EUTOPIA Hackathon.

What:

A traditional hackathon is a short, intense event where participants (programmers) either individually or in teams create prototypes or solve programming challenges.

In a more expanded setting the concept has been adapted by other disciplines and are used to either generate ideas, solutions, or prototypes. The term hackathon is now a more broadly used and can mean more than producing code.

A hackathon in this regard is a tool and not an end of itself. It can be used as a starting point or a milestone.

It is common that hackathons are structured as competitions, but not necessary.

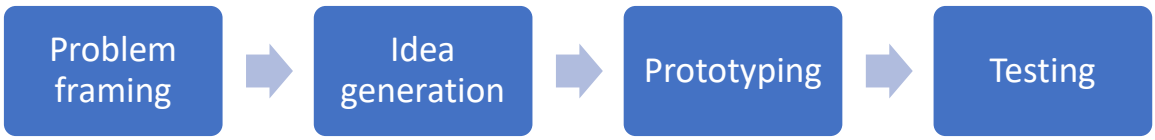
Why:

The intensity of a hackathon utilizes time pressure to force participants to prioritize their limited time. It is an effective way to quickly generate solutions, prototypes, ideas, pitches or identifying problems.

How:

Participants are more or less shut inside a venue where they workshop during a set amount of time often (but not always) facilitated by innovation support actors. The teams go through a rigorous workshop process to produce a lot of problem statements, insights, ideas, code, designs and prototypes that is needed depending on the goal of the hackathon.

The Design Sprint which is one of the more popular hackathon concepts has a timeline which roughly can be visualized as:



WP4 Hackathon

The teams coming into the EUTOPIA WP4 hackathon will be varied, some may have worked in their projects since WeDiscover Brussels and others are completely new for the hackathon. The projects themselves may also vary in how far it has been worked on.

That means that the hackathon should either take all the variations into consideration, which will add complexity in both facilitation and evaluation. How will one team that is brand new be weighted in comparison to one that has worked together for several months?

To solve this the premise of the hackathon should be that the teams of students iterate on the projects they enter the hackathon with based on input from external stakeholders relevant to their projects.

One idea is that through our pool of partners identify several upcoming public procurements that are at least thematically relevant for the projects. Then, at the hackathon, a procurement officer from each of the procurements is one of the external stakeholders that the students engage and iterate with.

This could lead to, that the insights the student teams generate during the hackathon can be incorporated within the procurement documents, either as background or in the requirements. There is, of course, no guarantee that the procurement officers will do this, but it does drastically increase the probability that the work done by the students, is carried on into a real context where innovation can happen.

Involvement of external stakeholders

Involvement of external stakeholders and local facilitators is assumed to be covered by the budget activity post “mentors”.

Main themes

There are a few main points that the suggested concept for the hackathon will go through. Problem Framing, Idea Generation, Prototyping and Testing. It follows the main principles of Design Thinking of discovery, ideation and testing (iteration).

Problem Framing and Goal setting

To make sure that the time spent during a hackathon is utilized well the first part focuses on exploring the context of a challenge/solution/project and then homing in on a specific obstacles or problems together with, relevant, external stakeholders.

Idea Generation

Participants engage themselves in a structured idea generation workshop to finally decide on a single idea.

Prototyping

In a three staged process the teams sketch, design and decide on prototype concept. After which they build the prototype, usually in PowerPoint or based on what other resources are available.

Testing
If there is time in a longer hackathon the prototype is then tested on targeted user groups.

3 or 5 days.
The main difference between a 3-day hackathon and a 5-day hackathon is the inclusion of external stakeholders within the problem framing session and testing on user groups.

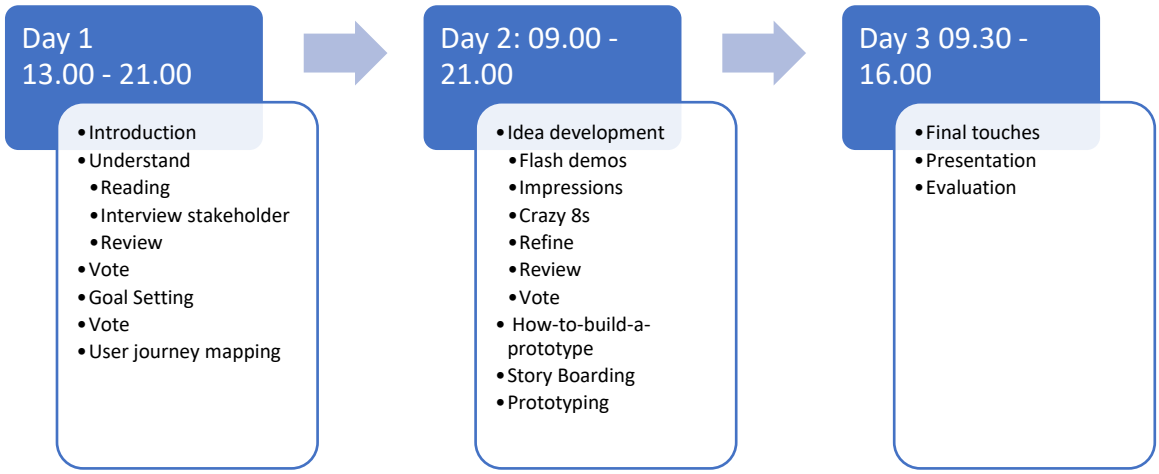
The quality of the work and the relevance of said work to other involved stakeholders (EUTOPIA academics and external stakeholders) the students do during the hackathon will be greatly increased by extending it to a full week.

3-day presentation
The prototype is presented to the challenge giver(s) and send it to the jury.
Group presentation on the challenge, problem, solution and learnings.
A short report is sent to the jury.

5-day presentation
The prototype is presented to the challenge giver(s) and then tested on target user groups for insights. Then it is sent to the jury.
Group presentation on the challenge, problem, solution and learnings.
A short report is sent to the jury.

Examples

3 Days.



5 Days