

Making the Switch: Best Practices and Experiences from Virtual Events

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Today, we will talk about...

1. Why virtual ??
2. What do we prepare?
3. What are the best practices?
4. What did we learn?
5. What do we recommend?
6. Take home messages

Why virtual ??

1. Restrictions due to COVID-19
2. Geographical limitations
3. Other purposes- continuous mentorship, in-time technical support

It could be either

- virtual or
- sometimes semi-virtual (with few participants in physical sites and others in virtual platforms).

What do we prepare?

- Have a team
- Split roles and share tasks
- Test technology and tools
- Dry run the session
- Create multiple communication channels

What are the best practices (during virtual events)?

- Always try to have co-facilitators (eg. co-host and helpers)
- Have one IT focal for the virtual event
- Have an orientation session on using virtual tools for participants
- Put your video on (by facilitators)
- Have a (short and fun) warm-up activity
- Communicate norms and ground rules
- Make it low dose and clear: one message per one slide
- Allocate more discussion time
- Use interactive tools and methods
- Have breaks as physical events

What did we learn?

Challenges & Constraints

- Internet & electricity
- IT literacy of the participants
- Participants engagement
- Knowledge-base training vs Skills-based training

Lessons learned

- The more interactive tools we use, the more we can engage
- Engagement depends on both sides: Facilitators and Participants
- Never hesitate to spend time on discussions
- Given the above challenges and constraints, most virtual participants prefer in-person events than virtual

What do we recommend?

- Adapt and contextualize the training design and approaches as per the context
- Use multiple communication channels (Facebook, Viber, etc.)
- Use interactive tools and methods (polls, breakout room discussions, videos, quizzes, breaks, etc.)
- Share how-to videos of virtual tools to the participants in advance
- Share a checklist that includes info on internet connection, electronic devices, and spaces for learning to the participants
- Limit the number of participants to allow more discussions
- Ask participants' feedback formally and informally

Take home messages !

1. Prepare, Prepare, Prepare!
2. Don't be Stingy with the Discussion Time!
3. Don't be ambitious with the content.
4. Expect the Unexpected. Be Expert and Flexible!
5. Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much!
(Helen Keller)



Thank you !

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