

Tips for Designing and Facilitating Engaging Events in a Community of Practice

This document is part of the Communities4Dev CoP Toolkit featuring practical resources to help you develop impactful Communities of Practice in the development sector. [Access the full CoP Toolkit.](#)

10 Tips for **Designing** Great Events and Activities

1. **Set a clear objective that is tied to your broader goals** - *what would you like to achieve and what would you like your audience to walk away with? What would you like them to feel or do next?*
2. **Take the time to plan, assign roles and responsibilities and engage your community members** – *an event is a project, treat it as such and plan carefully what and who will do before, during and after*
3. **Create space for meaningful audience interaction and participation** - *from the warm up that focuses everyone's attention and brings energy to the wrap up that provides space for reflection and highlights attendees' key insights*
4. **Create opportunities for relationship building** – *interactions are the start; think about how to make them meaningful so that people really get to know each other*
5. **Illuminate and leverage the collective wisdom of all attendees** – *enable attendees to learn with and from and help each other*
6. **Give everyone a voice** – *make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak, contribute and be heard and acknowledged (doesn't have to be in front of everyone)*
7. **Find the balance between flexibility and structure**– *strive to keep a balance between sticking to your plan and staying flexible when a section of the event is going particularly well and merits more time*
8. **Cater to different learning styles** – *different people learn and engage differently so use a variety of props and activities*
9. **End with lessons learned and next steps** – *always provide space to reflect and tell people what will happen next*
10. **Solicit feedback right after and use it for next time** – *do a +/-delta to understand what worked and what you could do differently next time, and then make the necessary changes*

10 Tips for **Facilitating** Great Events and Activities

1. **Share and follow the agenda** – *set expectations and let people know how the event will go; stick to the preestablished agenda*

2. **Prepare the speakers and moderators in advance** – *if you have panelists or other guest speakers, set clear guidelines for what they should do*
3. **Establish the ground rules up front** – *invite the audience to generate and agree to the ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’*
4. **Create a safe space and comfortable environment** – *be intentional about how you welcome people and how you set the room*
5. **Practice active listening**– *your job is to **facilitate** and bring out engagement from all attendees and guide the conversations and flow, NOT to dominate the agenda and have all eyes on you*
6. **Role model** – *behave the way you want your audience to behave; you are setting the tone for a respectful, inclusive and engaging event*
7. **Respect your event design and participants’ time** – *cut people off, if you have to, and deliver on what you promised*
8. **Diversify the types of activities you use**– *get people moving, pair people up, switch groups, use visuals and different props*
9. **End with lessons learned and next steps** – *always provide space to reflect and tell people what will happen next*
10. **Solicit feedback right after and use it for next time** – *do a +/-delta to understand what worked and what you could do differently next time, and then make the necessary changes*

Technology Tips for Online Events

1. **Mute yourself when you join the meeting** – *and stay muted unless you are about to speak*
2. **Call-in from a noise-free location** – *and if you face issues with bandwidth, use phone to call in and turn video off*
3. **Always say your name before speaking** – *it will help everyone, especially people who have audio only, to follow the conversation*
4. **Turn your video on and encourage others to keep their video on** – *at least for part of the meeting; it will help establish a personal connection*
5. **Say something if you experience technology issues** – *if you can’t hear someone, or you lose visuals, alert the presenter by speaking up or over chat*
6. **Share screen only when necessary** – *not sharing will allow participants to better see each other during the meeting*
7. **To record a meeting in a videoconferencing platform, you have to be ‘host’** – *OR you can ask the host to assign you the privilege to be able to hit the record button*
8. **Share necessary materials BEFORE meeting** – *like resources, PPT slides, agenda, to help people prepare but also to ensure everyone has access to materials in case of connectivity issues*

9. **Ensure you hear from everyone at least once!** – *this will create a more inclusive environment and help with relationship-building*
10. **Suffering is optional:** *mute your mic, take a walk, make coffee, but stay present with us*

Sample Meeting Norms and Principles

- Everyone will hear and be heard
- There are no wrong answers
- The wisdom resides within us
- We need everyone’s wisdom
- The whole is greater than the sum of its parts
- Expect leadership to come from anywhere

Useful Resources

- [Facilitation Idea Book](#): a World Bank Group resource with practical ideas for icebreakers, energizers and interactive exercises to add to learning sessions
- [Art of Hosting](#): a compilation of tools and techniques for participatory meetings and workshops
- [Guide to Great Events](#): a conceptual framework with practical examples and tips for how to design great events
- [Resources for Participatory Meetings](#): a plethora of resources on World Café, Open Space, and other participatory methods for small and large meetings and events
- [Art of Knowledge Exchange](#): a wide variety of activities developed specifically for knowledge exchange at different levels
- [The Circle Way](#): guidelines for how to facilitate ‘circle’ meetings giving everyone an equal voice
- [Liberating Structures](#): an alternative approach and design to how people interact and work together
- [Improv Warm-ups](#): a great collection of simple exercises to increase the energy and interactivity of an event

This document is part of the Communities4Dev CoP Toolkit featuring practical resources to help you develop impactful Communities of Practice in the development sector. [Access the full CoP Toolkit.](#)