

Handbook for training youth online

Based on training by Jan Lai & Saana Sarpo

*"Facilitating & designing online learning for
the Youth Leadership Programme"*

18th June - 7th July 2020



YLP vs. Covid-19: Supporting Young People's Learning Online

WELCOME! from who's where?

Participants' Expectations

- How to design online learning sessions that achieves the desired impact
- How to Keep the Youth engaged & excited in the virtual activities
- How to make online learning more efficient, effective and interactive?
- How to be close to Youth through online tools?
- How to rise Youth motivation?
- Get new facilitation skills! How to use online tools
- Be able to still organize beneficial & fun sessions
- Learn some technicalities to create dynamic online workshops
- Experiment Digital tools & elements

It's important to know participants expectations in order to create a content that matches their needs!

Youth Work online

- ✓ Check & assess participants needs;
- ✓ Make sure participants can all be included;
- ✓ Set up activities timeline
- ✓ Try to use 1 method ~~Not~~ more than 15 min;
- ✓ Chose the simplest tools;
- ✓ Think BIG then, SIMPLIFY!

Mentimeter

- 19 Online learning works only in Formal education?
- 26 Young people want only to meet in person?
- 3 Engaging young people online requires too much tech skills?

What are the challenges in designing online activities?

- Lack of resources
- Planning process of the activities
- Connectivity
- Lack of engagement

Try practicing one of them until the next session!

Tool Box

- Zoom
- Kahoot
- Padlet
- Whiteboard
- Mentimeter
- Trello

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Introduction

With COVID-19 changing the way we are implementing youth programmes, with many face-to-face activities moving online. Online tools have been previously used mainly to organize internal meetings or webinars with limited amount of interaction. Now we are facing the challenge of how to translate the face-to-face workshops and encounters online, without reducing the quality of training given, and ensuring that we are meeting the learning goals we have set for our projects.

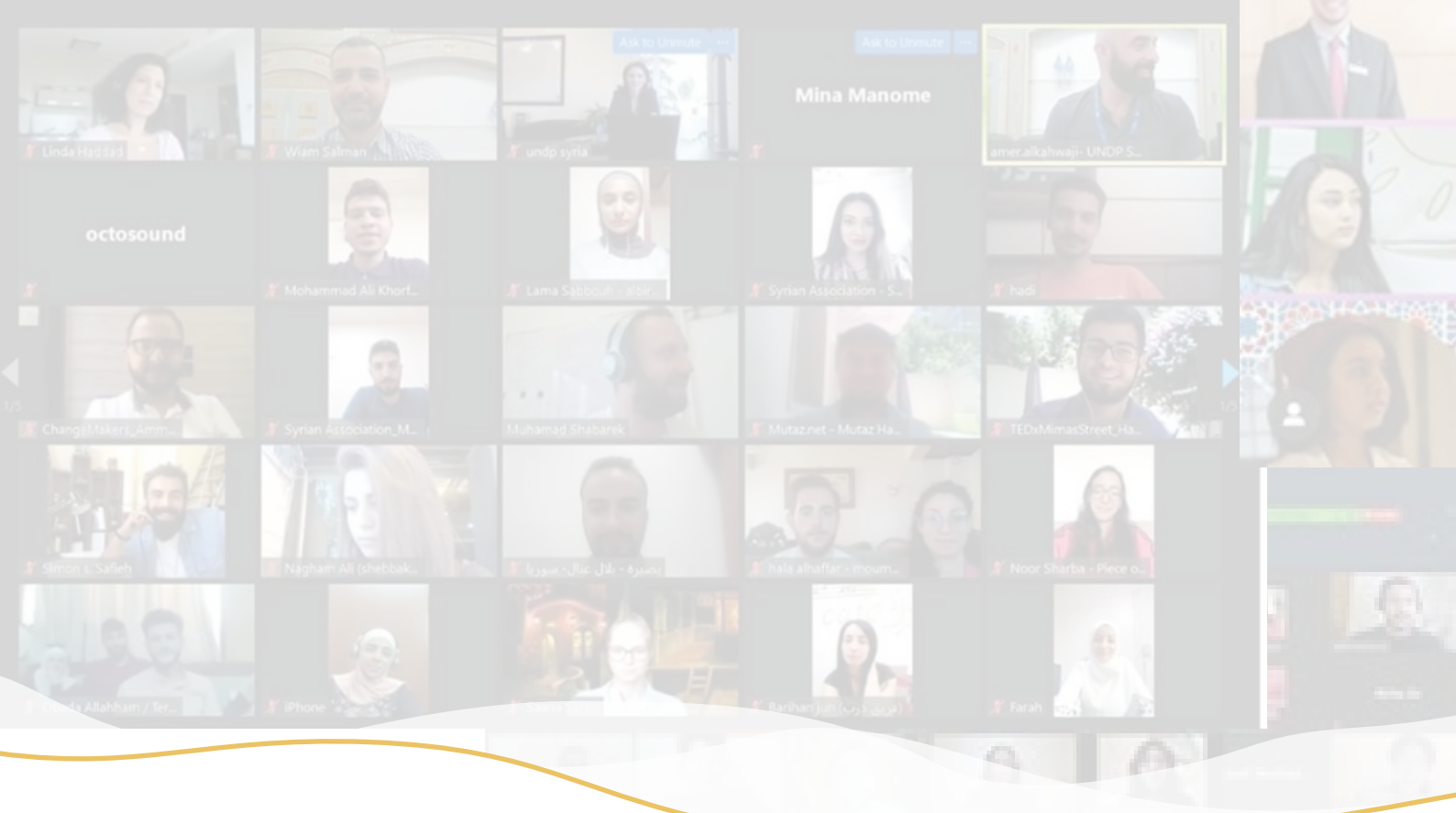
Bringing people together in an online setting alone does not guarantee success. The effectiveness of any given session or workshop is dependent on the skills of the facilitator and the process that has been designed. Training online and face-to-face differ from each other – thus the design and planning of different online activities differ as well. Thus, there is a need to go beyond thinking about the technological side of available online tools: to pay more attention to how we are designing the entire learning process to reach our goals through online training.

“Training online is not about technology, it’s about training”

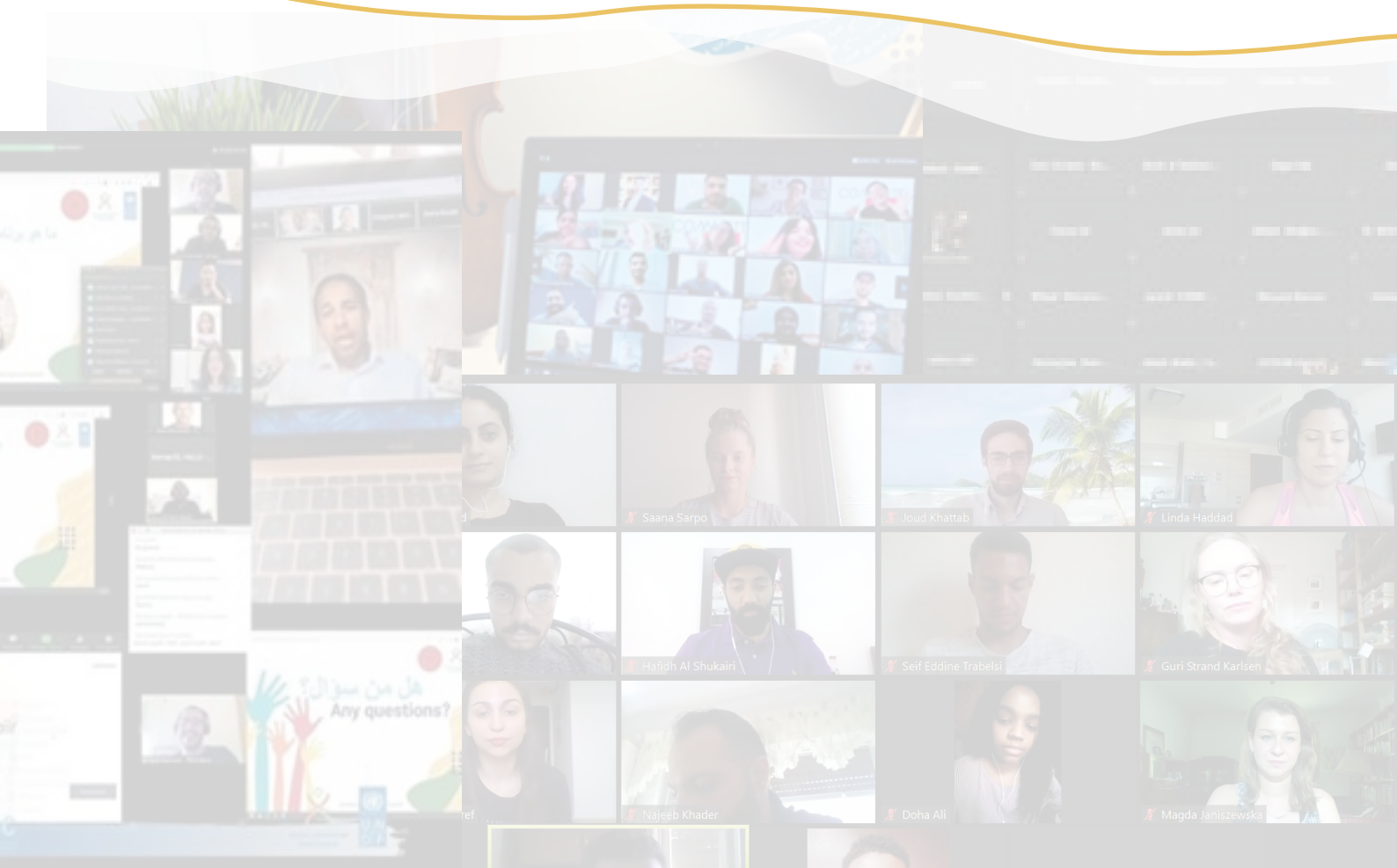
When we are looking at the future beyond COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that online workshops and facilitation are becoming more common. Thus, developing the skills and resources to be an effective facilitator and trainer, as well as how to incorporate online learning to our programmes, will be beneficial in the long run: ‘future-proofing’ and adaptability to changing circumstances are vital skills for any team, be it in delivering online workshops or working remotely in general.

This handbook is based on the training delivered to the organizers, trainers, facilitators and partners of the UNDP’s Youth Leadership Programme. The content was delivered in two ways: 1) through two online workshops, and 2) through an asynchronous online learning experience. The training engaged the participants in experimentation and hands-on learning, while encouraging the use of new tools and new ways of thinking. This handbook gathers the main information and tools used during the training.

We hope that this handbook will be useful for you as a trainer or as a person working with youth and give you tools and confidence to design and deliver your online learning activities!



Part 1: Designing online learning activities



1. What is non-formal and experiential learning? Can it happen online?

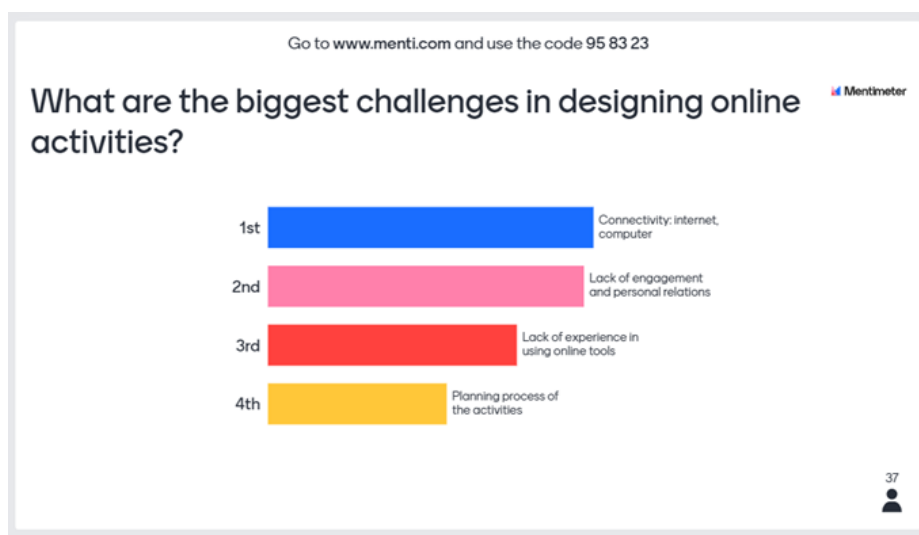
Experiential learning is considered to be the cornerstone of non-formal learning; its primary learning process. This can explain a certain level of scepticism when thinking of how to transfer non-formal learning from well-known in-presence settings to a little-explored online environment.

But do we all share the same understanding of these key concepts? We asked our participants and their answers showed that there is indeed a common and shared set of basic ideas about what non-formal learning and experiential learning are. The shared understanding defines it as a process that favours the acquisition of new skills through practical, hands-on experiences outside of the regular school and academic environments.

To quote one of the sentences collected through the group work, *“Experiential learning is a process through which students develop knowledge, skills, and values from direct experiences outside a traditional academic setting [...]”*.

Some main obstacles were highlighted during the sessions related to the possibility to have such learning online. These challenges need to be taken into consideration when planning an online learning project.

These are, most notably, bottlenecks related to **technical (hardware) and tech know-how**, and the need to find new ways to **engage learners**.



As one group noted, this creates a *“need to re-think the training and not to replicate the face-to-face training to the online environment as it is”*.

On the other hand, the online setting can bring new potentially positive outcomes, such as more flexible time management for the learners, and different and more flexible cost structures depending on the choice of tools to be adopted.

More participant definitions from the sessions can be read [here](#).

2. Designing effective online sessions

Step 1: Define the goals and needs of your group (be inclusive!)

There are two important steps to assess before you set on designing the agenda for your training sessions. These are defining your goals and the needs of your group. You need to know your participants well before designing their sessions in regards to their needs, resources and skill levels.

A clear understanding of goals and resources will determine choices about content, tools and time structure of your online project!

What are your goals for the training?

- Keeping a group of youth active online?
- Developing/working on content together?
- Delivering a certain set of information/knowledge for young people?
- Building team spirit?

Your goals define whether your session will aim to engage and motivate the young people to work together (aiming for fun and entertaining session), or whether you will need to prepare more sophisticated tools to work together on creating and editing content (for example a group or individual project).

What are the resources your group has?

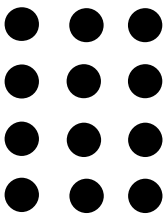
- Time
- Software licenses
- Motivation
- Connection
- Devices

The resources available for your participants define a lot of what software/tools you can use for your training: if most of your participants are joining from their mobile, complex software platforms can be hard to use.

Always test your tools in regards to what technological needs they have, such as bandwidth, need for downloading applications, need for registration, mobile compatibility etc.

To be as inclusive as possible, design your training to be as accessible as possible through different devices.

Rule of thumb: set your bar as low as possible to promote inclusion!



Step 2: ***Plan carefully***

Once you have a clear idea of your participants profiles, needs, goals and resources, you will be ready for a careful planning phase. There is no right or wrong planning approach if the focus is on having a clear picture of Step 1 findings and reflecting them in your design.

Knowing what the possibilities and limits of your participants and your project are will help in choosing among the following variables:

Preparation & format

What kind of sessions do you want to prepare? Do you want to organise a longer course with a mix of different interaction tools (live or asynchronously), or a short live session? Or perhaps a mix of these both? Different formats require different preparation times and can result in a very diverse time structure of how they are delivered.

Setting up online activities requires at least the same time as face-to-face meetings, if not even more. Moving activities online is not a shortcut and should never be approached as such.

It can easily happen that online activity will result in a much lighter financial budget, but this can be neither the rule nor the reason behind the choice for an online solution.

Content

Content does not mean only the information and knowledge you want your participants to learn. It also means the other goals you aim to achieve, including bonding, building team spirit and evaluation, as well as how you communicate with your participants. Online activities require an extra level of clarity of instructions.

Online experiences are mostly based on visual media. Using visual content and tools enhances your activities.

The attention span and the curiosity levels of your participants do not have a direct correlation with how complete a topic presentation is, but rather with how much such content is presented in a way that is motivating and easy to visualise and remember

Approach

The group of experts on digitalisation from the European Commission has suggested a minimum requirement for a successful online activity is to have a FLEXIBLE AND AGILE MINDSET. Learning platforms and digital tools come after!

Don't be fooled by fancy platforms and shiny tools. Focus on your goals, THINK BIG and then SIMPLIFY!

Downsize and aim at what's possible and manageable both for your own skills and for your participants' skills and resources. After all, what matters is the participants' engagement!

Software/tools

Choose your software based on the resources that your group has and on how you need to deliver your content

Your software should do what you require in the most user-friendly way possible.

You do not need the newest, coolest and most popular software! What you need is the right tool to achieve your goals by keeping your group in mind.

Ensure that you know your tools inside-out. A facilitator who does not know their tools and how to support in situations with problems does not promote confidence in the audience. Use tools that you are comfortable using and use enough time to test and prepare.

Rule of thumb: Simplify!
Consider your participants, not the coolness level of your tools!



Step 3: Evaluate!

To quote one of our working groups: *“non-formal [education] might have difficulty in measuring impact and behavioural change”* as it does not imply a system for verification and certification of learning. That is why evaluation is an important step in your design process.

There are two levels of evaluation:

1. Evaluating the learning of participants
2. Evaluating the training session itself

In non-formal/experiential learning, in the absence of a verification process and of a certifying authority (a teacher, a commission, etc.), participants’ self-evaluation is the key part of the process. Raising awareness of individual learning goals and fostering tools and methods for self-assessment by incorporating reflection as part of your training, will support the learning mindset of your participants.

Evaluation is linked to the expectations of the participants. At the beginning of the training session, you might want to ask the participants to articulate their expectations so that you can see what they are expecting and how your design responds to that. Not all expectations are realistic: you might want to take this into account when you reflect on the evaluation feedback.

An important thing to keep in mind is to make the evaluation and giving feedback as easy and simple as possible: avoid making it a boring and time-consuming step, and you will get you more answers.

Rule of thumb: Always evaluate both the learning and the session!



Common training challenges

My participants are not engaging, opening their cameras or asking any questions. We are also losing participants in each session. How could I keep participants engaged?

- Check your session design vis-à-vis the resources your participants have: is the problem in connectivity? Could you enhance “offline” engagement?
- Build team spirit through ice-breakers, group work and competitions: when participants know each other better, they are more likely to participate

My participants have a very poor internet connection, which means they cannot use video or keep dropping out of the live meetings. What can I do?

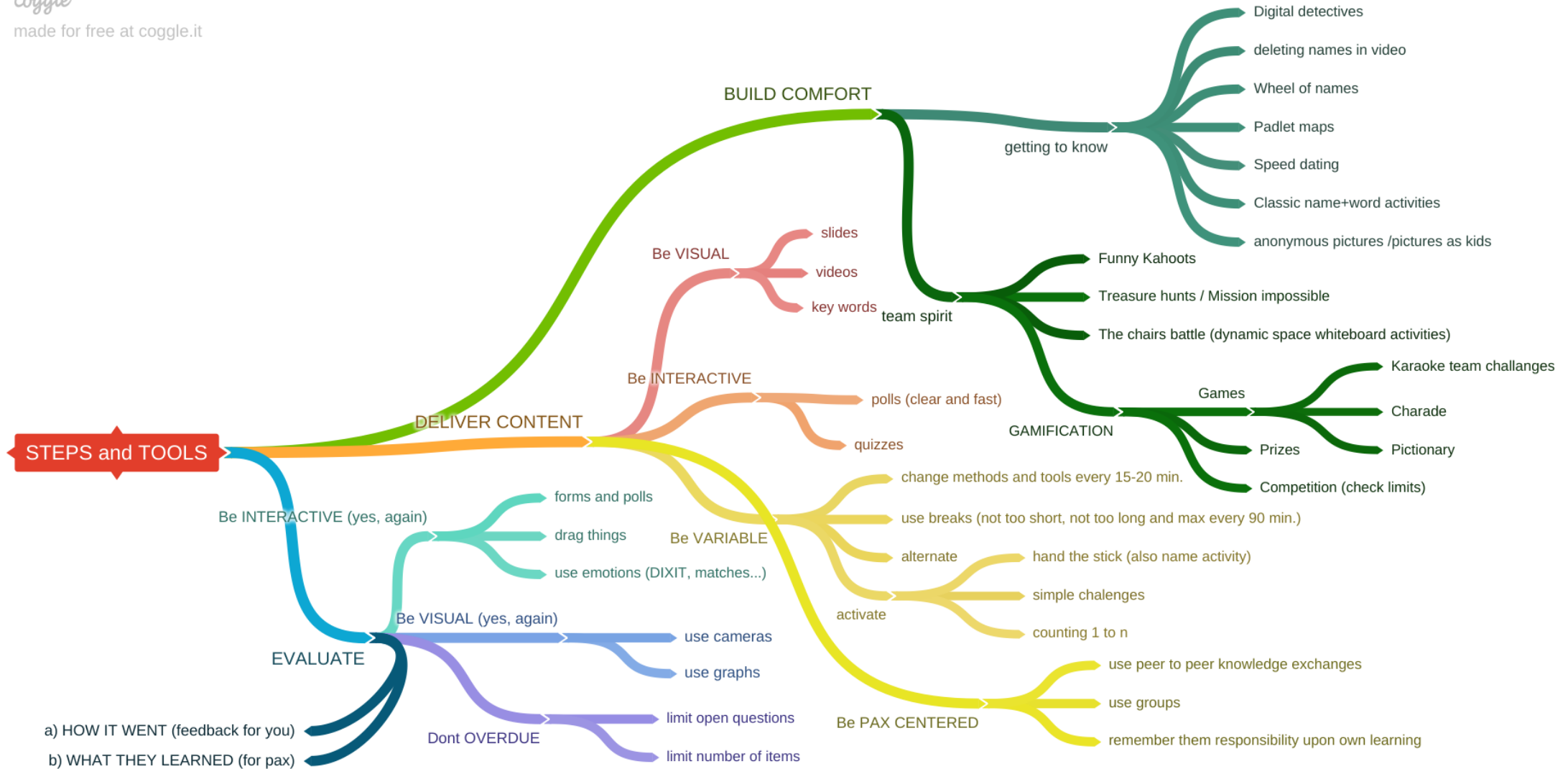
- Share the recording of the session
- Share powerpoint/other reading material before the session with preparatory questions
- Write all instructions for group work on a PowerPoint – don’t rely only on verbal explanations
- Keep live sessions short
- Use an online platform (Padlet etc.) for engagement between the live sessions. You can share materials, encourage discussions, set project tasks etc. on the platform.

My training session went poorly, and the exercises I designed did not work. I am a bad trainer and failed my participants.

- Great! You learned a valuable lesson: not everything will go as planned. In online training, these problems can be exacerbated, as we do not have a similar presence with our participants, with the chance to read the situation and their reactions and responses.
- Evaluate the session: why the exercises did not work? On the other hand, what worked well with your group? How could you adjust the “failed” exercises to match your group’s needs better for your next sessions or for your other groups?
- What works for one group will not necessarily work for others, and there might be many reasons
- Remember the two-way evaluation: you may have achieved the learning goals, even though some parts of your training did not achieve what you wanted. Your participants’ learning goals should always come first.

Summary

coggle
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coggle

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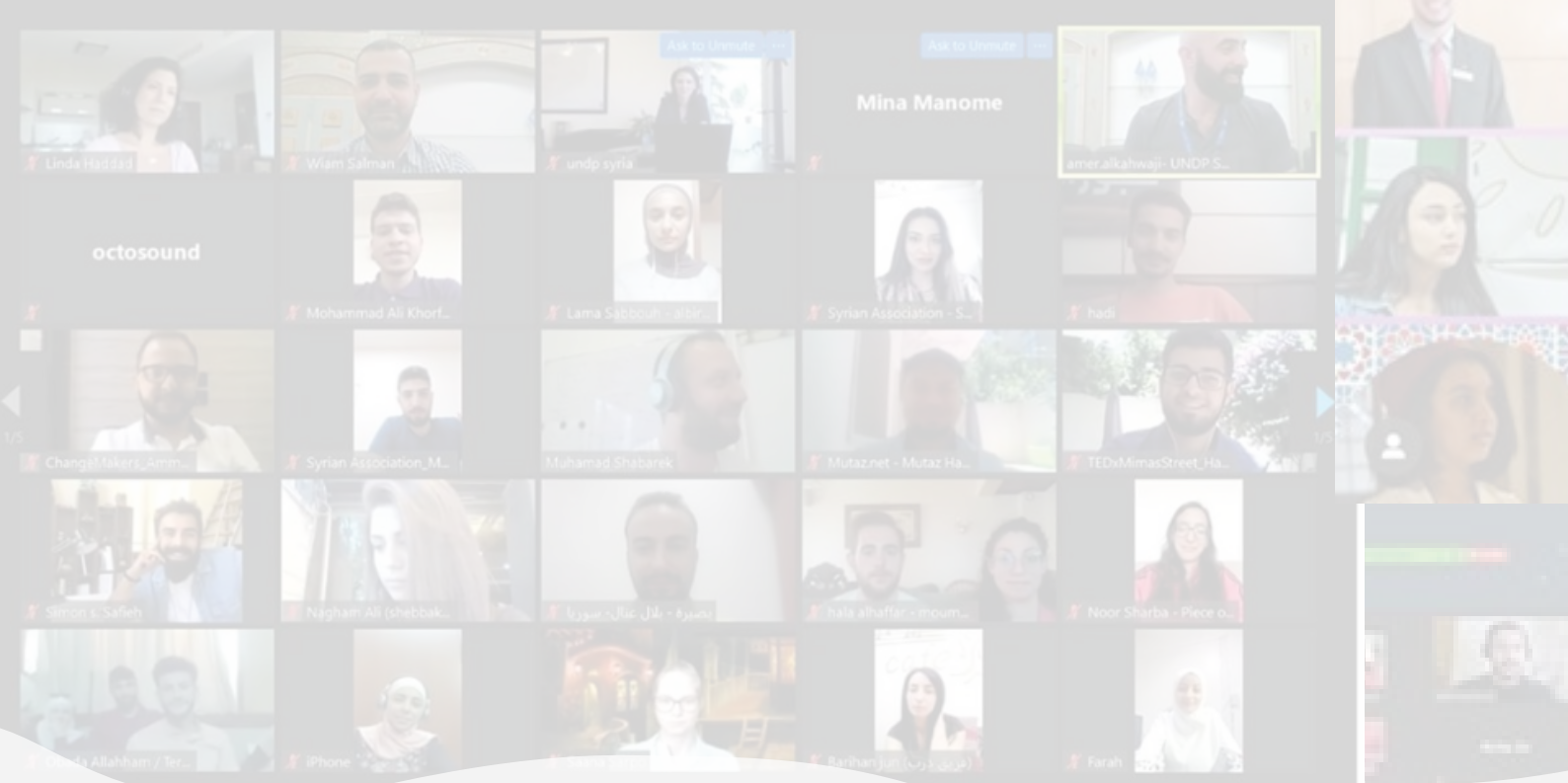


Additional issues to remember during the training:

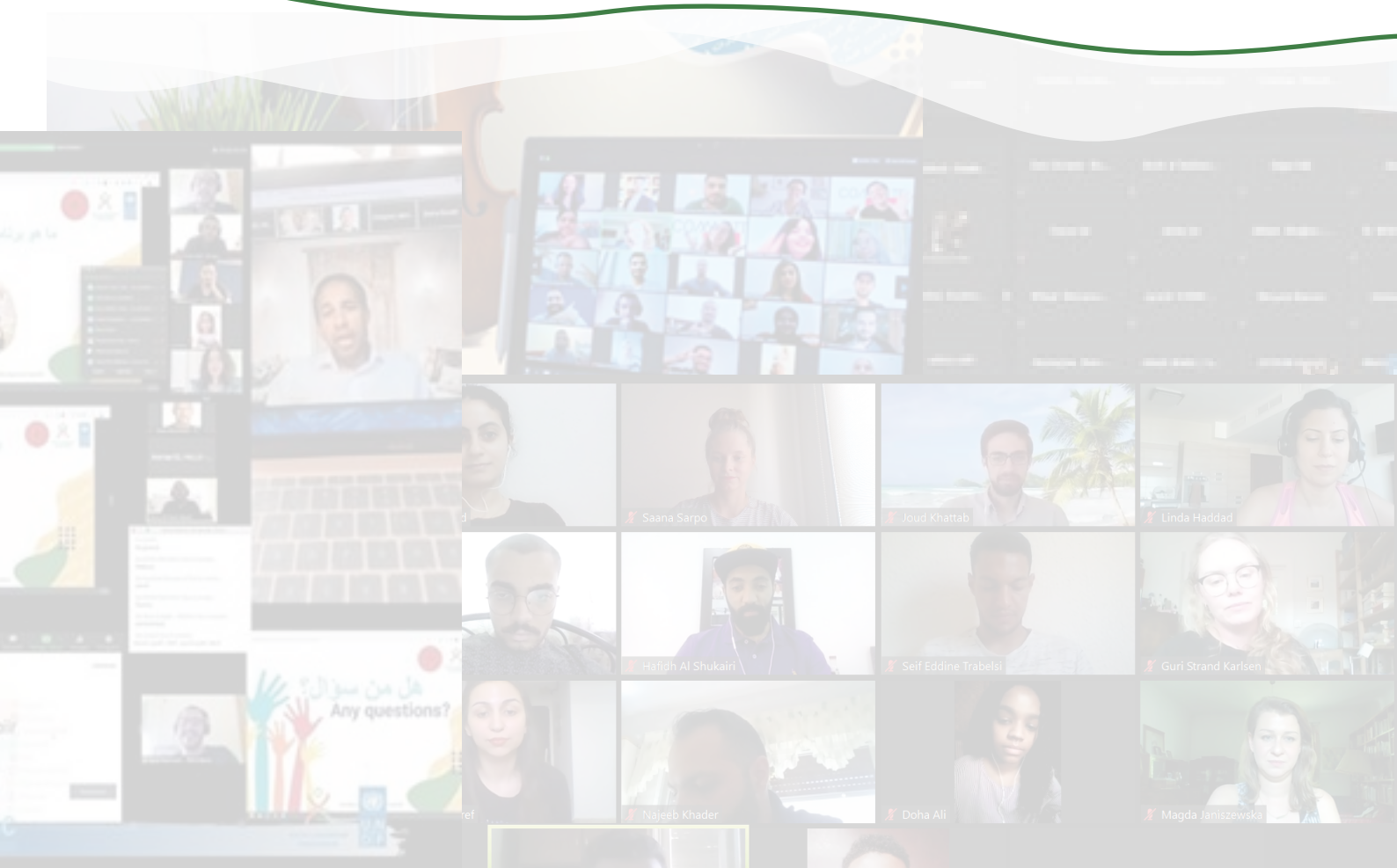
- If it can happen to your participant, it can happen to you. Be prepared for power cuts, internet connection losses, crashing of computers, missing materials and so on.
- Work in teams do not facilitate alone. If something unexpected happens, the other person can take over. For example, have an alternative host on each Zoom meeting, in case something happens to you, and you disconnect, the whole meeting does not end.
- Communicate with your team during the session, using another channel. This allows you to constantly reflect on what is going on, and whether you need to adjust and change the agenda based on the group needs. For example, you sense participants getting quiet and less engaged. Instead of pushing on with your current plan, do a short energiser before continuing.

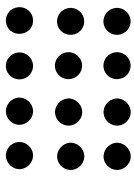
Knowing your tools can allow you to create a quick exercise in a very short time, to respond to the group needs.





Part 2: Structuring your training





3. Getting to know each other / team building / ice-breakers

Main objectives:

- Breaking the ice between participants
- Encouraging participants to bond and get to know each other
- Creating motivation and team spirit

Treasure Hunt

Give participants an easy task to find a certain object. This can be something they need to find online or in their house. The findings can be shared either on camera or in the meeting chatbox.

Examples:

- What can you see in address X? (participants can use Google Street view to see what is in the location)
- What painting is this? (participants are shown a small part of a famous painting and have to find out which one is it)
- Do you have X? (participants are given a certain object, e.g. mug, hat, drinking bottle, that they have to find in their own house)

Speed dating

Divide participants into groups of 3 using Zoom breakout rooms.

Give each round of speed dating a simple question that the participants can discuss for a couple of minutes (very short time!).

Team competition

Divide participants into small groups using Zoom breakout rooms.

The groups need to find answers to the questions you pose to them. Fastest group to report back to the main room with the answers wins.

Example questions (could be anything):

- What is the diameter of the Earth?
- How long is the river Nile?
- Which embassy is next to the UNDP Regional Hub in Amman?
- How many people can you see in the cover photo of the YLP Syria Facebook page?
- How many windows does the building in address X have?

Put me on the map

Use the Map option in Padlet to create a map, where participants can pin their own location.

4. Sharing information

Main objectives:

- Share the information and knowledge that you want
- Use various methods and tools to deliver the content
- Encourage participants' motivation

Presentation

Using presentations is a traditional method of delivering information, especially in webinars. In non-formal workshops, try to limit the length of one-sided presentations to a minimum and to the main information/knowledge you want to deliver.

You can mix your presentation with other mentioned methods, such as quizzes and group work, to keep the energy up.

Remember to:

- Take breaks at least every 90 minutes
- Mix your presentation with other more interactive methods such as quizzes and group work
- Use visual material, not only text on PowerPoint, such as videos and infographics
- If you cannot find suitable videos in your own language, you can use tools such as <https://downsub.com/>, to create subtitles to Youtube videos in your language, to make your content more inclusive.

Group work + plenary discussion

You can use group work to encourage participants to discuss the given information and knowledge further. You can also give specific group tasks using your selected tool/software.

For example:

- Discussing the further applications of certain topic/tool
- Discuss challenges relates to certain topic/ approach
- Discuss views and assumptions about a certain topic before starting your presentation
- Working on a group project on selected tool/ software, for example, filling out a template that defines the questions and steps. In the YLP process, this can be, for example, a business canvas, ideation phase, or a persona creation.

5. Encouraging engagement

Main objectives:

- Motivating participants to follow session actively
- Reducing barriers for asking questions
- Keeping the energy up

Quizzes

Quizzes can be used to:

- Raise curiosity about the topic that will be discussed
- Wake up the participants in the middle of a presentation
- Review learning
- Raise the energy levels

Thus, the quizzes can be built into your presentation, or they can act as an energiser between informative parts of your content.

You can either use the Polling option in Zoom, or an external software like Mentimeter or Kahoot.

Group work

Group work allows the participants to engage with each other better, and if well structured, also encourage discussion among the whole group in a plenary setting.

Remember to:

- Give clear instructions on what the groups are supposed to do (in writing, not only verbally)
- Ask the groups to select a rapporteur to share the group thoughts and ideas in the plenary
- Continue the discussion in plenary to ensure everyone/group gets heard

Peer-to-peer knowledge exchange

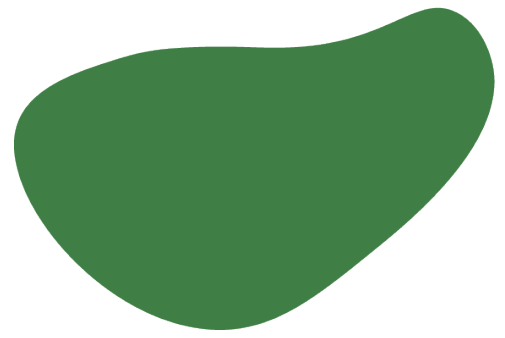
Encouraging peer-to-peer knowledge exchange ensures that the work (pre-assignments, group work, "homework") that the participants have done is showcased and appreciated. It also allows the participants to learn from each other and bond with each other, as well as helps them to take responsibility for their own learning

Non-formal learning is based on the interaction between the participants as much as it's based on delivering new information.

Remember to:

- Build space in the training design for sharing of experiences and assignments
- Do not force – but make the space attractive for sharing

6. Evaluating learning and training



Main objectives:

- Encourage participants' responsibility for their own learning
- Encourage self-reflection on learning goals
- Give you feedback on how the training went

Sharing expectations

You can use a simple whiteboard such as Jamboard or Padlet for participants to write down in different coloured post-it notes:

- What do they expect from the training (hopes and wishes)
- What challenges they see related to the training (fears)

You can go back to these notes at the end of the training as part of the participants' self-evaluation as well as your own evaluation process.

Evaluation hand

Using a simple whiteboard with a handprint, define each finger with a different issue to be evaluated, with colour-coding.

For example:

- Thumb/Yellow: what I liked about today's session.
- Index finger/Green: one issue I found especially interesting
- Middle finger/Orange: I was not fully satisfied with something
- Ring finger/Pink: how did I do personally as a participant
- Little finger/Blue: one word summarising today's session

Questionnaire/survey

Traditional way to collect feedback from the training. You can either use an online form to do this or for example a Mentimeter poll.

Example questions:

- Use a scale (not much – a lot or between 1-5) to reflect on learning goals
 1. I learned more on topic X
 2. I got new ideas
 3. I am further in developing my project
- Use 3 words to describe your training experience
- Rate the sessions in order from the most useful to least useful

Whiteboard target

Use a whiteboard to pin a target. Create small icons (people, arrows etc.) that participants will move on the target based on how well the training answered their needs/how they learned etc. (you define the question). The closer to the centre, the better.

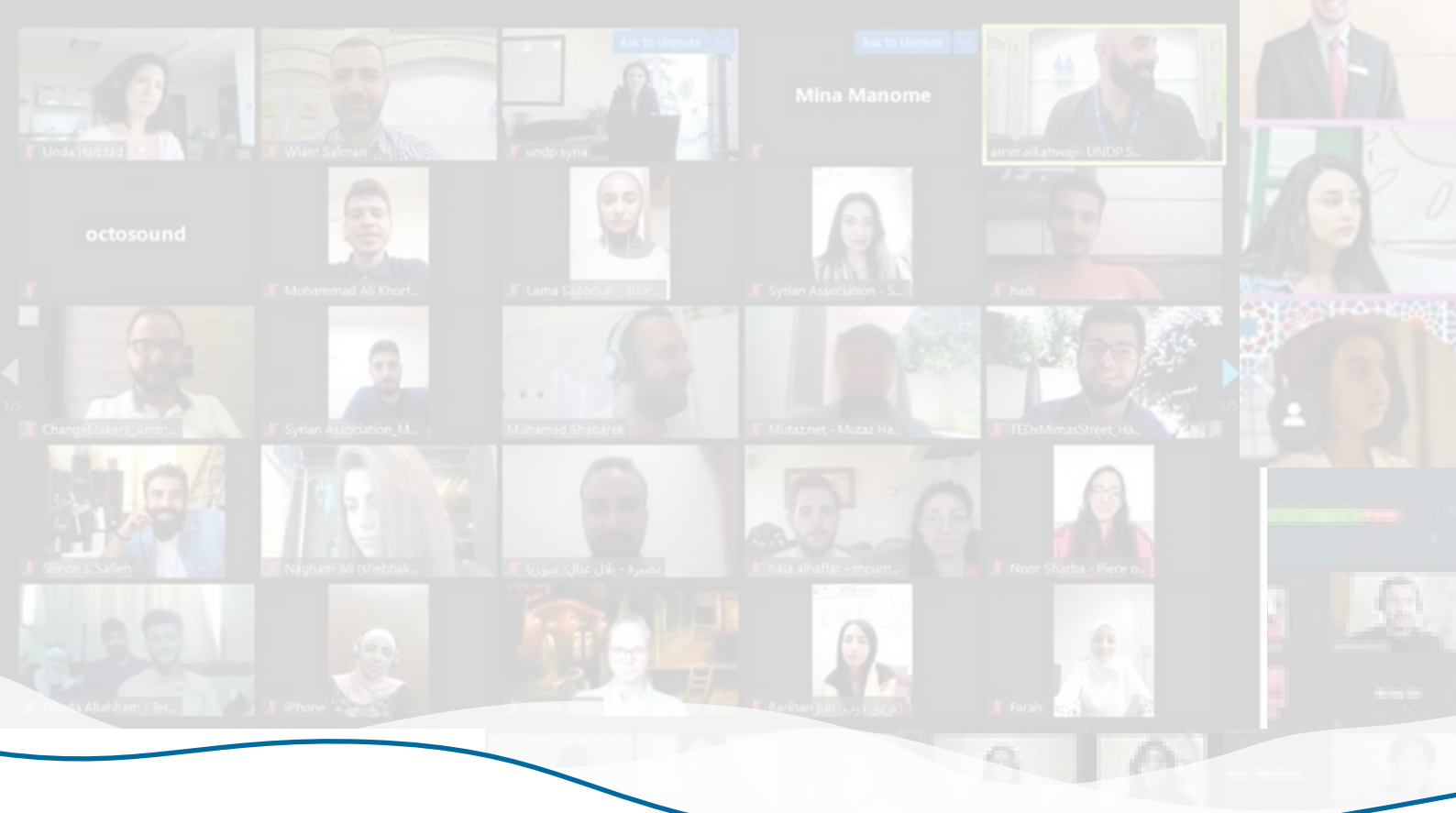
A very simple visual to give you feedback on how the participants felt about the training: this tool does not give you direct defined feedback but can be a good way to feel a general atmosphere.

Dixit cards

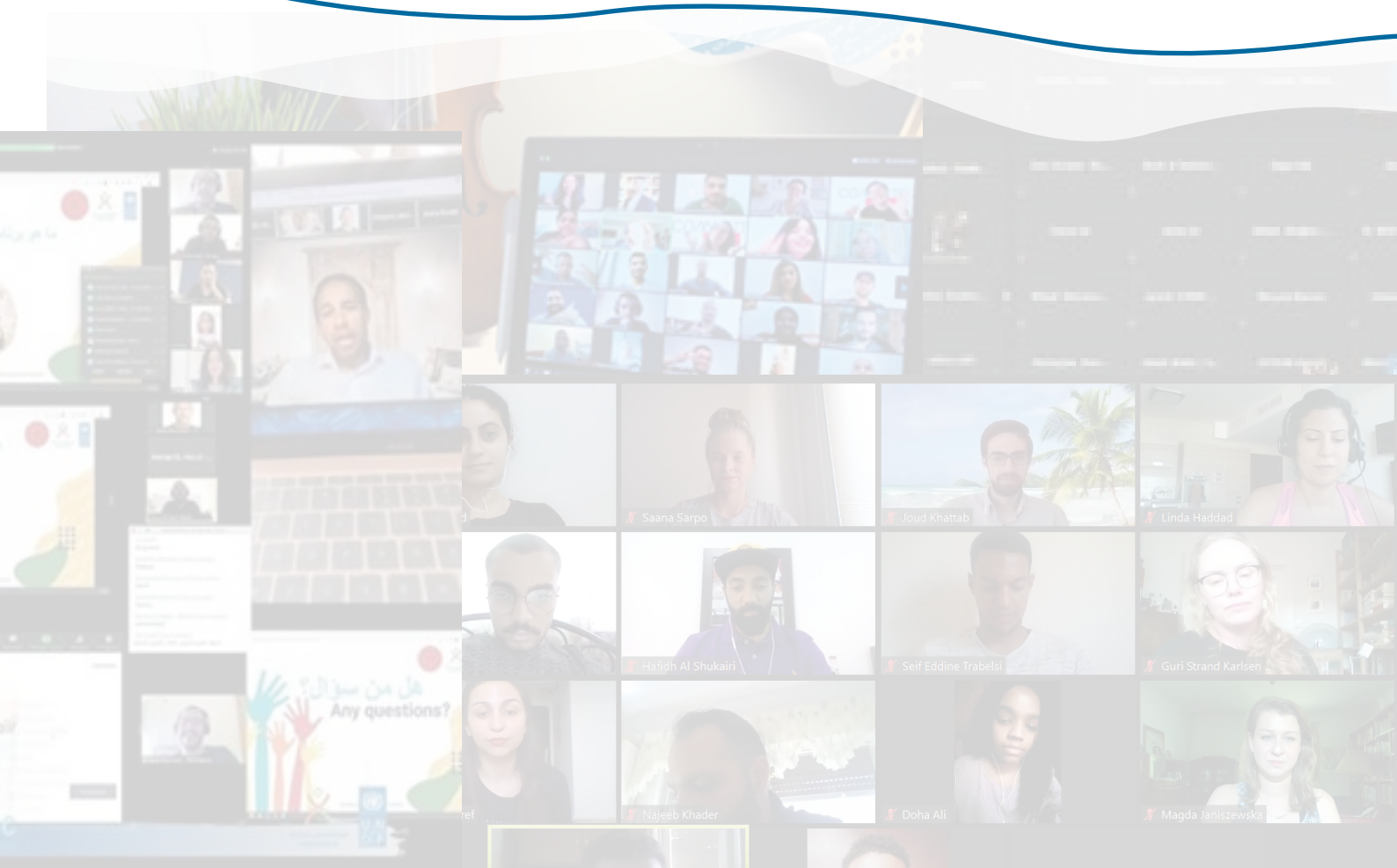
Create a Padlet board with Dixit cards (<https://print-and-play.asmodee.fun/dixit/>). Ask participants to select a card that represents how they are feeling after the training. Ask them to write down their explanation under the card. You can share thoughts in plenary, or leave it for them to go through others' answers.

Simple and fun way to sense the atmosphere. With discussion, you can go deeper into how the cards reflect the feelings of the participants.

You can also use the Dixit cards for other exercises, for example as an ice-breaker in the beginning, or in sharing expectations.



Part 3: Useful resources



7. Tools & software

Tool type	Name	Pros	Cons
Whiteboard Useful for: Brainstorming, issue/idea mapping, filling templates (business canvas etc.)	Jamboard	Simple to use, user-friendly	Everyone can move the background – does not work well in bigger groups. Content can be deleted by anyone. SAVE IT as PDF or PNG after each session.
	Awwapp	Simple to use, user-friendly Background can be locked	Possibility to use more tools can lead some people to “try them” as they start using it, it can become messy – does not work well in bigger groups
	Mural	Lot of options to build different collaboration exercises	Can be complex to use Not as mobile compatible
	Miro	Lot of options to build different collaboration exercises	Can be complex to use Not as mobile compatible
Mindmapping Useful for: creating connections between ideas/issues, brainstorming	Coggle	Nice colourful interface User friendly and easy to learn Good collaboration mode	Can be a bit limited in terms of features in its free version
	Mindmeister	Very rich in features Good collaboration mode	Not too user friendly Not as mobile compatible
Team collaboration Useful for: Organising your teamwork, sharing materials, keeping the conversation going between live sessions	Slack	Can serve as a messaging platform Great in ensuring asynchronous communication & collaboration	Limited task management system Registration
	Trello	Simple interface Easy task management system	Registration Learning the logic
Question/Quiz tools Useful for: Create presentations, fun quizzes and organise your content in an engaging way	Mentimeter	Easy to use Visual: creates visualisations of answers Can be used as a combination of slides and quizzes	If participants are joining the live session on mobile already, using a browser can be challenging Free version can be a bit limited
	Kahoot	Gamified quiz app Fun Fosters healthy competition	If participants are joining the live session on mobile already, using a browser can be challenging Best used in presence
Blended Useful as: Wall (post-its, comments, boards) Map (Google map build-in) Timeline Canvas (for brainstorming) Platform for content, exercises, resources and discussions	Padlet	Very simple to use Multiple ways to organise content	Limited formats within options
Dividing participants into groups	Zoom breakout rooms	Enabling groupwork automatically from the call Easy to use	Needs to be managed with care and possibly in a team of at least two people
	Other meeting software without breakout rooms option	An alternative for group work can be to create multiple simultaneous meetings with the meeting software you are using. In this way, the participants will move between meetings. This method requires participants to be organised and being able to handle multiple meeting links shared during the meeting.	



8. Useful reading

Leading Groups Online: a down-and-dirty guide to leading online courses, meetings, training, and events during the coronavirus pandemic

- Using their combined two decades of online facilitation, Jeanne and Daniel walk you through the basics of how to lead sessions online. They give you their top 10 principles for leading online groups, introduce you to interactive tools you can lead online, and answer commonly asked questions.
- <https://www.leadinggroupsonline.org/>

Digitalisation and youth work

- Discusses the impact of digitalisation to youth work. The book focuses on providing new perspectives on digitalisation and the technological development of society by approaching the subject through four major themes: skills and competences, participation and engagement, equality, and improving growth and living conditions
- <https://www.verke.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Digitalisation-and-youth-work.pdf>

Digital youth work – a Finnish perspective

- Experiences of digital youth work from Finland
- <https://www.verke.org/material/digital-youth-work-a-finnish-perspective/>

Online training of youth workers

- Online training of youth workers is a practical manual focused on how to design and facilitate online training of youth workers, including real-life experiences and examples. This publication is the result of the Capacity Building Project 'European Wide Web of Youth Work' implemented by youth work organisations from 7 European countries
- https://issuu.com/nerijuskriauciunas/docs/online_training_of_youth_workers_ma



YLP vs Covid 19: TOT Supporting young people's Learning Online

