



ROUND ROBIN

What: A collaborative brainstorming technique designed to encourage equal participation and idea generation among team members. The tool is a structured approach to brainstorming that ensures that each participant has an opportunity to contribute ideas in a systematic and equitable manner.

Why: It ensures that everyone in your team gets an equal chance to present their ideas and encourages the team to collaborate by continuously building on top of each other's ideas to create new ones. Also, when brainstorming in groups there is always a risk that the most assertive and vocal team members end up setting the direction for the brainstorm. This tool allows participants to generate ideas with little influencing by other team members.

When: The Round-Robin Brainstorming method is good to use early in the project design phase, when you have scoped your area of work and have a clear project goal. The tool helps generate new ideas that you can take into the next stages of the problem-solving in the design and planning process.

Step 1

PREPARE THE EXERCISE

Decide on the specific challenge or opportunity that you need new ideas for. This could for instance be problems in addressing specific identified needs or a new opportunity that has presented itself.

Do your homework for the chosen challenge or opportunity so that you are ready to guide participants with background or contextual information, information about the communities for the intervention, and strategic plans and ambitions etc.

When choosing the participants for the exercise, consider how you can maximise the creativity levels or new inputs. If the same team has been working together for a while, it can sometimes be difficult to think 'outside the box' and fresh perspectives may be needed. If appropriate and possible, it can therefore be beneficial to invite colleagues or partners outside of your team to your brainstorm session.

Prepare all the materials for the number of participants chosen.

Facilitator tip

You can easily adapt this as a group exercise if you have a large team. Simply divide into smaller groups and have each group develop and brainstorm ideas and rotate between groups instead of between individuals.

Step 2

PRESENT THE EXERCISE

INFORMATION

PHASE
DESIGN

TIMEFRAME
30 - 60 MINS.

MODE
FACE-TO-FACE

PARTICIPANTS
4-8

FACILITATION LEVEL
BASIC

MATERIALS
A5 OR A4 PAPERS, PENS, AND
A TIMER.

Introduce the participants to the timeframe and the purpose of the exercise by going through the following:

- What are we going to do today?
- Why are they invited?
- What are their roles (if participants do not know each other well)?
- What is the timeframe?

To start, gather your team around a table and provide each person sheets of paper cards to record their ideas on.

Present the challenge or opportunity chosen for the brainstorm. Make sure that everyone participating in the exercise is clear on the scope of challenge or opportunity you will be focusing on.

Be specific about the participants' tasks. Answer questions, but discourage any discussion, because the goal in this step is to allow people to think creatively without any influence from others.

Allow approximately 5 minutes for this step.

Step 3

PRESENT THE EXERCISE

Introduce the participants to the timeframe and the purpose of the exercise by going through the following:

- What are we going to do today?
- Why are they invited?
- What are their roles (if participants do not know each other well)?
- What is the timeframe?

To start, gather your team around a table and provide each person sheets of paper cards to record their ideas on.

Present the challenge or opportunity chosen for the brainstorm. Make sure that everyone participating in the exercise is clear on the scope of challenge or opportunity you will be focusing on.

Be specific about the participants' tasks. Answer questions, but discourage any discussion, because the goal in this step is to allow people to think creatively without any influence from others.

Allow approximately 5 minutes for this step.

Step 4

RECORD FIRST IDEAS

Have each participant, in silence, think of one idea and write it down. Participants can also add drawings to further explain their idea. The important thing is that the idea can be clearly understood by the other exercise participants, as they will build on top of the idea. Therefore, participants should make sure to write in an easily readable manner, as other participants will read their notes.

Allow approximately 5 minutes for this step.

Facilitator tip

Encourage participants to think creatively and inclusively when formulating their ideas. If relevant to the challenge or opportunity, remind participants to apply a protection, gender, and inclusion lens and well as a conflict sensitivity lens, when brainstorming.

Step 5

SHARE AND GENERATE NEW IDEAS

Once everyone has written down an idea, have each person pass their idea to the person next to them - without talking! Everyone should now be holding a new piece of paper with their neighbour's idea written down on it.

Have each person use their neighbour's idea as inspiration to create another idea by building on top of the original idea. Let the participants pass on their new idea clockwise after 2 minutes. Continue this circular idea swap for as long as is necessary to gather the number of ideas that you feel are sufficient – complete at least one round so an idea passes through all participants.

When time is up, aim to end up with between 10 and 20 recorded ideas at least. This will vary, depending on the topic and the group size.

Allow approximately 20–25 mins for this step.

Facilitator tip

You can also make the Round-Robin Brainstorming anonymous. Rather than having group members pass their ideas to the person next to them, instead gather the ideas at each stage, shuffle them, and then passing them out again. The advantage of doing the Round Robin anonymously, is to avoid that participants might hold ideas back simply because they know the person next to them or in the ones in the group will know what they have suggested, when passing their ideas around the room.

Step 6

COLLATE IDEAS AND DECIDING NEXT STEPS

Gather up all the now final ideas. You can now consolidate them and eliminate any duplicates.

Discuss with participants which idea (not your own) inspired you the most. Why? Decide what or which idea(s) to move forward with.

Discuss and agree on how you will move on with the ideas selected and who will do what.

If you need inspiration for sorting the most relevant or impactful idea, you can use the [idea & insight funnel tool](#) or the [Impact/effort matrix tool](#) to guide your work.

Allow 10–25 minutes for this step.