

How to Turn Face-to-Face into Online Events



LEARNING SOLUTIONS GUIDE





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Introduction



In light of what is happening around the world, there has been a huge rush from organisations, universities and educational institutions to find online solutions to their face-to-face training, events and educational activities.

As an incredible amount of resources, articles and webinars are popping up to offer online solutions, we want to help filter through all of this to find what is relevant for the unique needs of training and capacity building.

We want to make it easier for you to select those online training tools that help participants in achieving their learning objectives. Effective methods acknowledge various learning styles, engage learners and make facilitation easier.

The UNITAR Learning Solutions team will share with you the best tips which we are learning as we transform our own events online, as well as curating a selection of the most relevant and appropriate tips for trainers, training institutions and others in the learning development field.

We will be publishing a series of tips, tools and resources in the coming weeks and months – stay tuned!

[UNITAR Learning Solutions, Division for Peace](#)

Methodological Tips



Reconsider the ‘Why’

- Before jumping into the ‘how’ of how the training or event can be done online, consider the ‘why’ once again and clarify the purpose and objectives. This allows you to base your technological methodological solutions on the needs and purpose of your event.
- Consider how and to what extent the learning objectives can be achieved online within the available time frame.

Assess Opportunities for Online Learning

- Before designing training, we need to analyse our audience. These assessments now need to include a new variety of technologically-related considerations for online training, such as participants’ internet connectivity or digital literacy.
- Consider an intersectional gender analysis: factors such as gender, age, geographical location, family status, ability etc. will constrain and shape your participants’ ability to engage and meaningfully contribute.
- Reflect which parts of your event require presence of all participants at the same time (synchronously) and which might be able to run asynchronously or offline

Reconsider agendas

- As there is a risk that participants remain periods of time sitting behind their computer, you can consider adapting the training by creating shorter sessions or planning for longer breaks.
- Make sure that participants have time to work for themselves and move around. Ensure some flexible programming with hard time points/deadlines when everyone comes together online again.
- Consider time zones of participants. Different time zones generally imply that you might have much less time for your training each day.
- Share agendas with participants in advance with clear timings.
- Many participants could be participating from their homes, some with childcare obligations. Consider participants' availabilities as well as household constraints when setting agendas, and ways that you can provide flexibility for this.

Rethink session plans and time allocations

- If you want to make sure that everyone feels engaged, included and heard, anticipate that most things can take longer. Conversation flow tends to be slower in online events and getting everyone involved can take longer.
- At the design stage, keep one-way presentation to its minimum whilst including more interactive group work and collaboration. Platforms such as Zoom offer break-out rooms to facilitate such discussions.
- If time allows, you could break up and spread the training over a longer period or time.
- Attention spans can be lower when online especially considering there can be many distractions online. Use breaks, invite participants to stretch or grab some refreshments on a regular basis.

Adapt Methods

- Many face-to-face methods can be done well online whilst many may lose their power and effectiveness and need to be adapted or cut out completely.
- Practice and test any interactive methods beforehand, sometimes you may underestimate how such methods work in an online environment.
- Make sure that the adapted activities still allow participants to achieve their learning objectives

Create Holistic Learning Packages

- Ensure diversity in your delivery and activities.
- Just as in face-to-face training, make sure you address various learning styles by designing a holistic and dynamic learning package that involve audio, visual and kinaesthetic learning.

Take Advantage of the Time Before the Online Event

- Consider what can be done by participants before the live event in order to save time and increase effectiveness of the event. For example, participant introductions, creation of an participant/organisational mapping etc. so that valuable online time is not used for introductions, which can take a lot of time.
- Consider what questions participants can already start to think about and prepare before the event, so that they do not need to use the valuable time online thinking about answers which could have been thought about in advance.
- Give responsibility and ownership to participants by considering what responsibilities they might want to take such as to make a presentation, so host a discussion, or to offer an energizer activity.
- Consider hosting individual or group calls before the online event to already start conversations, brainstorming or gathering of inputs, which can then be brought to the online training.

Streamline Online time

- An online training does not need to involve participants moving from a training room to instead watching a screen for an entire day.
- Keep energizers at hand and monitor the group's energy and shake them up if needed.
- Remain flexible, you might need to adjust the timing of activities and breaks as the event goes along.
- Be prepared for technological mishaps, embrace that they will most likely happen. Have a plan B just in case.

Use Learning Materials

- Consider providing participants with supportive learning material such as workbooks or learning journals. This could come in digital or physical forms where participants are able to print their learning materials which can help to assist them in the digital experience with something physical and tangible.
- Consider mailing participants resource packs which could be sent to them wherever they are. These might include post-it notes, workbooks and anything else they might need to enhance the engagement.
- Ask participants to make their own toolkit! Participants can be resourceful and bring whatever items they have available to them such as post-it notes, colourful pens or other materials to create their engagement more interactive.

Use Recorded Videos

- Video recording material which can be downloaded beforehand can help to avoid connectivity issues.
- Participants can be asked to download well in advance, and trainers can choose when they should watch any particular recording or instruction.
- You can record your live event and make it accessible after the event for those who couldn't join.

Harvest learning

- Find ways to document essential insights and decisions that emerge from the group processes or discussions. This is usually easier in face-to-face environments when post-it notes or flipcharts can simply be collected, so make sure important insights and outcomes are not left out.
- You can also invite participants to collaborate on a virtual whiteboard or a template which you create and share beforehand.
- Consider recording any session, so that insights can be collected and analysed later on. If you do, be sure to let participants know that the sessions are being recorded, and also be aware that this may make some participants feel less comfortable when sharing or giving inputs.

Consider what happens after the training

- Ask participants to create post-training action plans - allowing participants to create and commit to their follow-up steps once the training is over.
- Use accountability mechanisms such as deadlines, buddy systems and follow-up calls to ensure commitments are carried out.
- Consider other learning reinforcement mechanisms like creating learning aids, micro-learning, communities of practice or coach and mentoring schemes.
- Ask participants to fill online survey questionnaires to evaluate and get feedback on your training.

Coming Soon!

We will soon share more tips related to facilitation, technology, energisers and other tools!

Follow our social media accounts

   to stay updated.

 Contact us at learning.solutions@unitar.org



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