How to design and plan your session(s)?

During the last years we have collected templates for interactive remote exercises, icebreakers and energizers, and we have various repositories of others activities and facilitation tips. Here we would like to share with you our example of session(s) design outline, checklist and our template that we are using - hoping these can be helpful.

Session(s) design outline

- Title [Think of the title that unlocks imagination]
- Purpose [What is the session about and where do we intend to land]
- People and Roles [Leads facilitators/host; Care facilitators; Chats and Time moderators; Tech Support]
- Exercises and Materials [Icebreakers, games, role play, creative materials, photos, journals, etc.]
- Preparation [A detailed description with duration and time of each planned activity from opening to closure, who is doing what and when to share with everyone involved, including the documentation team]
- Agenda [A short description of the various sections of the session with time duration, including breaks to be shared with participants]

Session(s) design checklist and preparation template

Title [Think of the title that unlocks imagination, that is creative, inspiring and welcoming]

Purpose [What is the session about and where do we intend to land]. A session is a stepping stone in the overall arc of the meeting. Make sure you have clear the overall arc of the event you are contributing and co-creating. Identify one up to three goals your session aim to address. The Purpose has two kinds of statements: 1) What do we want to achieve? and 2) Where do we hope to land? You can develop a tailored specific purpose for your session.

People and Roles – Online facilitation is characterized by fragmentation of spaces which asks for dedicated people to look after so that participants can experience the spaces with easiness. Define your team and agree on back channels or ways to address and respond to glitches or provide support to participants.

Based on our experience we have identified the roles below. They can be played by different people or some of them can play multiple roles. We always make sure our team feels comfortable with playing more roles. Wider facilitation team is made of:

- Leads facilitators/host – They lead the session design; take care of the opening and closing, hold the overall flow of the session, explain exercises and introduce people and their roles and the documentation team.
- Care facilitators – They lead on designing care into the session, help with body breaks, mindful and fun moments
- Chats and Time moderators – They follow the conversation in the chats and or any other agreed spaces, bring input back to the conversation, are responsible for time management and help leads facilitators/host and participants to be mindful about the time.
- Tech Support – This team is usually made of three persons. Their role is to explain and share any relevant information on the tools/platform used, support team and participants to overcome tech glitches, and respond to any issues that might arise.
- Documentation, translation and interpretation team - They are in charge of looking afters notes, decisions and key highlights of the conversation, translation, interpretation, and are included in the back-channel of communication, if one is created.
- Logistics and scheduling - Their role is to ensure everyone in the full team knows where they need to be, at what time, and who they need to connect with.

Exercises and Materials - These are activities that unfold the arc of your session and that support achieving the purpose. They can be various and inspired by different methodologies. The most used ones are icebreakers, energizers, brainstorming, role-play, facilitated discussions, etc. Activities can be done all together in plenary, in small groups or individually.

Preparation – This is the detailed description of each item on the agenda. It indicates the duration of each item, who is doing what, which materials will be used (from crayons and papers for drawing, doing collages, to links and specific online tools that will be used and tech support that might be necessary. We hope our template below will support you in your preparation as part of the checklist. The preparation is shared whenever is possible with the documentation team.

Agenda – The agenda is a short description of the various items that are part of the session. It includes time duration of each item, breaks. An item can include more than one activity, there is not a fixed amount of items that compose an agenda. It can be shared with participants before the session or at its opening. An agenda usually includes: title of the activity, duration, and additionally you can add the name of who is leading different activities.

Preparation template

Time	**Activity**	**Exercise/methodology**	**Duration**	**Who**	**Materials**
	Opening				
	Activity 1				
	Activity 2				

	Break				
	Activity ...				
	Closing				

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