are there potential sponsors or donors who have a connection to the rural community or a specific interest in rural workforce development?
- What can be revenue-generating strategies that involve the local community, such as local vendors or food stalls?
- What are the local media outlets or communication channels that can help you promote the opportunity fair and potentially attract sponsors or funding?



Add your thoughts/answers here

Set the time and location for the rural opportunity fair

4



How to ...

The venue

The location for the implementation of the opportunity fair plays a crucial role in the participation of both beneficiaries and exhibitors. Barriers such as lack of transport, lack of financial resources and access roads are some examples pointed out as the main constraints for participation.

Look for the rural areas where the companies are concentrated, close to a university/close to rural areas. Also, take into account the facilities: sanitation, internet connection (in case of hybrid fair), easy access to food (catering) and other basic services. In fragile contexts, it is important to think of peri-urban areas/places to ensure the security for the participants.

The venue partners with experience in preparing similar events can be an advantage, especially when it is a local partner, as they already have a solid knowledge of the environment and which aspects should be considered when preparing/organising events in the specific region.

They can be a valuable reference in the process of thinking about how to explore and manage spaces and how to address communication material (invitation/ flyers) to different groups of participants.

Provide space at the fair that allows interactive activities

Having a space at the opportunity fair that allows interactive activities in rural areas is very important to engage the participants. Interactive activities, such as skills demonstrations, job simulations, or interactive presentations can provide a more immersive and engaging experience for attendees, helping to make the event more impactful.

The location must guarantee spaces/rooms for demonstration lectures, successful testimonials, B-to-B sessions, and business to opportunity seekers, such as speed dating, a yard with enough area to allow interactive exhibitions of entrepreneur ventures and, etc.

A suggestion of spaces that allow a greater interaction are open spaces such as school and/or university grounds, stadiums, municipal spaces and etc.

Have gender aspects in mind when deciding about the time and location

Women participation in opportunity fairs has been low. Reasons such as overlapping tasks, cultural beliefs and safety are observed as some of the reasons that inhibit women participation.

Therefore, when choosing the location for the event, ensure that it has functional and accessible sanitation that is safe and comfortable for female participants. Considering gender aspects when deciding on the time and location of a opportunity fair in rural areas can help to ensure that the event is impactful and inclusive for all potential attendees and can eventually bring a more diverse and representative workforce.

The rural areas often have limited public transportation, and women are more likely to rely on public transportation than men. Therefore, the location of the opportunity fair should be easily accessible for public transport and ideally within a reasonable distance from residential areas.



The Timing

If the decision has been made to organise a rural opportunity fair, usually one of the first questions arising is: "When should the event take place?".

Two major aspects should influence this decision:

Timing

One of the most important aspects to consider regarding the ideal timing of the rural opportunity fair is the calendar. When hosting an event with a focus on agri-food sector employment it is important to consider the agricultural calendar, as well as the seasons for scheduling the event. During planting and harvesting season several target groups might not be available to participate. This has an especially high impact on the attendance of women. Additionally, the academic calendar influences the availability of graduates/job-seekers. It is not recommended to host the event during exam periods or school holidays. During the latter, students usually return home which makes transport arrangements and therefore attendance more difficult, especially for young women.

Time Management

We recommend to allow sufficient time for the event planning process. What sufficient time is depends on the size of the planned event and the organising structure.

Generally, multi-stakeholder teams require more time for developing a common vision, harmonisation of ideas, raising funds and joint decisions. The earlier in the year the planning process starts, the easier it might be to mobilise external funding since potential donors or sponsors have not yet concluded their financial planning and can easier include such activities in their budgets.

Size of the event

Suggested planning time-frame

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Small-scale (under 200 participants, 10-20 exhibitors) | ••➤ 1-2 months |
| Medium-scale (200-450 participants, 20-50 exhibitors) | •➤ 4 months |
| Large-scale (+450 participants, + 50 exhibitors) | ••➤ 6 months |

Recommendations

It is recommended that the location should be accessible and reachable to the target group. Please also consider the right timing.



Check the Season/Weather

The appointment of the day for the event to be held must comply with some preponderant criteria, among which the season of the year and the weather. Therefore, avoiding scheduling the event for the season of the year when it is rainy season or very hot or cold season, can guarantee the desired participation of the stakeholders, depending on the characteristics of each country. For Mozambique for example, it is recommended to be carried out between mid-August and October (where the temperature is varied, and the season is dry).



Check out other events that can interfere with the impact of the opportunity fair

It is important to conduct assessment/research of other similar events or other considerable activities, which may in some manner impact the attendance of the opportunity fair. Too many events happenings at the same time, in the same region where the opportunity fair is held, can have a negative effect on participation. Please ensure that the job fare is not scheduled for a day when other events can take place in the same region, such as an agricultural fair, party meetings, employer association workshops, etc.



It has to be free access to everyone

Many concepts about opportunity fairs call for paying a fee, both to participate as an exhibitor and jobseekers. Considering the reality of the target group in both directions (MSME's and youth from rural areas), with low financial resources, forcing the payment of a fee can be a factor to limit their participation. Thus, for this reason, it is recommended that access to the event should be free without paying any fee, unless an exhibitor institution expresses interest in contributing financially to its exhibition.

Country Examples

**Mozambique:**

How to find a good timing and location

The location and timing for the implementation of the opportunity fair were carefully chosen. Since this is an opportunity fair catered to rural youth, it was crucial to find a rural area where the different stakeholders intersected for the event to take place (existence of companies, youth groups, schools, etc.). The site was a village located in the middle of a corridor of national development in Mozambique (Corredor da Beira), where there are companies, government institutions, schools and youth groups, among other entities. To provide better access to everyone, a school was identified within the village, not far from the main access roads, with adequate infrastructure to host an event of that nature (rooms, amphitheatre, spacious backyard, basic furniture such as chairs and tables, electricity, water and sanitation, etc.). Looking at the seasons that could compromise the realisation of the event (rainy weather, or very hot and/or cold weather, harvest time, etc.), the time for the event was defined.

In this case, a day in the month of October was chosen, where it was found that there were no weather conditions and no possibility of finding situations that could compromise the participation of those interested. It is important to guarantee a good location and time for holding the opportunity fair by analysing the aspects mentioned above before defining them.



Guiding questions



- What can be a suitable date and location for your opportunity fair?
- Does the date clash with political rallies or other potentially disruptive events?
- Does the event fit into the school calendar and activities?
- Is the date during good weather season?
- Does the date allow for sufficient preparation?
- Does the duration of the fair allow your target group to participate (especially young women)?
- What can be an accessible location?



Add your thoughts/answers here

Develop a communication strategy

5



This chapter describes the process for developing and employing the communications around an opportunity fair.

Mobilising participants, especially young women and to guarantee the participants with the “right” characteristics are participating good and targeted communication strategies from the fair organisers is needed. A communication strategy should be developed according to the objectives of the fair and should take into account the profile of the guests, the exhibitors and the job seekers. Communication channels should be identified and chosen according to the targets to be reached and also the rural environment, such as radio.

To ensure an inclusive approach of the opportunity fair and e.g. ensure a high participation of women, in every step of the communication strategy, specific approaches and actions have to be implemented. The communication strategy should include actions before, during and after the fair. Each stage should take into account the targets and the environment.

Before the fair

The content of the communication should be based on information/awareness raising of stakeholders in order to make them aware of the objectives of the fair and to encourage them to participate or contribute to it. The communication should be also targeted to actors that could potentially prevent the participation, e.g. families and community in the case of young women. Communication tools must be adapted to the profile of the participants – the opportunity seekers and the opportunity givers.

How to ...



The following are the communication channels and their advantages, limitations and reach:

Channel/material	Reach	Advantage	Limitation
Poster/banners	Young opportunity seekers, families, community members, opportunity givers.	• It can easily be shared with a wider audience in a particular area. • Can be cost effective since one banner or poster can be used to reach a wider audience.	• Restricted cycle of people reached. • It requires certain literacy levels to perceive some messages on the banner, poster. • Banners or posters are hardly recycled since they have dates specified on them and you may need new ones each time you have an opportunity fair..
Flyers	Young opportunity seekers, families, community members and opportunity givers.	• Personalised way of inviting participants or stakeholders. • A flyer has potential to carry all relevant information.	• Flyers can be costly since you need to print many of them to in order to reach to a wider audience. • Requires a lot of time and energy to distribute flyers to individuals. • They have dates specified and cannot be re-used.
Radio/spots	Young opportunity seekers, families, community members and opportunity givers.	• Radio offers a level of selectivity through geographic inclusion by countless stations and different programme designs. • Cost benefits are huge with radio as a publicising medium because it can reach out to more people at once. • It reaches out to those that do not have access to digital platforms. • Among every one of the media, likely radio is the most adaptable as it has a short shutting period. • Delivers messages timely to the right audience.	• Local and national stations. • Some rural areas have no frequency reach. • It requires some level of repetition to reach out targeted individuals since people are not always listening to the radio.
TV/ads	Young opportunity seekers, families, community members and opportunity givers.	• It provides the actual pictures of the setup of the fair. • The use of info-graphics makes it more appealing to young people.	• Limited reach since not all people in rural areas can afford to own a TV set in their home. • Its costly to buy airtime on TV.
Website	Young opportunity seekers.	• It is cheap to run a website once it is developed. • Provides easy access to opportunities and information.	• It needs a competent manger to run effectively. • It is limited to people with access to digital platforms, hence not suitable for rural target groups. • It is expensive since it requires the use of the internet. • Websites have low reach and usability.
Social media	Young opportunity seekers, families, community members and opportunity givers with access to digital platforms.	• Easy reach to the youth since a majority of young people use social media. • Can reach a wider audience within a very short period of time. • Cost effective, cheap social media bundles allows it for young people to afford access.	• Scammers can use the information in a wrong way. • Limited to people with access to the internet. • Use of social media can lead to cyber attacks.

How to ...



Steps to take before the fair

1. Preparation and dissemination of the communication materials

- Logo, poster, flyer, website to identified and select participants.
- Broadcasting of the audio-visual campaign on local and national stations.
- Dissemination of information on social networks and partner websites.
- Displaying banners in places frequented by young people (schools, universities, social centres, youth organisations' headquarters, etc.).

2. Designation of a focal point for the necessary and useful information for the participants

- Provision of a telephone line, an email, contact person.
- Telephone or e-mail follow-up with exhibitors, partners and potential sponsors.

3. Preparation of a press kit and send the press release and the press kit to the media**How to mobilise and prepare exhibitors for the**

event

1. Where to find the employers/how to reach out to them?

- Chambers of commerce.
- Private Sector Alliances
- CBOs (community based organisations).

2. What information do they need to know?

- Objective of the event/value proposition.
- If possible: number and profile of the jobseekers.
- What kind of opportunities should I offer?
- Programme.
- Conditions for participation (what to bring, size of the booth, security, when to set-up, facilitation, facilities).

3. Preparation of invitation letters and terms of reference to partners and sending invitation letters to partners

- Follow up with each opportunity giver on their availability and needs.
- Set-up a briefing session for the exhibitors/opportunity givers.

Other promotional activities

- Participation in meetings of the different youth and women's organisations in order to discuss on the objectives of the fair.
- Organising courtesy visits to technical partners and administrative and customary authorities to obtain their agreement and support for the organisation of the fair.
- Organise meetings with exhibitors on the layout and decoration of stands.

How to ...

**During the fair**

The communication strategy adopted on the day of the fair must be effective, simple and dynamic. This will allow participants to take advantage of their time and, above all, to get done the most of the activities planned.

General arrangements to be made:

- Have a stand/location for the communication service to respond to participants' requests.
- Welcome, guide and accompany participants, exhibitors and visitors.
- Distribute the welcome kit containing the programme, the opportunity fair site' map, the badge and the satisfaction questionnaire of the fair.
- Drawing up the attendance lists and collecting the opinions and needs of young people (opinions on the organisation, needs in terms of internships, training, employment and others).
- Ensure the smooth running of the logistics (electricity, microphones, projectors, sound system, B2B room).
- Coordinate with the local authorities' protocol for the participants' arrangements, precedence and speeches.
- Ensure the work and presence of support services (health, security, etc.).

Facilitation of workshops and conferences

- Coordinate the different interventions planned;
- Facilitate the discussion session.
- Collect data and testimonies from participants.
- Organising discussions between partners (B2B).

The press

- Provide space for media coverage of the fair.
- Make contact with the various reporters of the fair.
- Specify the objectives of the fair and the rules for taking pictures.
- Ensure the dissemination of images and videos of the fair on social networks and partner sites.
- Coordinate the contents diffusion on the media broadcasts.

Exhibitors

- Ensure the effective set-up of exhibitors.
- Organise the visit of the stands for the officials.
- Organise the visit of the stands for young job seekers.
- Orient and accompany the visitors.

After the fair

The post-fair communication strategy aims to collect the participants' opinions on the progress of the fair for a good future organisation and to have their support and participation in future editions. Indeed, it is a question of taking stock of the fair and enhancing its results.

The actions will be based on:

- Organising an evaluation meeting of the fair with the stakeholders.
- Drawing up an evaluation report summarising the results, the difficulties encountered and the impact of the fair.
- Send a letter of thanks to exhibitors, partners and sponsors.
- Disseminate the evaluation report to exhibitors, partners, sponsors, the media and the general public.
- Send a follow-up e-mail or letter to visitors.
- Carry out a communication campaign on the successes and testimonies of the fair.
- Analyse the satisfaction questionnaire and data collected.
- To facilitate the implementation of the commitments made by the companies.

Recommendations

The communication strategy should be developed according to the objectives of the fair and should take into account the profile of the participants.

- Develop (a short) multi-channel communication strategy (addressing organising partners, exhibitors and jobseekers).
- Include clear timelines and responsibilities, and channels (what to communicate to whom and when).
- Start the communication process early.
- Do not forget about visibility and branding of the event itself.
- Plan coherent communication, e.g. by preparing building blocks and concept briefs, organise information sessions/briefings with your stakeholders/press conference.
- Plan specifically how to reach out to women.
- Consider different channels for different target groups:
 - Advertisement: Radio spot, TV Spots/Interviews, newspaper ads or articles social media, billboards, flyers and posters, WhatsApp groups.
 - Emails and calls.
 - Face-to-face presentations/briefings.

Ensuring the focus on women

- Reaching out to local communities/women groups/women organisations.
- Offering info sessions for parents/guardians.
- Use role models in communication materials (print, radio spots, women talking to women/families).
- Highlight available services during the event (child-care, transport, safe spaces, etc.).
- Find an appropriate time slot for the event (e.g. after harvesting).
- Using radio instead of digital media.

Country Examples

**Burkina Faso:**

How to mobilise by social media and radio

The youth and women's mobilisation strategy was mainly based on the contribution of youth and women's organisations. They used their social networks (WhatsApp and Facebook groups) to reach out to potential participants. Flyers and banners were also produced to announce the event. The fair was advertised on the local radio station. During the fair, the print paper and national television also covered the event.

**Mozambique:**

How to create a communication plan with the stakeholders

The main objective of the communication plan was to attract as many people as possible to participate in the event. The most important thing was to attract young people, mainly women, whose main motivation was the search for job opportunities. However, it was important to have visitors whose main motivation was the search for goods and services, as well as to provide a good environment for some exhibitors to prospect business. Looking at the rural context, the place indicated for the event, it was defined as functional strategies that would ensure good dissemination and coverage of the target audience, the use

of radio spots through two community radios whose radius signal diffusion allowed to cover the local and neighbourhood community stakeholders. Advertising spots were aired whenever radio stations advertised, during their normal programmes. The spot was broadcast in two languages, namely the official language (Portuguese) and the local language (Cisena). It was aired until the day of the event. The spots contained a female voice (to attract women's attention), were short, and contained all elements indicative of the event (purpose, location, duration, access, etc.).

**Malawi:**

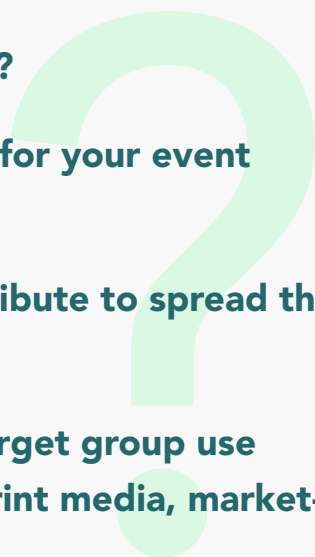
How to work with a media organisation as implementing partner

Timveni Child and Youth Media Organisation one of the implementing partners which is also a media organisation hosted a talk show with mHub elaborating more about the fair (opportunities available, venue and the soft skills that they will be exposed to throughout the fair. Additionally, a radio advert was designed and was shared during prime time. I.e. close to programmes that the youth like most.



Guiding questions



- 
- What do you want to communicate?
 - Which can be an appropriate name for your event (reflecting best your objectives)?
 - How can each of the partners contribute to spread the word?
 - Which media channels does your target group use (radio, social media, banners, TV, print media, marketing flyers, etc.)?
 - What kind of communication materials do you need to prepare (concept brief, press release, opportunity fair handout package, registration forms, feedback forms, invitation letters, advertisements, name tags, programme, event layout, etc.)?
 - How can you make sure your communication materials reach especially young women in rural areas?



Add your thoughts/answers here

Include and engage the opportunity seekers

6



How to ...

This section discusses how to include and mobilise opportunity seekers for the opportunity fairs.

Mobilising and preparing opportunity seekers for the event: Organise working sessions with young opportunity seekers on the writing and presentation of CVs and business projects.

Where to find the job-seekers/ how to reach out to them?

- Through TVET centres.
- Youth Organisations.
- Open invitations.
- Employment centres.

What information do they need to know?

- Date, time, and location.
- What kind of opportunities will be there offered by whom? (Interest and right skills).
- What to bring, how to prepare (attire, CV etc).

Preparation Option 1

Do not do specific preparation before, but offer trainings during the event.

Preparation Option 2

Have a specific day for opportunity seeker preparation before the main event and train them on how to handle themselves in a professional environment, CV development, job interviews.

Preparation Option 3

Offer prior online/hybrids sessions on the topics above.

Recommendations

The successful engagement of opportunity seekers is multi-faceted

Depending on the objectives and the opportunity givers identifying and inviting the “right” participants is key. Participants should be available (link to timing) and at a stage in their professional life where they are actively looking for opportunities (link to participants). It does not help to achieve the objectives of the event if the participants are not yet ready, or trained/interested in different opportunities than the ones offered.

Planning for attendance can be tricky depending on the type of invitations chosen. [Open-invitation](#) to participants can result in planning insecurity for sessions and the whole event, but would also be the least restrictive way for promoting the event. However, open invitations also pose the challenge that the organisers will not know the profile of the opportunity seekers attending, making it more difficult to design a meaningful event for both opportunity seekers and givers.

If the attendance becomes too high, crowd control of larger groups can become challenging. This requires closed access points to check attendance on the grounds. Offering parallel and repeating sessions could be a way of still accommodating high numbers of participants, as well as stretching the event over two days to allow for a focus on jobs-seeker preparation on day one and the actual event activities on day two. Another solution could be offering a hybrid-event that allows for on-site participation for a selected audience (fitting the profile), allowing for interaction during the event and an online part, that streams activities on stage or in workshop halls to a

larger audience that cannot be physically present. This solution on the other hand is very costly, involves a lot of organisation, technical support and stable internet connection. A live stream in itself is also not interactive, if you want to shape it in an interactive manner separate moderation for chats is necessary.

Neither open nor closed invitations by default enable equitable access for women to participate. Even though we tried to design an inclusive and gender sensitive communication and outreach strategy, the result was not as expected. We believe that missing activities such as reaching out to the communities and families, to ensure that they understand the importance of young women to participate in the opportunity fair hindered many women to be able to join.

Gender Inclusiveness

The active involvement of young women as opportunity seekers and participants during your rural opportunity fair will not happen automatically. Due to gender norms and societal structures, young women are disadvantaged in several aspects: caregivers, guardians or partners might restrict their attendance, especially if it involves long travel or overnight stays. Long travel, or travel during darkness puts them at risk of harassment. Care-duties of young mothers might prohibit them from attending because they have no one to look after their children. We recommend to execute gender-sensitive event planning. This includes first and foremost deliberate outreach to communities, caregivers, guardians and male reference persons sensitising them about the character and nature of the event, as well as of the

benefits for women participating. It further entails selecting locations close to the target groups that do not require overnight stays or long travel. Provision of child-care and safe spaces during the event. Start and end times that allow for travel during the light hours of the day. However, it also influences the exhibitor selection. Exhibitors should offer opportunities that are suitable for uptake by young women.



Malawi

Women participation was over 50% due to the fact that the implementation partner mHub has a strong gender lens and is led by a woman who functions as a role model.

Mozambique

Outreach to women was problematic, female attendance was too low.

If the participant structure is clear, it is important to tailor the content of the event and the activities to the need of the participants visiting your rural opportunity fair. In line with the overall objectives, the event should be attractive and empowering to the opportunity seekers and allow for successful matching between opportunity seekers and employers with open opportunities.

Country Examples

**Kenya:**

How to enhance the inclusivity of the event

Kenya took several measures to enhance the inclusivity of the event

- **Livestreaming of the event:** all agenda items happening on the main stage and in both side halls were livestreamed online. We facilitated around 300 people to gather at 6 different livestreaming sites in order to allow more people to benefit from the content of the fair (discussions, trainings), closer to their home locations.

An online component would also allow for a broader outreach of the opportunity fair to online participants who cannot attend in person for various reasons, as online participants could also attend from their Institutions' IT centres, through broadcast live streams or through their personal laptops and phones.

- **Child-care:** we offered child-care and a breast-feeding corner on the event ground to create an inclusive place for young and nursing mothers, so that they could freely participate in the event.
- **Sign-language interpretation:** all agenda items on stage or in the side halls were simultaneously interpreted by sign language interpreters. They were also visible in all online livestreams. This was done to include people living with disabilities in the event.



Guiding questions



- What is the type of youth you are looking for to participate in the fair (finalists, job-seekers, students, young entrepreneurs, etc.)?
- How can you reach the group of participants you would like to have at the fair? What kind of networks, media channels does the group use? Do women of this group use a different kind of network or media channel?
- What would be of interest for your group of participants? CV writing? Preparation for interviews? Discussion rounds?
- How could you prepare the youth better to be able to get the most of the event?
- How can you create a sustainable network for the participants for keeping in contact after the event?
- How can you ensure to track change and success with the group?



Add your thoughts/answers here

Mobilise the opportunity givers (exhibitors)

7



This section provides an overview of the inclusion and mobilisation of opportunity givers or exhibitors.

Preparing the employers/exhibitors

- Collect data of the employers during pre-registration to facilitate communication.
- Offer Information session for exhibitors (virtual).
- Support them in developing their opportunities (job descriptions).
- Inform about the matching mechanism during the event (speed dating, etc).
- Follow up with them on the phone to confirm participation.
- Create incentives for the exhibitors to participate: certification certificate.



[Full link to M&E Guide](#)

Recommendations

The employer landscape of the agri-food sector mainly consists of micro, small and medium enterprises.

Most of them do not have their own human resource department or responsible person, and seldomly access to a larger pool of qualified talent. A lot of them have also never presented their business in an event like that. Therefore, expectations towards their presentation at the event, as well as regarding the opportunities that they can and should offer to opportunity seekers have to be explained thoroughly. It is recommended to offer preparation sessions for the private sector and to provide dedicated handholding support as well as continuous follow-ups during the process. This should include stand/booth preparation, recommendations what they should bring and showcase (banners, flyers, products, demos), as well as support in identification of their hiring needs (what kind of profile are they looking for) and formulation basic job descriptions. The job matching process during the event should be kept simple and there should be a responsible person supporting both opportunity seekers and employers during the process in case they have questions.

Hosting value-chain specific events has the advantage that the invitation of potential employers and exhibitors is rather straightforward. Apart from matching them to opportunity seekers there is also an added opportunity to match them amongst each other to suppliers, off-takers, marketers, etc. Depending on the organisation structure and objectives of the event, it is recommended to select exhibitors that fit into the larger rationale of the consortium/lead organiser for future engagement after the event.

Country Examples

**Burkina Faso:**

How to develop a fair with a specific value chain focus



In Burkina Faso, there are several trade, craft and agricultural fairs that cover all value chains in general. Specific value chain fairs are not frequent and have been a good information opportunity for youth and women to establish employment and business partnerships. Thus, the value chains chosen were those in which the project and its main partners intervene in terms of training or activities in favour of youth and women. The opportunity fairs have been an opportunity to link youth which have been trained with the project fund and the SMEs and professionals (ProEmploi partners) along the value chains.

Thus, the value chains chosen are those in which the project and its main partners are involved in terms of training or activities which are young people and women friendly. The professionals made presentations on the different trades and job opportunities available in these two sectors. They also held exhibitions of the products and by-products of these sectors. The youth and women's organisations actively participated in the mobilisation of their members. The ATVET Centres mobilised young job seekers in these two value chains.

Also, for the issue of sustainability, any agricultural organisation could organise this type of opportunity fair for youth and women interested in their value chain.



Guiding questions



- What is your value proposition for exhibitors?
- Do you have an existing list of exhibitors who could exhibit at the event?
- How do you reach out to them to ensure participation (through which channels/which language/which message)?
- Which of your stakeholders can help to identify and/or attract exhibitors?
- Who from the organisational committee can provide assistance to prepare exhibitors?



Add your thoughts/answers here

8

Define programme and methodology



How to ...

This chapter describes how to set up an interactive programme for an opportunity fair and the possible methodologies.

In the following interactive overview, you can find possible activities and methods addressing especially opportunity seekers, opportunity givers and the opportunity matching, as well as general event activities.

The programme of the rural opportunity fair should well reflect the primary objectives mentioned in the first chapter: networking and exchange, showcasing a vibrant and attractive sector with various opportunities to get engaged, matching interested talent to employers.

The guiding question should be how we can create a memorable and successful event for both the opportunity seeker and employers/opportunity givers.

General event activities

- Opening ceremony
- Keynote speech
- Panel discussion (e.g. awareness raising discussions on opportunities for rural youth, social norms)
- Music and entertainment programme

Activities for opportunity seeker preparation

Q&A and Ask-me-anything sessions

Photobooth

Treasure hunt

Practical trainings

Drama competition

Activities for opportunity givers

HR Training for MSMEs

B2B events

Public-private dialogue

Activities for opportunity matching

Opportunity giver presentations (e.g. simple booths)

Job-Matching corner for interviews (Interview speed-dating)

Opportunity board

Onboarding to digital matching platforms

How to ...

Ask-me-anything session (AMA)/Q&A sessions

Why?

Q&A sessions during a rural opportunity fair serve several purposes:

Information Sharing: Q&A sessions provide an opportunity to address common questions and concerns of opportunity seekers in a rural setting. They help provide clarity about job opportunities, requirements, application processes, and career pathways.

Engagement and Participation: Q&A sessions encourage active engagement from opportunity seekers by allowing them to ask questions directly to employers, industry experts, or panellists. It creates a dialogue and a sense of involvement.

Education and Skill Development: Q&A sessions can be used to educate opportunity seekers about specific industries, job roles, or skill requirements. They offer insights into career development, training opportunities, and tips for success in the job market.

Inspiration and Awareness Raising: Ask-me-anything sessions with role models can help opportunity seekers to get inspired by peers who have already achieved something they want to achieve. This can be especially powerful for young women in rural areas.

Networking and Relationship Building: Q&A sessions enable opportunity seekers to interact with potential employers, industry representatives, and professionals. It allows them to build relationships and expand their professional network.

Preparation

Define Objectives: Clarify the objectives of the Q&A sessions. Determine what information you want to convey, the topics to cover, and the key messages you want to communicate to opportunity seekers.

Identify Panellists: Select experienced panellists who can effectively address the questions and concerns of opportunity seekers. Consider inviting employers, HR professionals, industry experts, and local leaders relevant to the opportunity fair's focus. Please ensure equal participation of women and men as panellists.

Develop Topics and Questions: Identify key topics and questions that are relevant to the opportunity fair and its target audience. Consider common queries, challenges, and areas of interest for opportunity seekers in a rural setting. Prepare a list of questions to guide the discussion.

Structure the Session: Determine the format and structure of the Q&A sessions. It can be a moderated panel discussion, individual presentations followed by Q&A, or an open forum where opportunity seekers can ask questions directly. Allocate appropriate time for each panellist and ensure a balanced representation.

Promote and Communicate: Promote the Q&A sessions in advance to attract job seekers' attention and encourage participation. Include session details, topics, and panellist information in your opportunity fair marketing materials and communications.

Implementation during the fair

Facilitation and Moderation: Assign a skilled facilitator or moderator to manage the Q&A sessions. Their role is to ensure a smooth flow of questions and answers, keep the discussion on track, and manage time effectively.

Encourage Active Participation: Encourage opportunity seekers to actively participate by asking questions. Create a welcoming and inclusive environment where individuals feel comfortable sharing their queries and concerns. Provide microphones for opportunity seekers to ask questions clearly.

Respectful and Inclusive Environment: Maintain a respectful and inclusive atmosphere during the Q&A sessions. Encourage panellists to provide thoughtful and informative responses, and ensure that all questions are addressed respectfully.

Document and Share Information: Capture important points, key takeaways, and valuable information shared during the Q&A sessions. Share this information with opportunity seekers through follow-up communications, post-event resources, or online platforms.

Photobooth

Why?

Organising a photobooth for a rural opportunity fair can offer several benefits:

Taking of professional photos can support opportunity seekers to set up professional appearance through quality photography. The photographer should offer photos for WhatsApp Business Accounts, LinkedIn profiles, or for digital matching platforms.

Engagement and Fun: A photobooth adds an element of excitement and fun to the fair, making it more enjoyable for attendees. It provides an interactive activity that can help create a positive and memorable experience for opportunity seekers in a rural setting.

Branding and Promotion: The photobooth can be customised with branding elements such as logos, banners, or props related to the opportunity fair or participating companies. It helps promote the event, create brand awareness, and reinforce the overall theme or message of the opportunity fair.

Social Media Exposure: Photos taken at the photobooth can be shared on social media platforms with relevant hashtags and event tags. This can generate online buzz, increase visibility for the opportunity fair, and attract more attendees and potential opportunity seekers. Please be particularly careful here to respect the existing data protection rules.

Preparation

Determine the Budget and Resources: Define the budget allocated for the photobooth, considering factors such as equipment rental, props, backdrops, printing, and staffing requirements. Identify the necessary resources and vendors to procure or provide the items needed for the photobooth setup.

Choose a Theme or Concept: Select a theme or concept that aligns with the opportunity fair's overall theme or message. Consider incorporating elements that represent the local community, industry, or the companies participating in the opportunity fair.

Select the Equipment and Props: Decide on the type of equipment needed for the photobooth, such as a camera, backdrop, lighting, and printer (if instant prints are desired). Choose props and accessories that are relevant and fun, such as hats, signs, or thematic items related to jobs or industries.

Customise Branding Elements: Incorporate branding elements into the photobooth setup. Design custom banners, signage, or backdrops that feature the opportunity fair logo, event details, and participating company logos.

Plan the Layout and Setup: Determine the location and layout of the photobooth within the opportunity fair venue. Ensure it is easily accessible and visible to attendees. Arrange for any necessary tables, chairs, or display stands to create an inviting and organised setup.

Implementation during the fair

Staffing: Assign staff or volunteers to manage the photobooth during the opportunity fair. They can assist attendees, explain the process, handle props, and ensure the smooth operation of the photobooth.

Instructions and Guidance: Display clear instructions and guidelines for using the photobooth. Provide prompts or suggestions for poses or expressions to make it easier for opportunity fair attendees to participate.

Photography and Printing: Capture high-quality photos using the photobooth equipment. If instant prints are desired, set up a printer to provide attendees with physical copies of their photos. Alternatively, offer digital copies that can be shared via email.

Social Media Integration: Create a social media presence for the photobooth and encourage attendees to share their photos on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook. Use event-specific hashtags to gather user-generated content and increase online visibility for the opportunity fair.

Follow-up and Engagement: After the opportunity fair, compile and share the photos taken at the photobooth. Consider creating a dedicated album on social media. Engage with attendees by encouraging them to tag themselves and share their experiences.

Treasure Hunt

Why?

Organising a treasure hunt for a rural opportunity fair can offer several benefits:

Engagement and Excitement: A treasure hunt adds an element of adventure and excitement to the opportunity fair, making it more engaging for attendees. It creates a sense of anticipation and fun as participants search for clues and solve puzzles.

Exploration and Familiarisation: The treasure hunt can be designed to encourage participants to explore different areas of the opportunity fair venue. This helps attendees become familiar with the layout, exhibitors, and opportunities available, enhancing their overall experience.

Learning and Discovery: The treasure hunt can include educational elements related to opportunities, industries, or skills. By incorporating relevant information into the clues or tasks, participants can learn and discover new things about potential careers and the local job market.

Networking and Collaboration: A treasure hunt can be structured to encourage collaboration and teamwork among participants. This fosters networking opportunities as participants work together to solve challenges and find the treasure.

Preparation

Define Objectives and Theme: Clarify the objectives of the treasure hunt. Determine what information or skills you want participants to acquire through the activity. Select a theme or storyline that aligns with the opportunity fair's focus and creates a cohesive experience.

Design Clues and Challenges: Create a series of clues or challenges that participants must solve to progress in the treasure hunt. Ensure that the clues are challenging yet achievable, and provide hints or assistance if necessary. Incorporate job-related information or industry-specific tasks to add relevance.

Select Locations and Hidden Items: Identify key locations within the opportunity fair venue where participants will search for clues or hidden items. Consider exhibitor booths, specific areas, or landmarks that are relevant to the treasure hunt theme. Ensure that the chosen locations are accessible and safe for participants (especially for women).

Prepare Materials and Props: Gather the necessary materials and props for the treasure hunt. This may include printed clues, maps, puzzles, or physical objects that participants need to find. Organise these materials in a logical sequence to guide participants through the treasure hunt.

Implementation during the fair

Introduction and Instructions: Start the treasure hunt with an introduction and briefing session. Explain the rules, objectives, and any special instructions. Provide each participant or team with a treasure hunt kit containing necessary materials.

Start Point and Checkpoints: Designate a start point where participants receive their first clue. Establish checkpoints throughout the treasure hunt where participants must visit to collect subsequent clues or complete challenges. Clearly mark these checkpoints.

Monitoring and Assistance: Have staff or volunteers positioned at various checkpoints to monitor participants' progress, provide guidance, and assist if needed. They can also ensure fair play and answer any questions.

Collaboration and Networking: Encourage participants to collaborate and interact with each other during the treasure hunt. Design challenges or tasks that require teamwork. This can foster networking opportunities and create a sense of camaraderie among participants.

Awarding: Determine the final treasure or endpoint. It could be a physical object, a prize, or access to exclusive opportunities at the opportunity fair. Celebrate the completion of the treasure hunt by acknowledging participants' efforts and providing a sense of accomplishment. This could be done as an awarding ceremony.

How to ...

Practical Trainings

Why?

Organising practical trainings during a rural opportunity fair can offer several benefits:

Skill Development: Practical trainings provide opportunity seekers with valuable skills necessary for their career development. By offering trainings on CV writing, interview preparation, and soft/life skills, participants can enhance their employability and increase their chances of securing employment.

Empowerment and Confidence Building: Practical trainings empower opportunity seekers by equipping them with the knowledge and tools to effectively navigate the job search process. Participants gain confidence in their abilities, improve their self-presentation skills, and develop a better understanding of what employers are looking for.

Tailored to Rural Context: Rural opportunity seekers may face unique challenges in the job market. Practical trainings specifically designed for a rural audience can address these challenges and provide insights into rural-specific job opportunities, networking strategies, and career pathways.

Networking and Peer Learning: Practical trainings offer an opportunity for opportunity seekers to connect with others who are in a similar position. Participants can share experiences, exchange ideas, and learn from each other, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment.

Preparation

Identify Training Topics: Determine the specific topics for the practical trainings based on the needs and interests of the rural opportunity seekers. Common topics could include CV writing, interview techniques, communication skills, time management, problem-solving, and teamwork. Consider topics that could be particularly relevant for rural women in order to strengthen them in a targeted way.

Define Learning Objectives: Clearly define the learning objectives for each training topic. Identify the specific skills, knowledge, or behaviours that participants should be able to demonstrate by the end of the training session.

Design Training Materials: Develop training materials that align with the chosen topics and learning objectives. This may include presentation slides, handouts, sample CVs, interview scenarios, role-playing exercises, and interactive activities. Ensure that the materials are easy to understand and relevant to the rural job market.

Engage Expert Trainers: Identify experienced trainers or subject matter experts who can effectively deliver the practical trainings. Look for individuals with expertise in CV writing, interviewing techniques, or soft/life skills. They should have the ability to engage participants, facilitate discussions, and provide practical insights.

Implementation during the fair

 **Schedule Training Sessions:** Determine the schedule and duration of each training session. Consider the availability of participants and ensure that the sessions are spread out throughout the duration of the opportunity fair. Allocate sufficient time for interactive activities and discussions.

Promote and Register Participants: Advertise the practical trainings through various channels, including local media and schools. Provide registration instructions and encourage interested individuals to sign up in advance.

Arrange Training Spaces: Allocate suitable spaces within the opportunity fair venue for the training sessions. Ensure that the spaces can accommodate the expected number of participants and have the necessary equipment.

Facilitate Interactive Learning: Structure the training sessions to be interactive and participatory. Use real-life examples and case studies to make the trainings relatable and practical.

Provide Training Resources: Distribute training materials and resources to participants. These resources will serve as references for participants to apply what they have learned during the training sessions.

Evaluate and Gather Feedback: At the end of each training session, collect feedback from participants to assess the effectiveness of the training and identify areas for improvement.

How to ...

Drama Competition

Why?

Creativity and Talent Showcase: Organising drama competitions during a rural opportunity fair can offer several benefits: A drama competition provides a platform for participants to showcase their creativity, acting skills, and talent. It allows individuals to express themselves through theatrical performances and engage the audience in a unique way.

Community Involvement: In a rural setting, a drama competition can bring the community together. It provides an opportunity for local talent to shine and fosters a sense of pride and support among residents. It encourages community members to attend the opportunity fair and participate as performers or audience members.

Entertainment and Engagement: Drama performances can entertain and engage opportunity fair attendees, creating a lively and enjoyable atmosphere. It adds variety to the event, complementing other activities and providing a break from traditional presentations and exhibitions.

Skill Development: Participating in a drama competition can help individuals develop various skills, such as public speaking, teamwork, improvisation, and stage presence. It offers a platform for personal growth and self-expression.

Preparation

Define Objectives and Categories: Clarify the objectives of the drama competition. Determine what you want to achieve, whether it's showcasing local talent, promoting creativity, or entertaining the audience. Create categories based on age groups, gender aspects, themes, or genres to ensure fair participation.

Establish Rules and Guidelines: Develop clear rules and guidelines for the drama competition. Define criteria for judging, time limits, performance formats, and any specific requirements (e.g. participation of women). Communicate these guidelines to participants and ensure they understand the expectations.

Promote and Invite Participants: Advertise the drama competition through various channels, including local media and schools. Extend invitations to individuals and groups who may be interested in participating. Provide them with registration details and deadlines.

Arrange Judges and Evaluators: Identify qualified judges or evaluators who have expertise in theatre. Ensure they have a fair and impartial approach to assess the performances. Provide them with the judging criteria and any specific instructions.

Plan Rehearsal and Performance Spaces: Arrange suitable rehearsal spaces for participants to practice their performances. Secure a performance space within the opportunity fair venue, ensuring it is equipped properly.

Implementation during the fair

Participant Briefing: Conduct a briefing session for participants to explain the competition format, rules, and expectations. Provide them with a schedule and rehearsal slots.

Rehearsals and Support: Allow participants sufficient time for rehearsals and provide any necessary support. Schedule rehearsals in advance to avoid conflicts.

Performance Day Arrangements: Create a detailed schedule for the performance day, including performance order, time slots, and any breaks. Coordinate with technical staff for sound, lighting, and stage management. Ensure smooth transitions between performances.

Audience Engagement: Promote the drama competition to the opportunity fair attendees and encourage their participation as audience members. Provide information about the performances.

Judging and Awards: Facilitate the judging process according to the established criteria. Announce the winners at the end of the competition and present awards. Offer constructive feedback to participants to encourage their growth and improvement.

Post-Competition Celebration: Celebrate the participants' efforts and the success of the drama competition. Consider organising a post-competition event or reception to acknowledge their performances and provide networking opportunities.

How to ...



HR Training for MSMEs

Why?

Organising MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) training on Human Resources (HR) practices during a rural opportunity fair can offer several benefits:

Skill Enhancement: MSME training provides an opportunity for rural job seekers to enhance their skills and knowledge in HR practices. It equips them with valuable insights into essential HR functions. This enhanced skill set increases their employability and potential for career growth.

Support for MSMEs: By offering HR training during a rural opportunity fair, MSMEs can receive support and guidance in effectively managing their human resources. This training empowers them to adopt best practices, improve employee engagement, and create a positive work environment.

Talent Acquisition and Retention: HR training for MSMEs can help them attract and retain talented employees. This, in turn, contributes to the growth and sustainability of their businesses.

Economic Development: Strengthening HR practices within MSMEs contributes to overall economic development in rural areas. By providing MSME training, rural opportunity fairs support the growth and success of these enterprises, leading to improved livelihoods and community development.

Preparation

Identify Training Needs: Conduct a needs assessment to identify the specific HR training needs of MSMEs in the rural area. This assessment can involve surveys, interviews, or consultations with MSME owners or managers. Determine the areas where HR training would have the most significant impact, such as recruitment, performance management, employee engagement, or compliance with labor laws.

Develop Training Content: Based on the identified needs, develop comprehensive training content that addresses the specific HR practices relevant to MSMEs in rural areas. Include topics such as effective recruitment techniques, creating an inclusive work culture, performance evaluation methods, legal compliance, and employee motivation strategies. Ensure that the content is practical, actionable, and tailored to the unique challenges faced by MSMEs in the rural context.

Engage Expert Trainers: Identify experienced HR professionals or trainers who specialise in MSMEs and rural contexts. They should have a deep understanding of HR practices and the ability to effectively communicate and engage with the participants. Collaborate with these trainers to design the training sessions, develop materials, and ensure alignment with the training objectives.

Implementation during the fair

Determine Training Format: Choose a format that suits the training needs and resources available. Options include workshops, seminars, interactive sessions, or a combination of formats. Consider the number of participants, time constraints, and available training facilities. Interactive and practical training methods, such as case studies and group activities, tend to be effective in engaging participants.

Schedule Training Sessions: Allocate specific time slots within the rural opportunity fair schedule for MSME training sessions. Communicate the schedule and session details to the participating MSMEs in advance. Encourage them to prioritise attendance and designate representatives who will benefit most from the training.

Provide Training Materials: Prepare training materials, including handouts, presentations, and practical exercises, to support the learning process. Distribute these materials to participants before or during the training sessions. These resources will serve as references for MSMEs to implement the learned HR practices in their businesses.

Facilitate Interactive Sessions: Ensure that the training sessions are interactive, allowing for active participation and engagement from the participants. Encourage questions, discussions, and sharing of experiences.

How to ...



Public-private dialogue

Why?

Organising a public-private dialogue during a rural opportunity fair offers several benefits:

Collaboration and Partnership: Public-private dialogues bring together representatives from both the public and private sectors to collaborate on addressing shared challenges and fostering partnerships. By organising such dialogues, rural opportunity fairs can facilitate meaningful discussions and build relationships between key stakeholders.

Policy Development and Implementation: Public-private dialogues provide a platform for discussing policy issues and identifying solutions. By engaging relevant government officials, industry leaders, and other stakeholders, rural opportunity fairs can contribute to the development and implementation of policies that promote rural job creation.

Resource Mobilisation: Dialogues between the public and private sectors can help mobilise resources to support rural job initiatives. Through discussions on funding opportunities, public-private partnerships, and investment prospects, rural opportunity fairs can facilitate the allocation of resources and attract private sector involvement in rural development projects.

Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building: Public-private dialogues create opportunities for knowledge sharing and capacity building. Rural opportunity fair participants can learn from the experiences and expertise of public sector representatives and vice versa.

Preparation

Define the Purpose and Objectives: Clarify the purpose and objectives of the public-private dialogue. Determine the specific topics or issues to be addressed, such as rural job creation strategies, workforce development initiatives, policy reforms, or infrastructure needs. Ensure that the dialogue aligns with the overall goals of the rural opportunity fair.

Identify Stakeholders: Identify key stakeholders from both the public and private sectors who should be invited to participate in the dialogue. This may include government officials, industry representatives, community leaders, non-profit organisations, representatives of rural youth/women organisations, and other relevant actors. Consider diversity in terms of sectors, expertise, and perspectives to foster inclusive discussions.

 **Engage Stakeholders in Planning:** Involve the identified stakeholders in the planning process. Seek their input on the dialogue agenda, format, and desired outcomes. Collaborate with them to ensure that the dialogue addresses their concerns and priorities.

Prepare Discussion Materials: Develop discussion materials, such as background documents, research findings, case studies, and policy briefs, to provide participants with relevant information on the topics to be discussed. Distribute these materials to stakeholders in advance, allowing them time to review and come prepared for the dialogue.

Implementation during the fair

Design the Dialogue Format: Choose a format that encourages open and constructive discussions. Consider time constraints, the number of participants, and the desired level of engagement.

Facilitate Dialogue Sessions: Appoint skilled facilitators who can guide the dialogue sessions effectively. Facilitators should encourage active participation, manage time, ensure equal opportunities for all participants to contribute, and maintain a respectful and inclusive atmosphere throughout the dialogue.

Encourage Collaboration and Idea Exchange: Structure the dialogue sessions to allow for collaboration and idea exchange. Encourage discussions on potential partnerships, innovative solutions, and actionable strategies.

Document Key Insights and Agreements: Assign a rapporteur to document the key insights, agreements, and recommendations that emerge during the dialogue. This documentation will be valuable for follow-up activities and future reference.

Follow-Up and Dissemination: After the public-private dialogue, ensure timely follow-up on the identified action points and commitments. Share the outcomes of the dialogue with participants and stakeholders.

How to ...



B2B meetings

Why?

Networking and Relationship Building: Organising B2B meetings during a rural opportunity fair offers several benefits: B2B meetings provide a platform for businesses to connect and build relationships with potential partners, suppliers, clients, and industry peers. These connections can lead to collaborations, strategic alliances, and future business opportunities.

Business Development: B2B meetings allow companies to showcase their products, services, and expertise to a targeted audience. It provides an opportunity to generate leads, secure new clients, and expand market reach.

Knowledge Exchange: B2B meetings often involve discussions, presentations, and workshops where industry insights and best practices are shared. Participants can gain valuable knowledge, learn from experts, and stay updated on the latest trends and innovations in their field.

Collaboration and Partnerships: B2B meetings facilitate the identification of potential partners for joint ventures, research projects, and other collaborative initiatives. By bringing together companies with complementary capabilities, B2B meetings encourage mutually beneficial partnerships.

Preparation

 **Identify Participants:** Identify the companies and individuals who should participate in the B2B meetings. Consider their relevance, expertise, and potential for collaboration. Invite participants who can contribute to the desired outcomes.

Plan Logistics: Determine the date, time, and duration of the meeting. Select a suitable venue, whether it's a physical location or a virtual platform. Arrange necessary equipment, amenities, and technical support for a smooth experience.

Communicate and Confirm: Send formal invitations to the selected participants, including the meeting details, agenda, and any relevant materials. Follow up with reminders and confirmations to ensure attendance and participation.

Coordinate Presenters and Speakers: If there are presentations or speeches involved, coordinate with the presenters/speakers well in advance. Share guidelines, time limits, and expectations to ensure their content aligns with the objectives of the B2B meeting.

Implementation during the fair

Welcome and Introduction: Begin the B2B meeting with a warm welcome and introductions. Set the tone for a productive and collaborative atmosphere.

Presentations and Discussions: Follow the agenda and facilitate presentations, discussions, and workshops as planned. Encourage active participation and ensure everyone gets an opportunity to contribute.

Networking Opportunities: Allocate time for networking and informal interactions between participants. Provide networking breaks, meals, or social events to foster relationship building and knowledge exchange.

How to ...

Opportunity giver presentation

Why?

In rural contexts, there are more opportunity seekers than opportunities. With this method, the employers can make themselves attractive for opportunity seekers, soliciting for talent.

Direct Engagement: Opportunity giver presentations allow opportunity seekers to directly engage with representatives from various organisations. This engagement allows opportunity seekers to learn about available opportunities and establish connections.

Access to Information: Through opportunity giver presentations, opportunity seekers can gather detailed information about the available opportunities. They can learn about specific requirements, application processes, timelines, and any additional skills or qualifications needed. This information helps opportunity seekers make informed decisions and apply for suitable opportunities.

Networking and Relationship Building: Presentations by opportunity givers facilitate networking and relationship building between opportunity seekers and representatives. These connections may lead to future job or educational opportunities.

Exposure to Different Sectors: Opportunity giver presentations provide opportunity seekers with exposure to a wide range of industries, sectors, and career paths. They can explore opportunities in fields they may not have considered before and gain insights into the job market trends.

Preparation

Identify opportunity givers: Identify the organisations that will participate as opportunity givers during the opportunity fair. Ensure a diverse representation across sectors and industries.

Determine Presentation Format: Decide on the format for the opportunity giver presentations. This could include simple tables, small tents, individual booths, presentations in designated areas, or a combination. Consider the number of opportunity givers and available space to accommodate their presentations effectively, as well as the costs involved.

Provide Guidelines to Opportunity Givers: Communicate guidelines and expectations to the opportunity givers participating in the opportunity fair. Clearly outline the objectives of the presentations, time limits, and any specific requirements. Provide them with information on the target audience, including the background and skill sets of the opportunity fair attendees. Encourage them to prepare a pitch describing why someone should be seeking an opportunity with them (good working conditions, great skills to learn, opportunities for personal growth, team, etc).

Logistics Sheet: Develop a template to request for logistical requirements by the opportunity givers (electricity, tables, chairs etc). Develop a site plan (map) and allocate the opportunity givers to locations (tables/tents/booths). Communicate the plan to the opportunity givers for smooth set-up.

Implementation during the fair

Set Up Presentation Areas: Designate specific areas or booths for opportunity givers to conduct their presentations. Ensure that each opportunity giver has the necessary space, equipment based on their logistics sheet (such as electricity outlets, etc), and materials to deliver their presentations effectively. Arrange the presentation areas in a way that allows for easy navigation and engagement.

Provide Supportive Materials: Encourage opportunity givers to prepare supportive materials, such as brochures, pamphlets, application forms, or digital presentations, to provide opportunity fair attendees with additional information. These materials can be distributed during the presentations or made available at the opportunity giver booths.

Facilitate Networking: Create networking opportunities for opportunity fair attendees and opportunity givers. Designate specific time slots or areas for informal interactions, allowing opportunity seekers to engage with opportunity givers, exchange contact information, and establish connections for potential future opportunities.

Interview speed-dating/ Speed-dating for talent

Why?

The first step is usually the hardest. This method allows for a structured first-step in opportunity seeker and opportunity giver interaction. The key here is to get-to-know as many potential candidates as possible in a short period of time to get a first impression and to identify promising candidates that can be contacted after the event for interviews.

Preparation

Set the parameters for the interview speed dating. Help the participating MSMEs by preparing a standard set of 3-5 questions and a small scorecard to assess the interviewees. Secure a suitable venue that can accommodate multiple interview stations, as well as a waiting area for candidates. Arrange for necessary equipment, such as tables, chairs, name tags, and any technology required for presentations or demonstrations. Ensure the venue has a clear layout (e.g. numbered tables) that allows for smooth movement of candidates and employers between interview stations.

The next steps depend on the decision if you want to offer scheduled or unscheduled interviews:

Scheduled interviews:

This requires an overview of the opportunity givers, the available opportunities as well as interested opportunity seekers upfront.

- Design a schedule that ensures each candidate has the opportunity to meet with all participating employers.
- Allocate specific time slots for each interview, considering the desired duration for each interaction and any breaks required.
- Create a schedule that maximises efficiency and minimises waiting time for candidates and employers.

Unscheduled interviews:

This requires good communication before the fair as well as during the event to support opportunity seekers and givers in self-organisation.

Implementation during the fair

- Set up the venue according to the planned layout, including interview stations, waiting areas, and any additional signage or branding.
- Brief employers and candidates about the event format, schedule, and guidelines before the interviews begin.

Facilitate the movement of candidates between interview stations, ensuring a smooth flow and timely transitions.

How to ...

Opportunity board

Why?

Some participants can attend the event in more than one function. An opportunity seeker can also be an opportunity giver. In order to make these hidden opportunities visible an opportunity board can help. A board to share and find opportunities. The objective is that “matches” meet in person during the event to get to know each other and to exchange contacts to deepen their exchange after the event. Organising an opportunity board for a rural opportunity fair can offer several benefits:

Information Sharing: An opportunity board provides a centralised location for opportunity seekers to access information about job opportunities and other career-related resources. It helps disseminate information efficiently.

Visibility for Local Businesses: The opportunity board allows local businesses, organisations, and employers to showcase their job openings and career prospects. It creates a platform for them to connect with potential candidates from the rural community and promote their employment opportunities.

Convenience and Accessibility: Opportunity seekers can identify opportunities without having to visit individual booths or companies. It saves time and effort, especially in a rural setting.

Community Engagement: An opportunity board fosters community engagement by bringing together opportunity seekers and local businesses.

Preparation

Set up a wall, pinboard or similar and highlight it as opportunity board.

Create an appealing and easy-to-read design for the opportunity board. Use clear headings, fonts, and colours to make the information legible. Ensure that the board is large enough to accommodate all the opportunities and can be easily viewed by multiple attendees simultaneously.

Printing and Display: Prepare and print the opportunity board materials, for both opportunity givers and seekers in different colours with necessary fields to fill (e.g. name, phone number, room to describe the opportunity, etc). Provide plenty of pens, tape or pins. Display the materials on a designated board or bulletin board at a prominent location within the opportunity fair venue.

Implementation during the fair

Explanations needed during plenary session, or in a written agenda.

Adequate Space and Accessibility: Ensure that the opportunity board is placed in a well-ventilated and easily accessible area within the opportunity fair venue.

Regular Updates: Maintain the board’s organisation and cleanliness to ensure that information is accurate and up to date.

Additional Resources: Supplement the opportunity board with additional resources, such as job search guides, career development materials, or contact information for local employment agencies. Provide a designated area near the board where attendees can access these resources.

Assistance and Support: Assign staff or volunteers to be available near the opportunity board to provide assistance and answer questions. They can guide opportunity seekers and provide additional information about the opportunities listed.

Networking Opportunities: Encourage opportunity seekers to interact with employers and organisations whose opportunities are listed on the board. Consider organising networking sessions or designated time slots for opportunity seekers to connect with employers who have posted opportunities.

How to ...

Onboarding to digital matching platforms

Why?

Online platforms are a modern way of finding potential opportunities. However, they might not be known or popular in rural areas. Informing and sensitising opportunity seekers and employers on the options of available online services to find opportunities/talent can be a first step to seize the potential of online platforms.

Access to Job Opportunities: Digital matching platforms connect opportunity seekers with potential job opportunities. By providing onboarding support, rural opportunity fair organisers can help participants gain access to a wider range of job openings.

Digital Skills Development: Many rural opportunity seekers may be unfamiliar with digital platforms and technologies. By offering onboarding support, participants can develop essential digital skills required for navigating and effectively utilising the digital matching platforms.

Expanded Reach: Digital matching platforms overcome the barriers of geographical limitations by connecting rural opportunity seekers with employers and opportunities from various locations and expand the reach of job prospects outside the local area.

Efficiency and Convenience: Digital matching platforms streamline the job search process by automating the matching of opportunity seekers and employers based on their skills and preferences. Onboarding support ensures that participants understand how to create effective profiles, navigate the platform's features, and make the most of its functionalities.

Preparation

Research and Identify Platforms: Conduct research to identify digital matching platforms that are relevant to the rural job market. Look for platforms that cater to a wide range of industries and offer user-friendly interfaces. Evaluate their features, reputation, and success rates in connecting opportunity seekers with employers.

Partner with Platform Providers: Establish partnerships or collaborations with the selected digital matching platform providers. Inform them about the rural opportunity fair and the onboarding support initiative. Seek their assistance in providing resources, guidance, and training materials for participants.

Develop Training Materials: Create comprehensive training materials that explain the purpose and benefits of using the digital matching platforms. Include step-by-step instructions on creating profiles, searching for job opportunities, submitting applications, and managing job preferences. Design the materials in a user-friendly format with clear visuals and language suitable for participants with varying levels of digital literacy.

Plan Training Sessions: Schedule dedicated training sessions during the rural opportunity fair to provide hands-on support to participants. Allocate sufficient time for attendees to learn and practice using the platforms. Consider offering both group sessions and one-on-one assistance to accommodate different learning styles and individual needs.

Implementation during the fair

Providing access points with internet and onboarding support for setting up opportunity seeker and employer profiles.

Promote the Onboarding Support: Advertise the onboarding support sessions and their benefits through various channels. Encourage participants to register for the sessions in advance to secure their spots.

Provide Access to Devices and Internet: Ensure that participants have access to the internet during the onboarding sessions. If necessary, arrange for a computer lab or provide loaner devices to those who don't have their own.

Conduct Training Sessions: Conduct the onboarding training sessions, following the prepared training materials. Facilitate interactive learning by encouraging participants to actively engage with the platforms under the guidance of trainers or volunteers.

Individual Support and Troubleshooting: Assign trainers or volunteers who can provide one-on-one support to participants during the onboarding sessions. Address any technical difficulties or challenges participants may encounter while using the platforms. Offer assistance in creating compelling profiles and optimizing their search preferences.

Follow-Up and Continued Support: After the onboarding sessions, provide participants with resources.

Recommendations

This section discusses the lessons learnt about the programme and methodology for a rural opportunity fair.

Potential success factors for a rural opportunity fair

- Change of narrative about agricultural opportunities by making them visible.
- Promotion of interaction and cooperation between value-chain and sector actors.
- Creation of matching opportunities.
- Participants go away with clear orientation on next steps for their career and contacts.
- Increase of enrolment in agri-food related courses
- Positive feedback from exhibitors on the success in attracting talent.
- Participants rate the event as attractive and beneficial.

In order to create an environment to allow for these objectives to be met, there are a few options regarding the structure of the event.

If the venue allows, consider offering several smaller event sites such as an exhibition ground, workshop rooms, a plenary hall. This allows to create an agenda with parallel topics, giving the participants the freedom to choose and allowing for a higher number of participants to have meaningful interactions. It also creates a sense of empowerment for the opportunity seekers to make decisions for themselves, approach interesting employers and network. Especially rural target groups might have never felt they have different options when it comes to their employment, nor that they can choose according to what is interesting to them. Putting them first and giving them the agency is a very empowering moment and can also spark a mindset shift towards the perception of the agri-food sector and its opportunities.

Content and Activities

- Interactive event design needs to be planned, prioritised, and given space.
- Structured job matching at the fair is a complex process that needs to be planned, communicated and explained thoroughly.

Implementation

- Involve all implementing partners at every level of organisation from planning to Monitoring and Evaluation for sustainability and coordination's sake.
- Include partners that will contribute to sustainability of the fairs in the future.
- Make sure to include support services for event management:
 - Security services, fire fighters, health, etc.
 - Registration services of participants
 - Digital services
 - Moderator
 - Protocol services
 - Sound service/ technical services
 - Added services for inclusivity:
 - Sign language services
 - Childcare services
 - Transport

Country Examples

**Malawi:**

How to organise a two-day event

Malawi organised a 2-day sequential opportunity fair. The aim was to create time to prepare the opportunity seekers with skills that would enable them to get the opportunities, 5 different facilitators with experience were given tasks based on their expertise to address topics like business coaching, career guidance, recruitment and personal branding. This was done on the first day of the fair and then day 2 was specifically for linking young people to opportunities exhibited by the various stakeholders that were there.

**Kenya:**

How to organise a fair with parallel sessions

At the Kenyan opportunity fair, we had several event sites with parallel activities at the same time. This was decided in order to allow participants to own the event and decide for themselves what is interesting.

The main event had four locations (main hall, side hall 1, side hall 2 and the exhibition ground).

Main Hall

- Opening and Closing Ceremonies
- Panel Discussion: Kazi iko wapi in the agri-food sector

Side Hall 1

- Drama Competition hosted by USTADI
- Lakehub Q&A Session: What is incubation?
- Shujaaz Konnect Live Discussion: Role young people play in the agri-food sector with three panellists and 70 participants

Side Hall 2

- 4 Career-Guidance sessions
- 231 persons attended the interview preparation and CV-Writing Workshops hosted by Brighter-Monday



Guiding questions



- What kind of activities do you want to have at your event (main and side events)? ➔
- How does the programme reflect your goals?
- How can you create a clear timetable format for the event?
- Which formats are best suited to guide participants through the event (maps, QR codes, phone alerts)?
- Who will moderate the event? Do you need (an) external moderator(s)?
- Do you want to include virtual formats? If yes, how do you organise the virtual participation (e.g. through live-stream broadcasts to integrate remote locations)?
- How do you create space for the target group to actively participate?
- How do you create value for your participants?
- Do your activities promote learning and exchange?
- How can you create a gender sensitive/ gender empowering programme? How can you integrate gender topics into the programme?

Add your thoughts/answers here

Conduct M&E and document lessons learnt to ensure sustainability

9



How to ...

Monitoring and evaluation of participation and results of an opportunity fair help to improve the fairs over time, be accountable towards sponsors and donors and do better communication and advertising on the fair. M&E is part of every step of the opportunity fair: in the preparatory planning phase, during the fair and in the aftermath of the fair.

In the first step one needs to define the objectives of M&E: What do you want to know?

This could be:

In the planning stage: Registration about the exhibitors, information about their offers and searches for better planning of the fair.

During implementation: Participation and Evaluation

- Number of youth present at the fair, with relevant disaggregation and sociodemographic information to know the target group better.
- Number of exhibitors present at the fair, information on their nature, sector and offer.
- Identify expectations, needs and experience of the participants (youth and exhibitors) and evaluate in how far these are met.
- Identify areas for improvement on the organisation (logistics, advertisement, venue) and the programme of the opportunity fair.

After the fair: Results

- Identify the improvement of the employment situation of opportunity seekers.
- Identify if the opportunity fair contributed to reach the objectives of the companies (e.g. filling vacancies, sell their services).
- Identify if self-employed youth have established new contacts and networks, (e.g. input dealers, off-takers, clients).

The second step is to define the M&E tools and the processes to capture the required information. Third is to implement the tools and analyse the data. And fourth is to make use of the data.

The cross-national M&E working group has designed a specific knowledge product including the tools used for M&E, as well as most important Do's and Don'ts when implementing them. Access it here for more information:



[Full link to M&E Guide](#)

Country Examples

**Mozambique:**

How to ensure sustainability through roundtables

In Mozambique the technical vocational training school from Mecuburi (rural Nampula area) took the lead in initiating a regular roundtable with selected partners from the private sector, the provincial government and youth representative. During the roundtable the actors exchange on topics such as How to support youth to start self-employment?, How to support the creation of youth associations?, How to link the students better to private sector actors?, amongst others. Through the roundtables the different actors build up a stronger relationship with one another and can discuss in a joint manner how and when to organise opportunity fairs.

**Burkina Faso:**

How to ensure sustainability through roundtables

Roundtables were organised with stakeholders to explain the objectives of the fair. During these meetings, we elaborated the content of the day, the budget, the list of guests and exhibitors, fixed the date of the fair and determined the strategy of communication and mobilisation. Several preparatory meetings took place to finalise the administrative documents (letters, speeches) and communications (press kit, banner, badges). After the fair, a debriefing meeting was organised to take stock of the activities.



Overview of your thoughts/ answers



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