# European Center for Not-for-Profit Law Stichting

# (Virtual) Session Design Canvas

## ECNL Tool for Events

European Center for
Not-for-Profit Law

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## How to use the canvas

The purpose of the **session design canvas** is to support the session design process and allow organizers to develop an event embedded in the big picture or overall program, along with the detail of the logistics at the same time.*

- **Download a blank copy of the canvas *from this link here.***

- **Populate the canvas by answering the questions below in the relevant sections of the canvas.**

- **Use appendices for examples and inspiration.**

## Before you start to use the canvas

Before you start designing your session, you should be able to describe:

- **An outcome or purpose:** what is your session is trying to achieve or produce? How will participants benefit from attending?

- **Who can and should participate**: who exactly will benefit from attending the workshop?

- **A plan for working towards your stated outcome:** how will you allocate time in your session, what steps move you toward productive results, and how are your participants contributing to the same?

** This canvas was originally conceived during ECNL Stichting practical online work. Further feedback and input was provided by the participants of the Virtual Session Design Lab.*

*See more at: https://www.fabriders.net/canvas-draft/*

# I. Populating the Session Design Canvas

## 1. The Big Picture

- What are your goals? What are you trying to accomplish?

> *Is this part of a broader aim or a program, project or effort? What is that? Is it a milestone? If so, how will it move this forward?*
>
> *What do you want to learn?*
>
> *How will this session build and strengthen connections in your community or network?*

- How will you evaluate the effectiveness of the session?

## 2. Participants

- Who are your participants?

> *What do you need to learn about your participants ahead of the session? Examples: language, location, time zone, level of knowledge about the topic...*
>
> *What do you want to learn from your participants during the session? How can they help you move your work forward?*
>
> *Do the participants know each other? How well? Have they collaborated or worked together previously? How is that relationship? How will you foster their bond during the session?*

- What are the essential topics participants will need to understand in the session?
- Do participants need financial support for participation (e.g. data packet)?

Consider writing a brief session description that describes who the session is for and what value and benefit they might get from attending.

## 3. Logistics

- How much time do you have to run the session? Plan less time than you have allotted – it will most surely take longer than you plan.
- Schedule your session – make sure you have an optimal time, given people's energy levels.  A long online session might make more sense to schedule over a couple of days, rather than doing it all at once.

- What virtual tools will you need to run the session? Use as few as you possibly can. At the minimum, you will need a meeting space (Zoom, Teams, Hangouts, etc.) and a shared doc (Google Doc, Google Jamboard, Etherpad) for use during the session. Check the recent FLD guide on safe online tools: https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/resource-publication/guide-secure-group-chat-and-conferencing-tools

> *Consider your participants' bandwidth, connections and their comfortability and familiarity with the tools.*
>
> *What instruction will you need to provide?*

- What are responsible data, privacy and security considerations needed for this meeting? How will you communicate those to the participants in advance? Check *Annex 4* for information on privacy and security.

- What will need translating and how will you do it? Start looking for online event translators early.

- Do you need a back-channel for your team to communicate with each other during the session? Yes.

> *Who should be part of the backchannel? Do you need more than one?*
>
> *What platform (e.g. Skype, WhatsApp, Signal) is the team most comfortable?*

- What resources will you need? How much budget?

## 4. Preparation

- What roles will you need to run the session? How many people? Doing what? Check *Annex 2* for information on roles.

- How will you document and take notes during the session? Will you provide follow up notes to participants?

- What guidelines will you need to provide to participants in order to ensure inclusivity and trust during the session? Prepare them.

- What will you need to test ahead of time? Test everything.

- What instruction will need to be provided? How will we make sure what we are asking of participants is clear and understandable? When should instructions be sent out (and repeated)?

- When do you need to send different materials to participants (invitation, agenda, reading prep, instructions, logistics, reminders, etc.)? Make a schedule.

## 5. Post-Session

- How and when will you follow-up with participants?

- How will participants continue to interact with each other after the session?
- How might participants make use of the outputs of the session?
- What will happen with the collaborative doc?
- How will you get feedback on the session from participants?

# II. Creating a Session Plan

How will you line up parts of the session to create a logical and comfortable sequence? We have laid out an ADIDS (Activity, Discussion, Input, Deepening & Synthesis) sequence for session planning that will drive adult learning.

## 1. Activity

- What **activity** can you start with to get participants grounded in their own contexts and challenges? Check *Annex 1* for information on various activities.

> *How will you break them into small groups for the activity?*
>
> *What should be captured in the small groups? How will you do that? (Google Doc, post-it notes, etc)*
>
> *How long will this take?*

## 2. Discussion

- Which questions should you ask when you bring them back into large group **discussion** to help them reflect on the activity?

> *How long will this take?*
>
> *How will you capture it?*

## 3. Input

- What expertise could be provided to the participants on the topic for **input**?

> *Are there key voices/writings/content/stories that could be shared?*
>
> *How long will this take?*

## 4. Deepening

- What is a small group activity where participants can **deepen** their knowledge with the expertise they have just received?

> *How will you break them into small groups for the activity?*
>
> *What should be captured in the small groups? How will you do that? (Google Doc, post-it notes, etc)*
>
> *How long will this take?*

## 5. Synthesis

- How can they **synthesize** the session in a large group discussion?

  > *Is there a list of best practices you might ask them to generate?*
  >
  > *How can they apply this workshop to their current and future projects?*
  >
  > *How long will this take?*
  >
  > *How will you capture it?*

- How much time will you have for follow-up questions and clarification on next steps?

  > *What are next steps/follow up activities with the participants?*
  >
  > *How will you capture it?*

- How long do you need for the entire session? Add up the time needed – especially for technical parts (switching between large/small groups, etc.).

- Don't forget to include breaks.

## 6. Session Design Best Practices

- Design your session to be **flexible and adaptable** to the questions, interests and actual needs of the participants who attend; it is less productive to "just follow the script".

- It is more than okay to **engage participants in a challenge** you are facing in the topic. Think about how you can benefit in your own work by engaging the brains that are in the session.

- **Divide into small groups early and often** in the session. Smaller groups mean more opportunity for participants to be engaged and also give input.

- "**Less is more**": try to do a small number of things well in your session, rather than cramming too many elements into what you work on.

# III. Running the session / Facilitation

- Make sure everyone feels welcome, comfortable and knows how to use the platform or tools.
- Provide Guidelines for interaction. State the goals for each discussion at the outset, check along the way that you are progressing towards those goals, and review the goals at the end of the session. It means: "tell them what you're going to tell them, then tell them, then tell them what you told them".
- Take breaks when people seem to be getting tired. Ask participants to turn their video on and off, rather than disconnect and reconnect during the break.
- If people are dropping out because of low-bandwidth, consider turning off video.
- Always stay calm and have a sense of humour if things go wrong.
- Appreciate everyone's participation and contribution often. Strive to include everyone in the discussion. Some participants will want to talk too much, others will refrain from speaking. Try to move the dialog to the latter camp, and don't be shy about politely calling out those who monopolise the airwaves. Politely invite anyone who dominates the conversation or monologues to allow others to have a chance to contribute.
- Ensure the conversation is sticking to its stated topic and purpose and keeps progressing. Watch for tangents that de-focus the topic at hand; gently rope in those who digress or veer off topic. Similarly, don't let participants get too fixated on one point.
- Ask participants for (technical) help and advice if needed - it is a joint effort!
- Identify and document any next steps or action items that have come out of the discussion.

# IV. Appendixes

## 1. Session Activities

- **Silent reflection** - ask participants to write down a response to a question, this can either be done via an online collaborative doc. Write the question with bullet points underneath. Examples:

> *Get final commitments by getting them to complete the sentences:*
>
> As a result of this workshop, I will... (task & name)
>
> As a result of this workshop, we (this group of people) should...
>
> Reflecting on what happened, let us not forget to...
>
> *Get the group to imagine future interaction by completing "How about we....."*

- **Brainstorming and Organising –** ask participants to break into small groups to discuss the topic more deeply. Ask them to capture main points in complete understandable sentences on post-it notes. After enough time to generate a good number of post-it notes, use a wall to gather the notes and ask participants to organise the post-its and identify main themes or topics.

- **Ordering** – Print the title of each step on a sheet of paper and ask for volunteers to hold the signs. After each volunteer says the title of the sign, ask participants to put the steps in order – as they do so, ask why they have chosen that order.

- **Ranking** – ask participants to break into pairs and discuss a list of techniques and ask them to determine most effective to least effective.

- **Polling** - use Zoom polling function or outside poll tool such as Mentimeter, Slido or similar.

- **Gallery** – Share examples or case studies and get participants to review each one as if they are in an art gallery. Give them questions to answer as they review each example (i.e., for data visualisations ask: what is the message and who is it for?)

- **Spectrogram** – draw a line down the centre of the screen. At each end of the line write the words agree and disagree. Then read controversial statements related to the session topic and ask participants to place virtual notes along the line in relation to how much they agree or disagree.

- **Scenario** – create scenarios based on real-life problems that address the topic. Break participants up into small groups to review the scenarios and discuss how they would solve the problem.

- **Drawing** – get participants to visualise something using Zoom blank board or Google Jamboard. Perhaps an organisational practice, workflow, or even the outcomes or impact of their work. Or simply play Pictionary.

# 2. Virtual Session Roles

## Technical host (s)

- handles breakout room set up, breakout room Q & A
- schedules the meeting
- handles interpretation / coordinates online translators and their technical requirements
- assigns ‘co-host’ duties
- designs participates and coordinates technology and content with the team

## Facilitator Host (s)

- co-host
- coordinates on content, format and guests / participants
- outreach and announcements for the event across networks
- coordinates event production team
- books guest speakers
- runs the public part of the meeting (front of house)
- relays messages from team
- designs, participates and coordinates technology and content with team

## Community manager/engagement (s)

- co-host
- moderates people – shut video, verify users, kicks out potential troublemakers
- coordinates with business owners on potential problematic participants
- coordinates questions across breakout and facilitator
- shares outreach and announcements for the event across networks
- provides community engagement training
- coordinates the back of the house (WhatsApp) and the front of house communications
- answers questions in the chat
- provides the collaborative documentation
- recruits moderation, community helpers for larger events
- coordinates technical and community teams with facilitators
- manages waiting room with business owners (verifies participants when applicable)
- designs, participates and coordinates technology and content with team

### *Technical Support*

- co-host
- coordinates technical issues with the technical host and team
- direct messages people who need help with sound/setup, verified participants, changes people's names to identify them correctly

### *Moderators*

- provides extra support for technology and community teams
- co-host
- can advise if there are potential problem makers

### *Analysts*

- review the outputs from the collaborate notes
- creates summary and insights

### *Designers*

- puts outputs into usable, web or email-based content and formats for easy digesting and dissemination

## 3. Virtual 'How to Participate' Guidelines

### *The Zoomies*

- To operate in Zoom, move your cursor to the bottom of the screen and **a menu bar** will appear (please note that if you're using a tablet or smartphone, the menu may be located elsewhere). In the lower left-hand corner, you should see **a mic icon where you can mute and unmute yourself.** We request that you stay on Mute, until you are invited to come off Mute to speak. Next to that is an icon for a camera where you can turn your video on and off

- In the middle of that menu bar, you should see **an icon of a figure, click on that and a list of participants appears on the right-hand side of your screen**. You will note: there is a button at the bottom of that list that **says 'raise hand'** - you can use that to get our attention if you have a question or a comment you would like to contribute to the discussion.

- **You are free to record this workshop for your own use only**. If you were ever to share the recording, please contact relevant participants and get their okay.

### *General Guidelines*

- **Be respectful** - Please follow the instructions and the prompts, be timely. Don't rush to solve other people's problems. Respect that there are different experiences present and try to listen and understand. Strive to build solidarity.

- **Be Inclusive** - Speak to the nth. Expand all acronyms, be wary of jargon, so everyone can understand. Share resources and URLs, so others can benefit.

- **Be Fully Present** - Ask questions and get the most out of the small group discussions and in the large group. Minimise or close apps that you might find distracting during this!

## Google Doc tips

- To the left of the document, floating towards the top of the white buffer, is a grey three line icon. That's the Document outline. Click it and it will show subsections of the document, which you can then click on and travel right to that section instead of scrolling

- If you want to go directly to someone's cursor (where they're writing) and they' signed in (or you know which anonymous animal they are) you can **click on the circle icon for their name/animal up top**, above the document on the right side, on the same level as the title, towards where it says "Share." If you can't see that line, look for a down arrow (like an upside down >) on the very far right up top and click that.

# 4. Privacy and Security Guidance

## Privacy

Include in the registration form a paragraph like "*For the purpose of this online event, the video-conferencing platform Zoom is being used. ECNL Stichting bears no responsibility about how Zoom processes personal data. You can read more about Zoom's privacy policy here. Please see ECNL's Data Usage Policy here.*"

If we want to share pax list with participants or donors, also include a sentence with check box, that "*I consent that my information is shared with .....*"

## Security

Before the meeting

- Always use a registration form in order to keep track of people registering.
- Do not share meeting link on social.
- Share event etiquette: mute your mics when you are not speaking, be respectful, don't interrupt others, be present (i.e. don't look at phone, e-mails, etc.)

During the meeting

- Use waiting room to control who is joining.
- Disable screen sharing for participants.
- Lock meeting so people cannot join?
- Kick out people that might cause trouble.