

# Open the »space« for employment

Take a group of 140 independent organizations implementing different employment projects. Force this group to discuss and agree on how a public organization can best support them to utilize the EU resources most effectively. On top of that, impose a tight deadline. This challenge cries out for a creative solution, doesn't it? by Mónika Thury, Zoltán Barna-Lázár



## OFA (Hungarian Employment Public Benefit Non-Profit LLC)

- Promotes Hungary's employment and lifelong learning policies, harmonized with EU policies and procedures
- Supports professional activities, institution and capacity building amongst organizations (NGOs, companies) involved in employment and human resource development
- Target group: 140 organizations that implement more than 50 EU-funded employment projects

[www.ofa.hu](http://www.ofa.hu)

## Common action plan

The Hungarian Employment Public Benefit Non-Profit LLC (OFA) is implementing a priority project co-funded by the European Social Fund, named »Partners for Employment,« that supports various employment programs in Hungary.

OFA's aim was to personalize their services in order to reflect the real needs of the beneficiary organizations. They knew they needed to involve the target group and come up with an action plan together with them. The only question was how. OFA chose to arrange a 3-day conference involving 130 participants and asked ICG Ex Ante to organize and facilitate the event.

## Open Space made a difference

Open Space is a way to run productive co-creation meetings. An Open Space conference is focused on a specific purpose, but begins without any formal agenda; the participants define the topics on the spot and they create the schedule together. The work then proceeds in small groups, and the participants are allowed to switch groups and add their comments or ideas to any topic they are interested in. An Open Space event – besides the excellent organization – certainly needs experienced and well-prepared facilitators. They are responsible for creating and maintaining the framework and rules for the group work while activating all co-creative power of the participants, and also taking care of sharing the documented results.

## Successful service development

137 people from 77 beneficiary organizations participated in the conference where three Open Space sessions were held on 18 topics. The event was a great success and definitely reached its goals. The initially skeptical participants became especially constructive and motivated during the process, coming up with brilliant ideas and suggestions. OFA received sufficient input for their service development. Since then, they have been successfully supporting the target group with different types of services and events based on these suggestions. The priority project will be concluded with a similarly large conference in June 2015, assisted by ICG Ex Ante. ●