Core principles and practices

When considering to organise and host an online event, there will be many questions to consider such as:

- What do I want to accomplish? What is my goal?
- What format and technology should I choose?
- Who are my participants? What risks are involved?
- Is my event accessible?
- How long should my event be?
- Who needs to be involved in designing and implementing the event?
- Do I want to use the event later as a resource?

- Core principles and practices
- Principles and practices of participation

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All these questions revolve around the overall approach to the design of your event which is different for every organisation. How we answer these questions stems from the foundation: our core principles and practices that we base the entire event on. Below you will find various questions and additional elements added under different sections that rest on this foundation. [Illustration for Cathy includes more questions from sections]

An event is rooted in individual and collective values and principles; it never starts or sits in the vacuum. Before planning, imagining, and designing an event take some time to review your core documents, agreements and practices. Go back and review the values, core principles and policies that belong to your group or organisation as online event organiser.

Think about the foundations that you have and elements that you as an organisation want to bring in. What are the core principles that constitute the foundation, the DNA, the kernel of your event? They can be written in formal policy or embedded in your practice. Look for them and review them, or reflect on your past events and practices. Your organisational principles and values will be your compass. They will help you make decisions, filter the variables and invest in some components throughout your planning, implementing, closing and follow up of your event. This exercise will also help you in identifying possible gaps and considerations that become more relevant in moving your event into the digital realm.

- **Safe space.** Consider the privacy, security and anonymity needs of your participants to ensure you are creating a space that holds minimal harm and is enjoyable for all, with clear steps and protocols to address concerns. Running a risk assessment exercise will help you to reflect and will inform your choices. For a risk assessment check our FTX: Safety Reboot.
- Think about the ways you can weave care into your approach when planning your online event, both for your team and participants. This can be reflected in considerations around event duration, time zone considerations, accessibility, safety, session design, self and collective care activities, etc.

- **Values and principles informing your events and your technological choices.** APC is guided by Feminist practices and politics of technology.
- **Choice of technology.**APC prioritises free/libre and open source software (FLOSS) and open standards, as to remind us that our choices need to be: Driven by community needs, sustainable and secure.
- Think about all of the stages of the process and credit previous projects, contributions, sources, people, etc. APC is committed to using CC licensing when acknowledging previous contributions, projects, as well as the labor of persons, groups and movements. Providing attribution connects and contextualises our work within the trajectory of open sharing and collective knowledge building.

APC, as many other organisations, has defined through the years which values, principles, and policies apply to events we organise. Our Code of conduct and ground rules are applied to both APC-hosted online and offline events, including internal organisational meetings and members/network convenings, as well as program and project conferences and/or training events:

"The Association for Progressive Communications is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for discussing issues related to its community. The APC Community comprises members of the network, all APC staff and team and its larger network of partners, friends and allies.

The code of conduct and ground rules apply to member meetings, all APC hosted events, conference-related social events, such as parties or gatherings at restaurants or bars and spaces, and includes our mailing lists, wikis, platforms, websites and any other spaces that APC hosts, both online and off."

All APC events are intended to be SAFE spaces and we ask participants to be guided by mutual respect, collaboration, consent, awareness and recognition of diversity, and acting in fair and honest manner. These are some of our main ground rules, however, depending on the context and content shared during the convening there are more ingredients added and specific APC principles are further applied. Our principles and practices that inform and guide our convenings and events evolve and transform as our community evolves and transforms.

Moving from the physical to the online environment - the relationship and principles that shape the technology which hosts and makes the event possible have taken a prominent role. Through planning and creating our events we have learned on their applicability, their limitation and their empowering framing. One of the major outcomes is the understanding that we need values, principles and policy to guide the planning and realization of online events which are environmentally respectful on the short as well as longer term.

Two key values recognised and formalised in our work define APC event's relationship with technology:

- Policy on use of free/libre and open source technology

- Feminist Practices and Politics of Technology

Check in
You can read more in the following sections where technology choices of platforms and tools are presented. Throughout the different sections of the guide you will find/discover/see how APC values, principles and policy have informed our choices, methodologies and also confronted us with the challenge of combining them or have to prioritise one over the other.

Principles and practices of participation

Nurturing an environment where each person feels seen, heard, and their experience acknowledged - contributes to a work flow that welcomes shared learning, intersectional conversations, mutual support and creative collaboration. Here are our Principles and practices of participation that we value and apply in our events:

- Create a welcoming, safer and more accessible space for all participants
- Acknowledge and value different histories, diverse identities, lived experiences, and the knowledge everyone offers and brings into the shared space.
- Consent, privacy and confidentiality are non-negotiable and unconditional as a baseline of trust.
- Handle disagreement constructively and non-violently.
- Zero tolerance on disrespect, harassment and violence in any form.
- Embed politics and practice of self and collective care.
- Be collaborative, open and participatory in your approach.
- Be mindful of language, access layers and context diversity, and be supportive of self-expression to the autonomy, extent and pace of each person.
- Self-reflect and recognize the specter of power and different (lack of) participation privileges in terms of situational capacities and structural inequality, including context, access, language, gender, different accessibility needs, public speaking/participation skills, etc.
- Be willing to de-center your perspective and always listen to each other with an open mind and heart.
- Extend compassion and kindness to everyone you are sharing the space with.
- Attribute and give credit to previous projects, sources, contributions and also the investment from everyone in the shared space.
- Adjust your participation pace to your needs. Reach out if you need support at any point.

If you find this useful or resonating with your experience and values, read the extended version of the Feminist Principles of Participation, which inform APC's Principles of Participation, along with the Code of Conduct and Sexual Harassment Policy.