Information Management Network Meeting – 2nd Dec 2020

Chair: Ei Ei Thein (MIMU)
Participants: Jhpiego, UNRCO, MIMU, Malteser International, Urbanize, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), UNHCR, DAI Global LLC, Trócaire, NRC, ACCESS to Health Fund – UNOPS, OneMap/CDE, IFPRI-Myanmar, MCC

1. EXPERIENCE SHARING SESSION - Approaches to Virtual Training

In this experience sharing session, there were three presentations relating to lessons learned and best practices for conducting virtual trainings:

- Experience Sharing / Approaches to Virtual Training – Mathew Richard, May Thu Khaing (UNHCR)
- Making the Switch: Best Practices and Experiences from Virtual Events – Thura Kyaw (Jhpiego)
- Approaches to Virtual Training – Javier Manrique (MIMU)

The information from these presentations is compiled into a chronological outline. While not exhaustive, this is a useful resource for anyone planning, coordinating or running virtual trainings.

Thank you very much to everyone who contributed to this outline and discussion.

General Points on Transitioning to Virtual Training

The advantages of virtual training:

- People can attend without travelling, particularly those in remote areas.
- There is no need to arrange a venue.
- Cost savings.
- It can provide continuous mentorship and timely technical support.
- Virtual events can also be hybrid, or semi-virtual, such as having some participants in physical sites and others in virtual platforms. This can be useful for training healthcare workers who live in areas without internet access who need to travel to a training site.

The disadvantages of virtual training:

- Reliance on the internet.
- Limited communication between trainers and participants.
- Less networking and social interaction.

Planning and Preparation

When planning and preparing it's helpful to think about the WHAT

The purpose, type and name of the training:

- What are your objectives/goals for the training?
- What content do you want to cover?
- What kind of practice exercises and tests would you like to have?
- What is the skill level of the training: Beginner, intermediate or advanced?
- Consider that skills-based training is much more challenging than knowledge-based training.
- For skills-based training, the suggested maximum is 20 people, however knowledge-based training can comfortably accommodate 50-60 participants. Consider the size of your support team when planning.
- When choosing a platform/application to use, you should also consider what the participants are most familiar with. For example, MOHS uses Zoom, so it is not recommended to require MOHS to learn a new software like Skype or Teams.

The language of the training:

- Which languages will be used? It's helpful for participants to give their opinion on what language they prefer
- Will a translator need to be present?
- Will translated materials be necessary?
- Are there special software requirements in regard to translation (e.g. dual language channels) that may need to be set up in advance?

Testing/evaluation methods:

- Be sure to define the type of questions you want to ask.
- Think about the grading scale.
- Make rules for talking, presenting, time allotted, etc.

When determining WHO will be in attendance consider:

The kind of participants you want:

- Technical people, public employees, coordinators, academics, humanitarian workers, etc.
- The desired number of participants.

The kind of team you want:

- Always try to have co-facilitators (helpers, co-hosts, etc.)
- Do they have the necessary skills and experience to train the participants?
- Split the roles and share tasks
- Have one IT focal person so that participants have someone to reach out to if they have IT problems before or during the training.

Consider *HOW* the training will be conducted:

- Determine the type of training you want, how to control the time, breaks, use of camera/microphone, splitting into groups and number of assistants vs. trainers.
- Adapt and contextualize the training design and approaches based on the context/audience.
- Attendance control: How will you ensure people are attending and engaged? Will you take attendance daily, ask random questions, have some other form of verification?
- In virtual training it is easy to overwhelm participants. Make slides “low dose” and clear with only one message per slide.

Practice and dry runs

- Be confident in using the platforms and tools beforehand.
- If you can, do multiple “dry runs” (i.e. practice trainings). Dry runs may look very different depending on the subject. For example, if the training involves props, tools and physical activity, the trainers should repeatedly practice in advance to be confident when using them online.
- At the end of any dry run, it is helpful to make an evaluation of the session and the trainers.

Plan for *WHEN* and how long

- Consider the local calendar and check for holidays or political events.
- Think about the number of days as well as hours per day. (Hours per day is especially important for public employees.):]
- In virtual training, asking questions, replying to questions and presenting will always take longer than usual. A three-day in-person training may be better suited to five days when it is a virtual training.
- Consider the frequency trainings. Will they be monthly? Quarterly?
- If participants have a second screen, it’s possible to combine instruction and exercise time.
- Arrange breaks between sessions.

Platforms and Possible Issues

Be sure to consider participants’ and trainers’ need for laptops, monitors, sound, WiFi, 3G and electricity.

The platforms used to conduct the training:

- Evaluate multiple options.
- Suggestions for video: Teams, Skype, Webex and Zoom (particularly good for “breakout rooms”).
- Suggestions for file sharing: Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive, WeTransfer.
- Suggestions for data collection: Google Forms, Survey Monkey, KoBo Toolbox.
- Consider using interactive platforms to maintain participant engagement such as Kahoot.com to ask questions and Mural.co for an interactive, digital whiteboard.
- Form multiple communication channels. For example, use a chat service like Messenger or Viber to create a group for sending hyperlinks while the presentation is ongoing.
- Consider which platform to use for testing participants. Google Forms can be a good option depending on the type of test.
- Determine which participants will use mobile and desktop and how that impacts the platform used.

Platform preparation

- When you have selected your platforms, be sure to **fully test** in advance and **train the trainers** on how to use the platform/software.
- In advance, have the IT focal person share with participants how-to videos about the platforms that will be used. (e.g. how to download Zoom on your phone/laptop, how to use the program, etc.) Youtube.com/channel/UCho5oy6xTXS5jLBoL32raoQ is a good Myanmar language resource for tutorials on Zoom and other programs.
- Offer an advance orientation session on how to use the selected platforms. In the case of Zoom, training can be conducted in separate rooms based on the number of trainers. Be sure to test the Rooms feature before the training begins.

Issues:

- Have a plan for power cuts and internet stability. This should be considered for students and trainers. Trainers may require external 3G modems.
- Share a checklist with participants that includes info on how to deal with technical issues such as electricity, internet or computer problems. For example, have a list of suggestions/solutions for when the internet goes out (have an extra SIM from a different service provider, have an alternate location available, etc.)
- **Always consider the IT literacy of the participants.** Participants may struggle to mute/unmute, screen share, raise hand, use the chat box, etc.

The Application Processes

Invitation type:

- Is it an open application or direct invitation?
- Who will you choose? Define selection criteria such as availability, daily tasks, type and priority of organisation, skillset, etc.

The application:

- Registration forms are useful for targeting the right people and knowing who is participating.
- Google Forms can be very helpful for creating an application.
- The application should have a questionnaire that provides enough information to make the selection process easier and faster.
- "Package the training". On the registration form, the objectives of the workshop should be clearly listed so that registrants understand what they will achieve by participating.

Once you have selected participants:

- Be sure to verify the background/profile of the participants selected.
- For accountability, have participants provide some kind of letter of commitment or supervisor recommendation letter.
- Give final confirmation of acceptance to participants by email or phone.
- Determine what should be sent to participants beforehand. This can include data (or participants could provide their own data), software, documents, web links, etc.
- So that they are better prepared, ask all participants to familiarize themselves with the material before the training begins.
- Consider that people often have one personal and one professional email, so it helps if the participants use the same email they registered with.

	Before Delivering the Training Things to verify on the first day: - The details participants provided in their application. - That participants have access to all resources and understand how to use the platforms. - **Ensure in advance that all participants have the right software installed and working** . - Attendance. Be sure to consider that participants may leave in the middle of the training. For monitoring, Zoom can inform you of how long participants are connected so you can calculate an attendance percentage. **Notify participants if their attendance is below expectations.** Information to provide on the first day: - Agenda (share the file), start and end times, break times, length and number of sessions, attendance requirements, rules and expectations, etc. - Some examples of rules and expectations: “Mute your mic if you are not speaking”, “mute your phone”, “raise your hand if you have a question.” - Remind participants of the final test/project/exercise so they can keep it in mind throughout the training. Other things to do: - Log into Zoom with the name of the trainer and organisation. Be sure all trainers have “Host” permissions. - Identify which participants may have WiFi and power issues and who has a second screen. - Give an introduction/opening speech and **confirm/refresh what is in the agenda.** Icebreakers: - Icebreakers are a great tool to make everyone comfortable before the training begins. The activity will vary based on the context. - Scavenger Hunt: Pick up a few objects near you and ask participants to search their own home for similar items. - Recap of the previous day’s content (if it’s a multi-day training). - Have a fun quiz, “brain teaser”, riddle, wordplay game, etc. - Use videos with songs/dances such as the COVID handwashing songs that come with motions, or TikTok videos. - Follow an easy workout video for a little bit of exercise. - If the participants know each other, ask them to introduce one another instead of themselves. **During the Training:** Keeping the participant engaged: - Always be checking participant’s attention. - Be sure to put your video on and encourage others to do the same. - Talk clearly and slowly, using short sentences. - Constantly check if everyone is engaged by asking random questions. - Use audio/visual resources such as graphs, charts, maps, songs and videos. - Remember to consider using an interactive tool like [Kahoot.com]() or [Mural.co]()

- Never hesitate to spend time on discussions. They are incredibly valuable. To encourage participation, consider splitting the group into two smaller groups with a breakout room.
- Have breaks as physical events such as a tea/coffee break. These are very important, especially if the training is long.
- Have a team member actively respond to questions in the chat box while you are presenting.
- Have multiple facilitators, each of whom are responsible for a different part of the workshop. This will keep the training more interesting.
- Try to determine if you need to adjust your content, such as making it simpler or more advanced.
- Having two monitors to run the training is very helpful.

Reminders and other things to consider:

- Always be thinking of how to engage participants. Without physical indicators like eye contact or body language, it is much more difficult to assess engagement. The more interactive your tools are, the more you can engage the participants; however, engagement level depends on both the participant and the trainer. If the participant doesn't want to be there or doesn't want to learn about a topic, they won't be engaged regardless of what the trainer does.
- Don't be ambitious with the content; try to not put it all one day.
- Remember to keep the slides "low-dose", and to not include too much information.
- It may be difficult to gather people after lunch time.
- "Expect the unexpected". Be flexible; have a plan B and C.
- Allow longer time for discussion.
- **Have patience**. Questions may be repeated multiple times.
- When trainers ask questions to the participants, it's important to leave enough time for the participants to respond, especially as it takes longer to react to the question and people take longer to speak.
- If a participant misses a session, consider what to do so they do not delay the group.
- Some participants share Zoom accounts, or have accounts on multiple devices, so Zoom may say "multiple-connected".
- Remember to send the final project/exercise/test materials to participants and remind them of the rules for developing the assignment and presenting it.

Assessing Competency

General competency:

- Regularly ask questions to participants and gauge their answers.
- It's important to get direct feedback from participants so you know how well they understand the content.

For exercises/workshops:

- Have a practical exercise in several different breakout rooms (e.g. three rooms for a group of 30). Facilitators can support participants with the exercises via informal discussion. Keep the length to around one hour.
- When participants reconvene, have volunteer participants present their output (e.g. the Power Bi dashboard they just created). This is often a fun part of the training.
- Create a private communication channel for participants to share resources and request support.

The final test/project/presentation and scoring:

- Decide what you want to test, how you want to test it and how you will score the tests.
- A final project/presentation is often better than a paper test.
- Review the final test/project/presentation with the participants so you can provide them with feedback and so they can provide comments about their experiences.
- The primary objective of the final test/project/presentation is to measure learning and clarify ideas.

After the training is over:

- Create a template, add the correct logos and a signature. Consider how to deliver the certificates and also keep a record of the certificates.
- Only provide certificates if all requirements are met and if participants had at least an 80-90% attendance rate (be flexible based on the situation).
- Be sure to sign and send the certificates by the following week.
- Consider putting training videos and materials on the internet just in case a participant wants to review the content at a later date.
- Have a list of resources for continued learning.

Evaluation and Learning

Have a training evaluation survey to receive feedback from participants:

- Decide what kinds of questions to ask.
- Decide what form the survey will take (short answer, multiple choice, etc.).
- Google Forms or Survey Monkey are common survey platforms.
- Remember some participants may struggle to use the platform.
- For honest responses, have participants fill out the survey anonymously.
- You can also provide a test to participants specifically for evaluation, but **not** have it affect their certification. This would be for evaluating the effectiveness of the training.
- If you're interested in more advanced research and data collection, participants can be a valuable resource of qualitative data via focus groups.
- Take pictures of the training (with consent of the participants) for your records.
- Throughout the training, informally ask questions to the participants to determine how you can improve.

Reviewing and improving.

- Collect success stories from participants.
- The training team should meet to analyse and discuss feedback from participants as well as their personal experiences.
- All lessons learnt should be recorded to improve future trainings.

	Risks and Concerns - Always plan for internet/electricity/IT issues. - Always ensure the facilitator is well prepared and familiar with the chosen platforms. - If participants live in noisy conditions, they may need to find a different location so they can focus. - If discussing sensitive or political issues such as politics, religion or ethnicities, participants should have access to headphones to reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding from people nearby. - If participants live in a remote area, they may have to travel far from home for an internet connection. If the training ends in the evening, women in particular can feel unsafe about traveling home. - When participants are on their phones or computers all day, family members may take issue with the amount of screen time the participant is engaging in, so clear communication with family members should be encouraged. - Consider whether to use Zawgyi or Unicode font when creating digital materials/tests/questionnaires.
6.	Next Meeting – **The next IM Network meeting will be on February 3rd**

	Participant	Agency/Organization	Position
1	Nyi Naung Yoe	Jhpiego	Technical Advisor
2	Aye Yupar	UNRCO	Data Management Officer
3	Moe Moe Su	MIMU	Web Analyst
4	Thet Zaw Tun	MIMU	GIS Assistant
5	Javier Manrique	MIMU	IMO
6	Khine Haymar Myint	Jhpiego	Technical Director
7	Claudia Plock	Malteser International	Country Program Advisor
8	Ei Ei Thein	MIMU	Data Manager
9	Nilar Khaing	Urbanize	Researcher
10	Khin Thandar Tun	Myanmar Information Management Unit	GIS Associate
11	A Myintzu	International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)	Research Analyst 1
12	May Thu Khaing	UNHCR	IM Associate
13	Hnin Ei Win	International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)	Research Analyst
14	Zaw WIn	MIMU	GIS Analyst
15	Zin Min Tun	MIMU	Database Analyst
16	Win Bo Aung	DAI Global LLC	Research Analyst

17	Akar Khin Nyunt	Trocaire	Capacity Strengthening Officer (Admin / Finance)
18	Dr Su Yin Win	NRC	M&E manager
19	Michael Wang	International Food Policy Research Institute	Leland Fellow
20	Ying Kham Synt	International Food Policy Research Institute	Research Assistant
21	Thura Kyaw	Jhpiego	Sr. KM Manager
22	Mya Myat Thwel	ACCESS to Health Fund, UNOPS, Myanmar	Senior Assistant to the Fund Director
23	Kyaw Naing Win	OneMap/CDE	GIS Manager
24	Khin Zin Win	IFPRI-Myanmar	Research Analyst
25	Tun Tun	MIMU	Data Assistant
26	Thiri May Kyaw	MIMU	Resource Centre Associate
27	Henrik Hansson	MCC	Adviser
28	May Myo Chit	Trocaire	Government Liaison Officer
29	Nan Po Po Myint	MIMU	Database Associate
30	Mathew Richard	UNHCR	IMO