Feminist organizing toolkit

PLANNING VIRTUAL MEETINGS

WE DO

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Content

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"Technology is not neutral. We're inside of what we make, and it's inside of us. We're living in a world of connections — and it matters which ones get made and unmade."
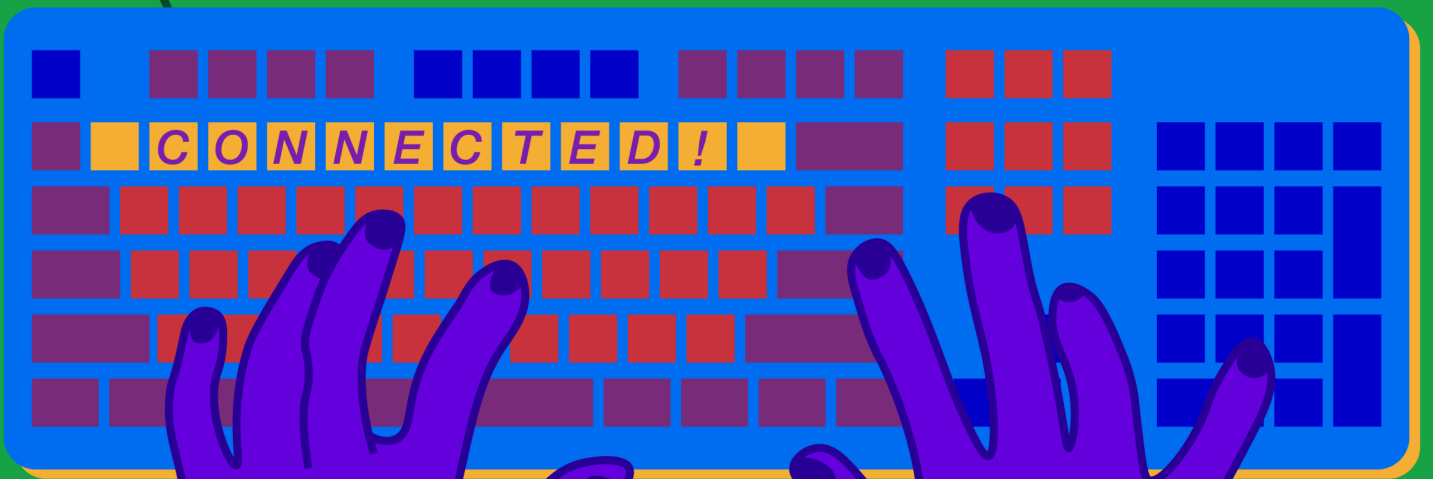
Why virtual meetings?

In late March 2020, as countries around the world began to implement social distancing measures to protect public health in the face of COVID-19, it became clear that feminists must be equipped with tools for unprecedented levels of virtual organizing. Though we may not be able to gather together around tables or in the streets in the same way for the next few months, the work of advocating for a just recovery and resisting repressive responses must continue virtually. As feminists, we must find ways to build power together online.

Though this toolkit might be particularly useful in this time of social distancing, we hope its utility extends beyond, too. We must reach and connect to our feminist partners and allies around the world in order to address the most pressing global issues of our time, and virtual meetings can be one crucial tool in our toolbox for that work.

There are many great platforms and resources available to do things such as: host virtual forums and conferences, collectively write and brainstorm digital media, and reach broad audiences online, but there are also a variety of challenges to accessing these tools. The digital divide, as well as lack of information about how to use various platforms that exist, often limit feminists' (and everyone's) chances to participate in virtual organizing.

In April 2020, two feminist advocacy organizations, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), hosted a series of three teach-ins on organizing virtual meetings, centered around three kinds of skills to grow together. These were: 1) Planning meetings: accessibility & methodology; 2) Logistics: nuts & bolts of software; 3) Digital safety. In this toolkit, we have included the tools discussed during the three teach-ins as well as other tools requested by the participants. We hope you'll find it useful!

Planning virtual meetings

Methodology & accessibility

In the first episode of our training series we outline the different steps that go into planning a virtual meeting and how to grow as an effective facilitator. We also use resources from disability justice work to describe steps you can take to ensure that your virtual meeting is accessible.

🔗 **Watch here**

Organizing virtual meetings often requires even more focus, planning and intentional group moderating than in-person meetings. Preparation is key: the more you are able to plan for facilitation, technical, and engagement needs, the easier you will be able to manage things as they arise. The great news is that there are lots of resources available in this toolkit to help you do this preparation. Thanks to WECF and EDUACTIVE for many of these planning tips & tricks, first shared here!

Before your virtual meeting

Below are some steps to take before your meeting. Some of these might be new to you, and some might be very familiar. We suggest you keep this step-by-step list handy to run through before your meetings in the future, just to make sure you're not forgetting a key step around accessibility, tools planning, or preparation.

Accessibility

Before creating your presentation or any other key materials, check in with groups who have barriers to online mobilisation and ask them about their needs. The communities you work with might have other barriers than the ones listed below, so do some brainstorming with your co-organizers beforehand. You might also want to send out instructions for how to participate in a Zoom meeting. You can find an example of such instructions in the "More Resources" chapter, page 39.

Removing barriers for people with disabilities

☐ Designate an "Accessibility Coordinator" for needs that arise during the call.

☐ Ensure you communicate with participants ahead of time in an email or via other mode:

 ☐ Provide contact info for accessibility coordinator

 ☐ Ask ahead of time about accessibility needs - send out a Google Form to all attendees (with the option to call and email you as well) asking for specific ways your meeting can be more accessible. Find a sample form in the "More Resources" chapter of this toolkit.

 ☐ Ask participants to check their audio and visual setup

 ☐ Send out supporting materials before call - Always offer screen reader readable-text versions of your presentation. This means taking all your notes and text out of your presentation and putting it into a plain text document without photos, emojis and formatting.

 ☐ Make sure the registration form is accessible.

 ☐ Remember that screen readers cannot read presentations shown in "screen-share mode". Make sure you upload the presentation to a google presentation and share the link with the participants. Or share the presentation ahead of the virtual meeting.

Language-based barriers

☐ Brainstorm ways you might be able to incorporate different languages into the call (e.g., creating language-specific breakout rooms or simultaneous phone translation).

Internet access

☐ Keep it simple, with no large videos that require bandwidth.

☐ Offer participants the option to follow your screen or follow the presentation directly.

☐ Ask participants to turn off their videos.

Select format - will it be interactive or not?

Will the meeting be interactive? Or more like a seminar? Interactive components help with energy, engagement, and keep the content dynamic. Below are just a few ways you can create interactive components, but don't try and cram in as much as you would for an in-person meeting
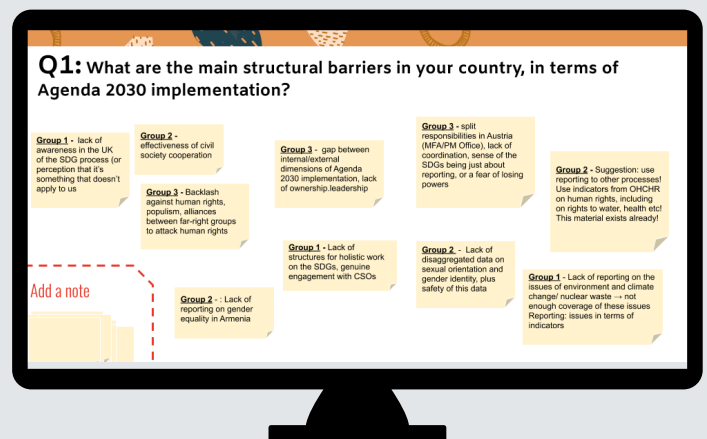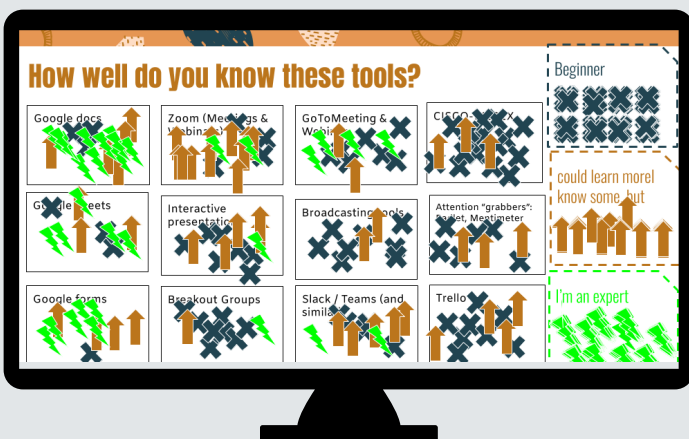
Breakout rooms

☐ Formalise the purpose of the breakout session. What expected outputs are you looking for?

☐ Draft questions that tie into the purpose. Use open questions that will lead to discussions.

☐ Share the questions with participants ahead of time

☐ Select moderators and prepare them for their facilitation tasks, and the questions they need to answer, as well as technical tasks - are they reporting back in an interactive online document? Then tell them ahead of time how this will be done.

Padlet

☐ Padlet allows participants to fill out virtual sticky notes, helping you gather information on attendees like their names, organizations, countries, and key questions or goals they might have for the meeting.

Interactive slides in the presentation

☐ If you are asking attendees to follow the presentation with you, there are lots of fun ways to ask them to engage on the slides. Below, you'll see one example on the left, where participants were able to move various stickers to correspond with their familiarity of online tools, so the moderator could gain an understanding of the audience's experience and needs. Depending on the size of the call, this strategy can be messy, so decide ahead of time if it is a strategic interactive tool to use. The example on the right is of a discussion board where a question has been written at the top and where the working groups add post-its during their discussion.

Select and prepare moderators

Prepare the technical support for each breakout room. Moderators have the important job of managing the discussion and the chatbox. Becoming a good and effective moderator is a skill you can hone; there is a checklist to practice on the next page.

Set the agenda

It's good practice to send the agenda ahead of time, both for accessibility purposes and to encourage participation.

Plan for health breaks

In the agenda, allow time for proper health & bio breaks as well as buffer time for technical transitions (i.e., always calculate 10 min for the transition into breakout rooms), including energisers. People need to feel the pace is sustainable during the meeting, that they are welcomed and inspired to share.

Send out a reminder

All registered participants should receive reminders both a day and an hour before the meeting.

Master the software

Practice beforehand with the platform you are using.

Great, now you have the steps you need to prepare for your meeting! It's always helpful to hear lessons learned from feminists who have been putting these steps into practice, as well. The following reflections were gathered together after WECF hosted a massive virtual civil society forum, but are applicable to meetings of all sizes and subject matters!

During your virtual meeting

What really sets an effective meeting apart from an ineffective one is good facilitation. We have put together some tips below to make facilitation less daunting. But remember – everything doesn't need to be perfect when leading a virtual meeting. Be honest with your participants if this is the first time you are hosting an interactive virtual meeting. Never underestimate people's empathy.

Checklist for facilitators

- **Master the software settings before the call.**
- **Remind people of the house-rules.**
- **Ask if it's ok to record.**
- **Actively mute participants when not speaking.**
- **Actively turn off videos of participants.**
- **Keep an eye on the chat for questions.**
- **If people are trolling, kick them off the call.**
- **If people are disruptive, give them warnings.**
- **Keep an eye on the "raised-hand" function, including lowering hands if participants forget.**
- **Give everyone a chance to talk, and if the same person ends up talking again and again, interrupt and make space for new opinions.**
- **Keep an eye on the time; if you run over, ask participants if they are ok with continuing.**
- **If you are using screen-share, then keep your phone near you to check if people have emailed you issues.**
- **As a moderator remember that you are the one that needs to engage, bring back focus and sometime interrupt speakers that has spoken too long or has gone off topic.**

Set some house rules!
Here are some that we use; feel free to use and adapt them for your meeting:

- One person talking at a time.
- Mute your mic when not talking.
- Turn off videos (this is very important if you have participants with unstable internet connections, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when many are working from home).
- Don't speak too fast, particularly if you have live-captioning or translators. This is especially important when majority of the participants are not native English speakers.
- Identify yourself by name every time you speak.
- If you don't want to interrupt the speaker's flow, add your comments or positive feedback in the chat.
- If you have slow bandwidth, turn off any other programmes on your computer that are slowing down your internet connection.
- If you have a question, raise your hand (either by clicking on your name in the participant's list and click "raise hand" or by pressing the keys "ALT" and "Y" in zoom), You can also write an asterix (*) in the chat-box.
- If you agree with someone's point, you can add a plus sign (+) in the chat-box, if you disagree you leave a minus sign (-), or use the emojis on the menu.

Keep the meeting accessible!

- Ask someone to take notes.
- Include accessibility information at the top of the call.
- Keep people oriented to where you are in the agenda.
- Make sure materials are easily accessible.
- Screen sharing is (not always) your friend, so offer an alternative!
- Accessibility Coordinator should be available for immediate response.
- Verbally describe any visuals your discussion is based around.
- Verbally read key chat contributions that are shaping the spoken discussion.

After your virtual meeting

It is always good practice to share presentations, materials and recordings of the call after your meeting. In the next chapter "Nuts & Bolts," we explain how you can retrieve the participants' list and recordings of your call.

Accessibility steps

- Make notes available, along with presentation, recording (if made), and text-only versions of any materials used.
- Ask for feedback on accessibility.
- Make note of accessibility issues to inform future planning.

Key reflections for making a virtual meeting successful

The personal is public
With more virtual meetings in our calendars, the division of our work lives with our personal lives at home can be difficult to maintain. People are managing child and elder care, chores, and other responsibilities, often while joining online meetings. If you are hosting a longer meeting, ensure that you allocate proper time for lunch and screen breaks. It's also often good practice to begin the meeting with a breathing exercise to ground people and make them focused for the online collaboration.

The importance of setting some house rules
Civil society has years of experience with online mobilisation and should already be used to some of these, but as a host, you will need to make sure you remind people of standard practices before and throughout the call. This becomes particularly important if you have other stakeholders on your call who are not used to these unwritten codes of conduct.

Select a technical support person(s) and an accessibility support person(s)
If you have the budget and lack someone tech savvy on your team, there is software that offers technical support (e.g., MaestroConferencing). If you don't have the budget though, then it's good if you select someone, or several people, on your team to be the technical support. They can respond to the questions in the chat, emails and help split up participants into break-out groups. This role is crucial if you have first-timers on your forum and you want to ensure that everyone is able to engage. You should also assign someone the role of accessibility support person, who handles accessibility needs as they may arise on the call. For example, if a person cannot find the presentation link for their text reader to read, it is critical that someone is poised to respond immediately with the link. On smaller calls, the roles of tech support and accessibility support can be played by the same person.

Virtual interactions are key!
We often use a fun introduction platform called Padlet, where attendees fill out virtual sticky notes, but explore other options to keep folks focused! Energizers are key for all meetings - virtual or not. Reassure participants who may have trouble or feel overwhelmed by the new tools that it is not mandatory to participate. Also tell them that they can send the information to the technical support person(s) either through email, whatsapp or write the information to them in the chat. Just make sure people feel heard and included.

Keep it simple

The more complicated the forum gets, the more barriers to participation there will be. It's great to use a few tools for keeping the participants focused and engaged, but too many tools will make the virtual meeting a bit chaotic and too complicated to follow.

Participation is key

A session full of presentations will very quickly lose the interest of the participants. A participatory process should be your mantra. This is easily done by breaking into working groups if you have a lot of participants, but remember that planning, framing and good moderation is key. We often use Zoom, which has a breakout room function integrated in its software, but you can also use skype or whatsapp and include the call links in the agenda to the different working groups so participants can choose which group they want to join. The latter option requires a bit more planning and coordination as all the moderators must set up individual call links ahead of the meeting.

Breakout groups

If you do this tool, then the breakout groups should be guided by some clear questions and an interactive format. Moderators should be well prepared beforehand on the questions to be answered. The technical support person can check in on the different groups and see how they are doing, as well as give reminders about the time. It can take a few minutes to break into groups, so it's good if the moderator has an activity planned or is ready to answer questions while the technical support person is breaking into groups. If you use breakout groups, it's very important to have a clear agenda setting: what is the purpose of the discussions and what is the expected outcome.

Make sure your virtual forum is accessible

Check in with constituency groups and ask them about their needs, e.g. people with disabilities, ageing people, non-native English speakers. We recommend during the registration process, and/or in a form sent out subsequently to registrants, asking for specific language and accessibility needs, such as language interpretation, sign-language and live-caption.
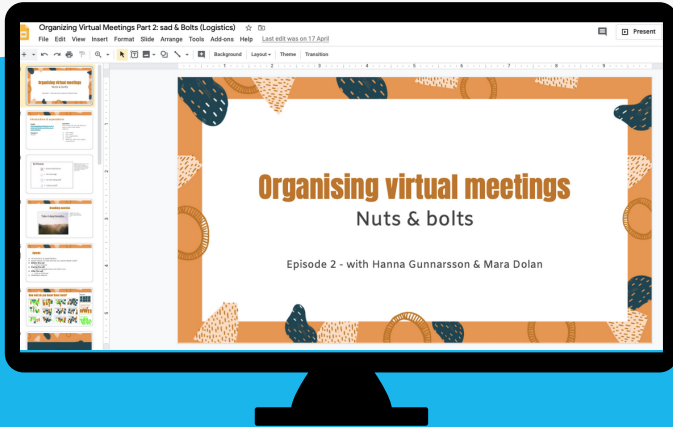
Do your research!

There are loads of good articles out there already about how to host a well managed meeting, especially ones that are geared towards specific software. Keep this toolkit on hand, but also make sure to check out the "More Resources" guide at the end, which points you towards many more guides and tips.

FEMINIST MEETING IN 10 MINUTES!

Logistics

Nuts & bolts of software

Here we are exploring a wide range of online conferencing tools that are out there, as well as looking into other collaborative tools such as Google Docs and Slides. We are particularly focusing on the many settings and functions within Zoom, and how to master them to prevent "Zoom-bombing".

🔗 **Watch here**

Now that you've done the preparatory work of planning for your online meeting, the next step is learning the nuts and bolts of the platform you want to use. We know that "the technical stuff" can feel intimidating to some, but we want to encourage everyone to see themselves as agents that are able to learn and master these skills. We are always growing and improving in our understanding of moderation, facilitation, and navigating these platforms, no matter how experienced we are. Practice makes perfect when it comes to our software skills!

Key steps for managing software during virtual meetings

If we boil down the lessons from this section in three key things to remember, they are these:

- Decide on the platform (use the list of Platforms at the end of this toolkit), set it up, and get familiar with it.
- Decide on what tools you will use during the meeting and practice them beforehand.
- Inform your moderators, tech & accessibility coordinators about the platform and tools you are using and what your expectations are of them.

Platform options

There are many different platforms available for you to host your virtual meetings, and it's all about choosing one that best serves your needs. During the planning phase, ask yourself questions like:

- "Do I want the other people in the meeting to be able to share their screen?"
- "How many people will be attending?"
- "Do I have the ability to pay for services, or do I need to find a free platform?"
- "To accomplish what we need to during the meeting, do we need to all be looking at the same screen?"
- "Should participants be able to vocalize questions and interact or should participation be limited to written questions?"

These kinds of questions can help inform your choice of platform and will allow your meeting to run more smoothly, with specific platform characteristics that suit your aims.

This matrix uses some of the available platforms that are widely used (there are lots!), and allows you to compare the various features they have. As you can see, lots of them have shared characteristics (many are good for small meetings), and there are also clear differences (costs, limited amounts of attendees, whether captioning is available). These are the kinds of differences that can help you decide what best fits the needs of your meeting, its attendees, and what you need to accomplish during your time together.

Please keep in mind that this matrix and its content is not static; the prices might change, new features are introduced, and new platforms come into service. Keep up to date by visiting the platforms' websites and learning about any new updates or resources they are making available, as well as paying attention to what your fellow feminists are using and enjoying!

Platform	Good for large meetings?	Good for small meetings?	Has Screen Sharing / Presentation mode?	Has closed captioning?	Has live translation services?	Cost?	Additional barriers to use?
Zoom	✓ You can pay for more attendees, has webinar option.	✓	✓	✓ Option for third party to write, but lagging according to professionals	✓ For the expensive accounts, but you have to provide the translators.	Free option only allows calls up to 40 min, with up to 100 participants, and 14$/mo allows unlimited time but still up to only 100 people.	Video conferencing requires fairly strong internet connection, though sometimes using call-in instead can mitigate difficulties.
Skype		✓	✓			Free	Can be buggy, and breaks down if you have more than 10-20 participants on the call.
Google Hangouts		✓	✓	✓		Free	Meeting creators must have Google Suite, but attendees do not. Difficult to have call-in options available.
Go To Meeting	✓ Up to 1000, has webinar option.	✓	✓	✓		Not free, costs $29/month	Not super user friendly.
Maestro Conference	✓ Up to 5,000, has webinar option.		✓	✓	✓ Costs extra	Very expensive, with 39$/month for 25 attendees and up to $400 for largest calls	Good for big groups, and for tech support, but not super interactive.
VoiceBoxer	✓		✓	✓	✓	Can pay monthly or one-time event cost (priced based on event details, usually $1500).	This is not optional for interactive meetings, as only the panellists can speak.

Platform	Good for large meetings?	Good for small meetings?	Has Screen Sharing / Presentation mode?	Has closed captioning?	Has live translation services?	Cost?	Additional barriers to use?
Whatsapp group call		✓		18		Free, when connected to internet.	No features other than a phone call, can support minimal participation.
BlueJeans	No, standard is 50, Pro is 75, "enterprise" is 100.	✓	✓	✓	✓ Availability only at certain subscription levels.	Standard: $9.99/mo Pro: $13.99/mo Enterprise: have to contact them directly	
Jitsi	No (only up to 50 people)	✓	✓			Free except for premium plans.	Open source alternative to Zoom, requires no sign-in and could therefore be a safer option than other options such as Google Hangout.
Webex	✓	✓	✓	✓	No	Free option for up to 40 min; other options start at $13.50/mo	Not very user friendly.

Collaborative tools

Virtual meetings do not necessarily need to be a call or webinar. There are so many collaborative tools to use online - your virtual "meeting" could, for example, be coordinating a one-hour block of time to write on a document together, and utilize a chat box to discuss. Collaborative tools are also useful to integrate into your call meetings as an additional way for attendees to engage and participate with the material. Here are a few collaborative tools to consider:

- Google tools - docs, sheets, drive & slides
- Padlet - padlet
- Teamwork tools - Slack, TEAMs, Asana, Trello
- Qiqochat - software that connects to Zoom and allows participants to move freely among breakout rooms on their own. It has interactive tools attached to each room. This software is great for virtual interactive meetings, but it costs additionally to your Zoom account, and you need to set a side technical support who can help your participants throughout the entire meeting.
- Extensive list of tools - can be found here

Know your software

It is critical that we know the software we are using well. We encourage you to watch the teach-in on software skills, linked earlier, to see the live demonstrations of these tools. Below you will see still frames that outline many of the same skills, though it is important that you open up your own interface in order to see what they look like in real life and not in a screenshot. We are using Zoom meetings here as an example because it is one of the most commonly used interfaces for interactive meetings, but there are similar tutorials online for any given software you choose to use.

Explanations

Available for hosts only

Available for hosts & participants

Manage your participants by hovering over their name and clicking on "more" (only available to meeting hosts)

Select if you want to privately talk to somone by clicking on their name, or if you want to chat with "everyone"

Mute/ unmute yourself

add a reaction emoji if you agree with the speaker

Turn your video on/off

Security settings

Open participants list

Open chat

share your screen

Launch a poll

Start, pause or stop recording

Launch breakout groups

Personal settings

Log into your account. On the left there is a personal menu, where "settings" is listed at the bottom. This is where most of the settings are altered before you enter into a call, so if you want to disable screen share, or enable breakout rooms, this is where you do it. Generally, any setting you enable or disable in personal settings functions as the automatic rule when you set up new meetings. You can actively overrule some of these settings for a specific meeting when you schedule it.
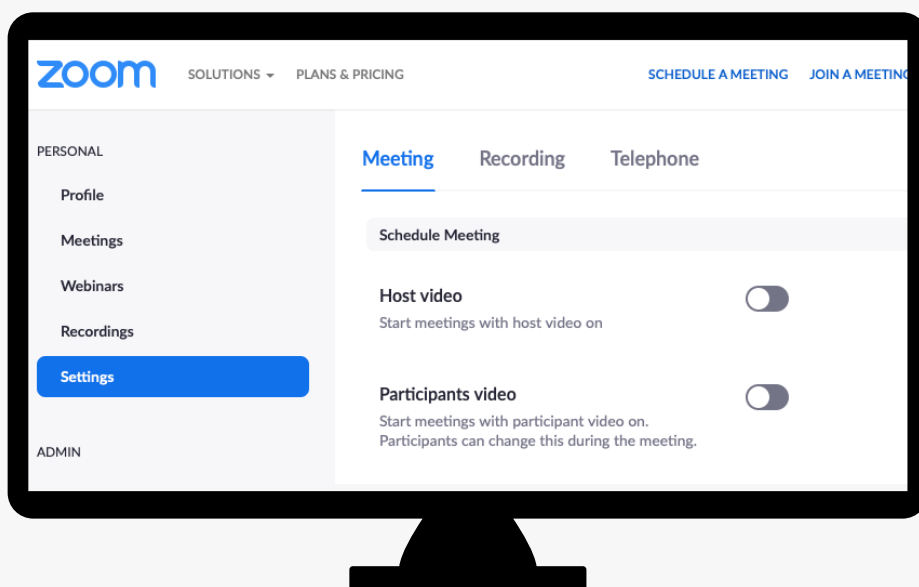
Image description
Screenshot of the homepage when you have logged into your zoom account. With the "personal" menu on the left and the "settings" menu option highlighted".

Settings which make your meeting more efficient

- Mute participants on entry - can be done in personal settings and in the settings of each meeting, as well as when the call has started if you click on the "more" menu at the bottom of the participants list.
- Enable waiting room - read more about it below.
- Disable video for hosts and participants - this means their videos won't be visible when they join the call.
- They can still enable their video after they have joined.
- This can be implemented in personal settings and in the settings of each meeting.
- Disable join before host.
- Disable file transfer for big meetings.
- Allow the host to add co-costs Enable polling, if you plan to use it.
- Enable breakout rooms, if you plan to use it.
- Always show meeting control bar - this makes it easier for everyone to access the functions and settings.
- Let only hosts share their screens.
- Disable desktop/screen share for users.
- Disable remote control for big meetings.

Registration

If you are having a larger meeting, outside your closest circle of working friends, we recommend that you enable the registration setting when you schedule a meeting. You can tailor the questions asked on the registration form and add an organizational identity. Remember to change the contact email if the contact person of the meeting is different from the email of the Zoom account. Everything you need to know about registrations can be found here.
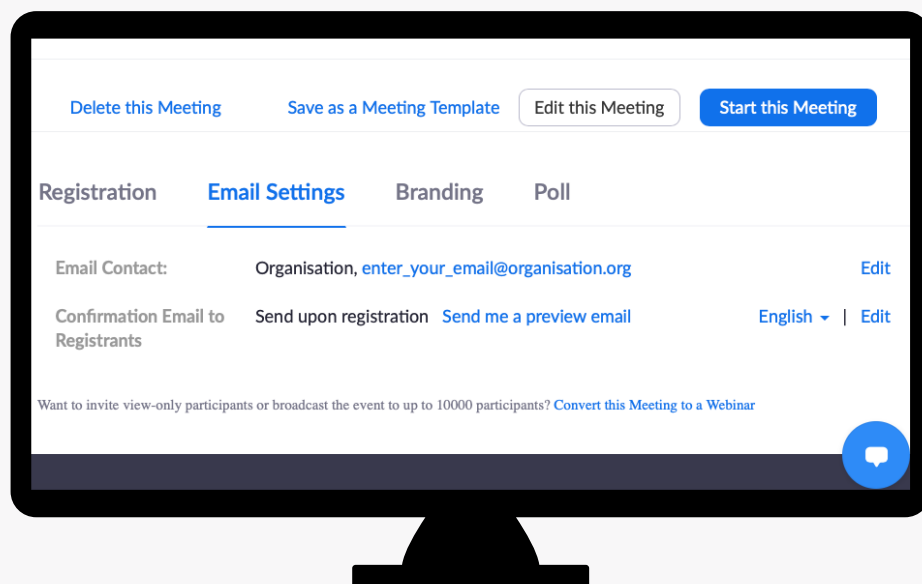
Image description
Screenshot of the bottom of the settings page of a scheduled zoom meeting with "required registration" option selected.

Breakout rooms

Enable breakout rooms in your personal settings and in the settings of your scheduled meeting. You can pre-assign people to rooms before the meeting, but if you don't know exactly who may join, then you might want to do this during the call instead. If you are splitting participants into room by language, you can ask them to rename themselves to their first name and language - for example: "Hanna (ENGLISH)". As a host you need to clearly explain what it will look like for participants when you break into rooms.

Just like with in-person group work, you need to explain what the group work in the rooms will look like, and then you need to join the various rooms to see how the groups are doing and if they have understood the task. Please note that the explaining and the technical breaking into groups usually takes about 10 min, if people are new to this working method. Everything you need to know about enabling breakout rooms can be found here.

What it looks like for the host

What it looks like for the participant

Step 1: create breakout rooms

```
Breakout Rooms

Assign 2 participants into   [2 ▲▼]   Rooms:

  ○ Automatically    ● Manually

        1 participants per room

        [ Create Breakout Rooms ]
```

```
Breakout Rooms - Not Started                 ☑ Gina
∨ Breakout Room 1                      1     ☐ Mara
   (G) Gina
∨ Breakout Room 2              Assign



Options ∧   Recreate ∧   [ Add a Room ]   [ Open All Rooms ]
```

Mara Dolan (she/her)

Hanna Gunnarsson (she/her)

Mute   Start Video   Participants Chat Share Screen Record Reactions   Leave
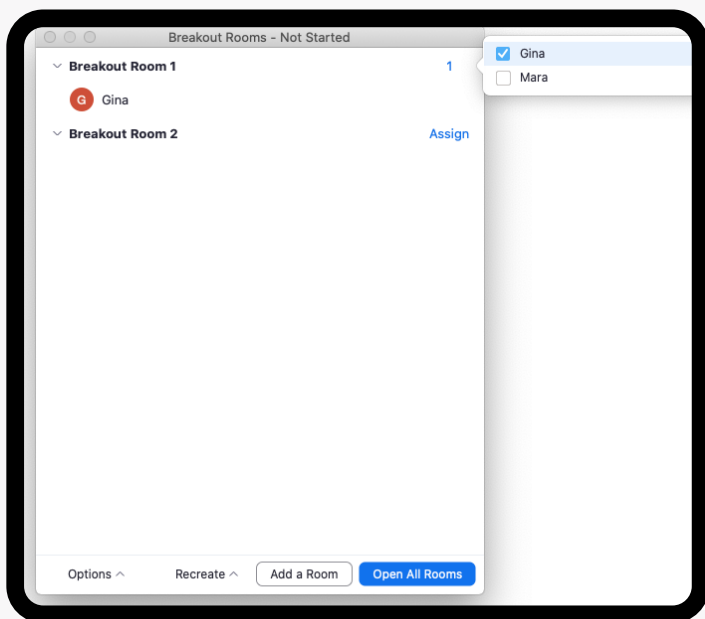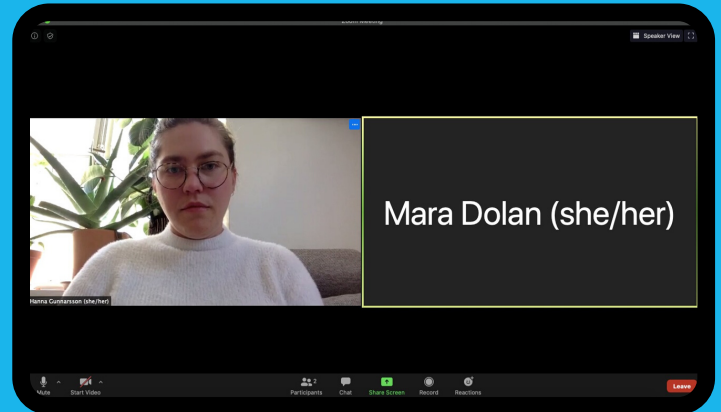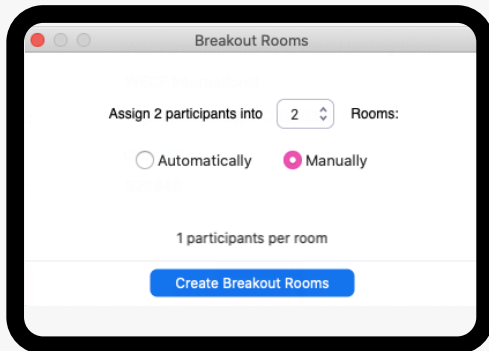
Step 2: launching breakout rooms

```
Breakout Rooms - Not Started
∨ Breakout Room 1                      1
   (G) Gina
∨ Breakout Room 2              Assign

Meeting Topic:

Host Name:

Invitation URL:

Participant ID:

☐ Move all participants into breakout rooms automatically
☑ Allow participants to return to the main session at any time
☐ Breakout rooms close automatically after:  [30]  minutes
   ☑ Notify me when the time is up
☑ Countdown after closing breakout room
   Set countdown timer:  [60 ▲▼] seconds

Options ∧   Recreate ∧   [ Add a Room ]   [ Open All Rooms ]
```

```
🎥 Breakout Rooms                              ✕

  [Zoom]    The host is inviting you to join Breakout Room:
            Breakout Room 1



                              [ Join ]   [ Later ]
```

If you do not click "join", then you'll stay in a waiting room. If you ever get kicked out of a room, e.g. if your internet drops, you will end up in this waiting room again and need to be added to the room again by the host.
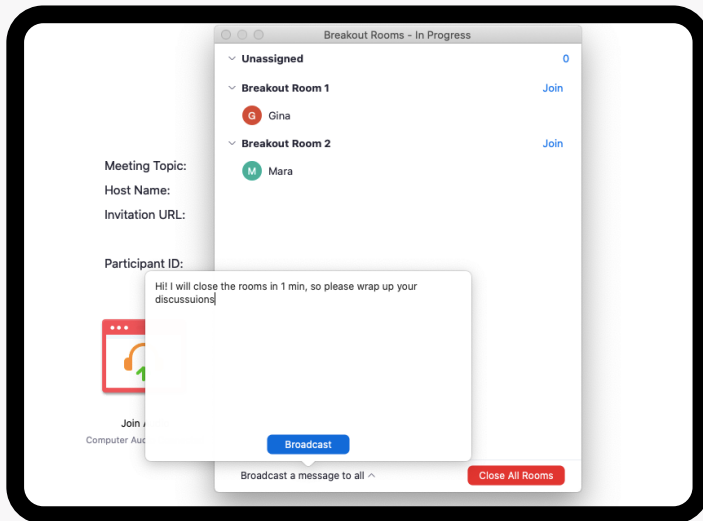
What it looks like for the host

What it looks like for the participant

Step 3: breakout rooms in action

- You can broadcast a message that shows up in all break out rooms
- You can join the different rooms to see how everyone is doing.
- If people are kicked out or leave a room, they end up in the "unassigned" room. As a host you have to check in with them to see which room they wanted to join and then add them to it.
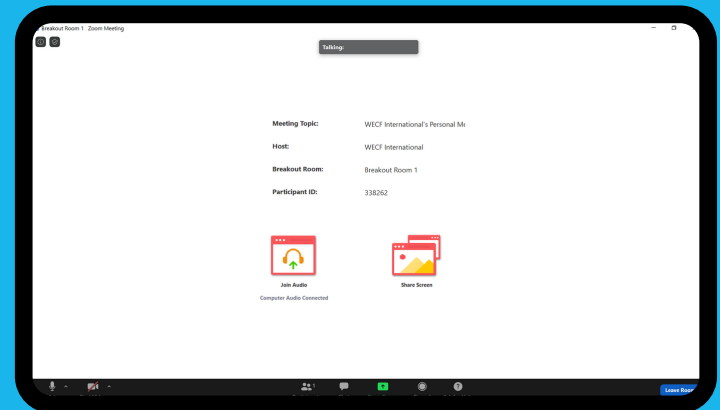
- Each room has a separate chat
- If you screen-share, it's only visible for those in that breakout room
- You can click on "ask for help"
- You can leave the room at the bottom-right corner

Step 4: closing breakout rooms
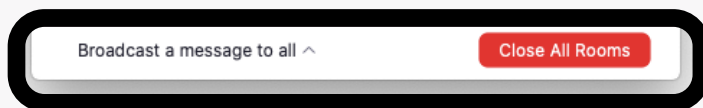
- Click on "close all rooms."
- Wait for participants to join you in the main room - depending on your settings, this should take about 1 min.
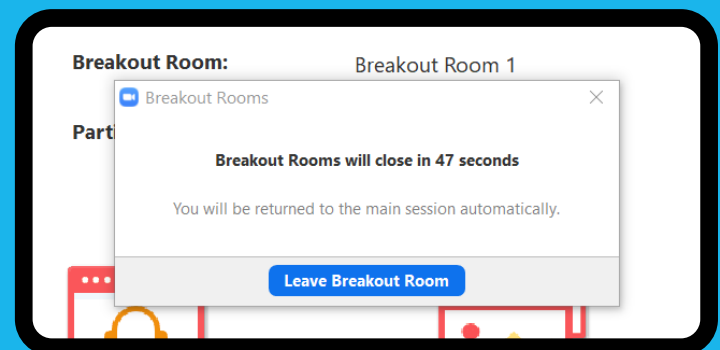
- Once the host has decided to close the breakout rooms, you will get a pop-up message where you can click on "leave breakout room".
- If you click on this, you will get back to the main meeting room again. You will automatically be added to the main room after one minute if you do not actively press the button.

Polling

You might want to add a poll to your meeting, either as a tool for making decisions, or as an energiser and to refocus people after you have been in breakout groups. As a host, you can retrieve the answers to your poll after the call. This is done in the same way as you retrieve a participant list (see below).

Before starting your meeting, enable the poll in your personal settings, then go into your already scheduled call. At the bottom of the page there is an option to add a poll. When you click on "add," a pop up window shows up where you enter questions and multiple answers. You can have several polls prepared for one meeting. Each poll can have several questions attached to it.
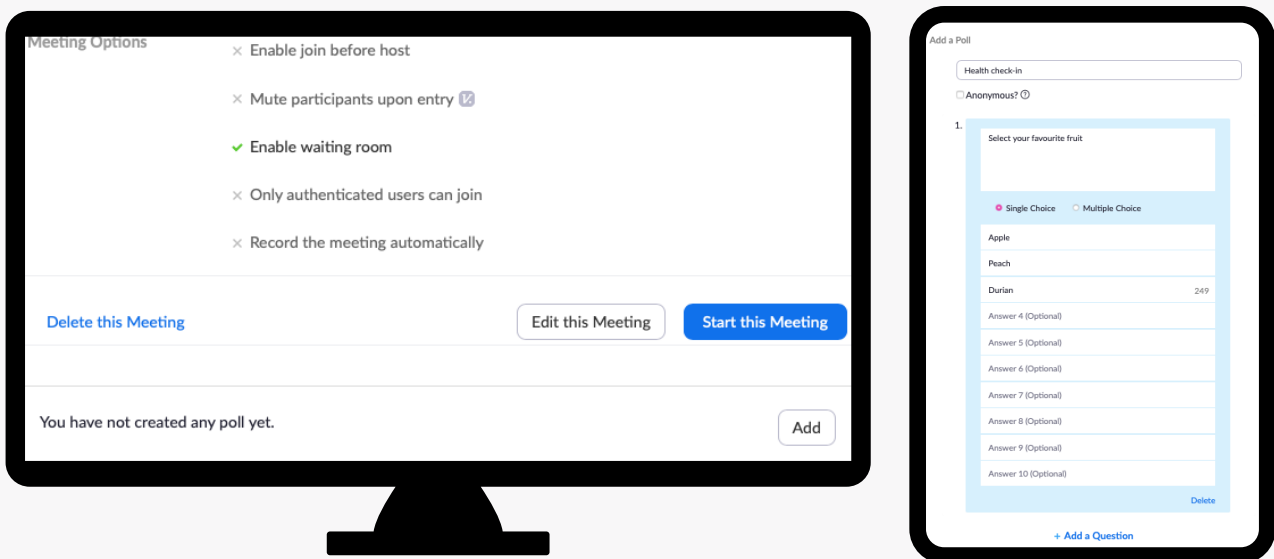
Image descriptions
Left image: screenshot of the bottom of the settings page of a scheduled zoom meeting where it is written "You have not created any poll yet, and a button with the text "add" written on it. Right image: screenshot of the making of a poll, with fields to add questions and answers.

As you can see below, the host can see how many seconds each question has been active and how many have voted (1 out of 1 participants voted for apple in this test). The host cannot see the names of who has voted. The participants, on the other hand, can only see the percentage and not the number of votes.

What it looks like for the host

What it looks like for the participant

Health check-in in Progress 00:00:36

Attendees are now viewing questions   1 of 1 (100%) voted

1. Select your favourite fruit

Apple   (1) 100%

Peach   (0) 0%

Durian   (0) 0%

End Poll

Polls

Health check-in

1. Select your favourite fruit

○ Apple

○ Peach

○ Durian

Submit

Poll 1: Health check-in   ✎ Edit

Poll closed   1 voted

1. Select your favourite fruit

Apple   (1) 100%

Peach   (0) 0%

Durian   (0) 0%

Polls

Host is sharing poll results

1. Select your favourite fruit

Apple   100%

Peach   0%

Durian   0%

Close
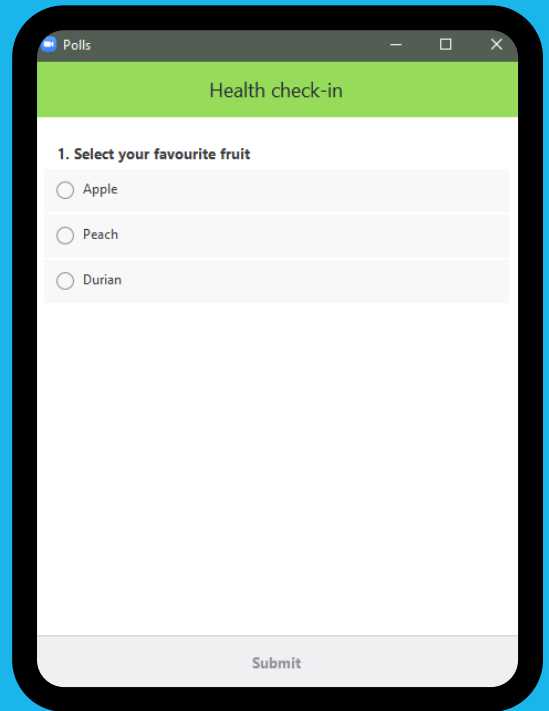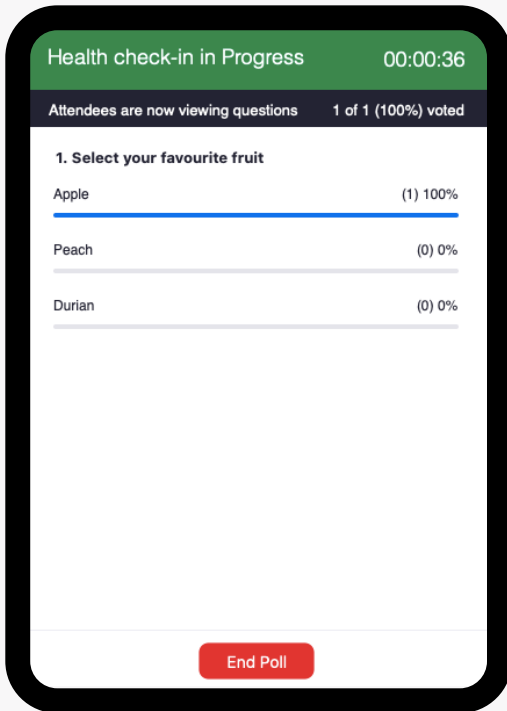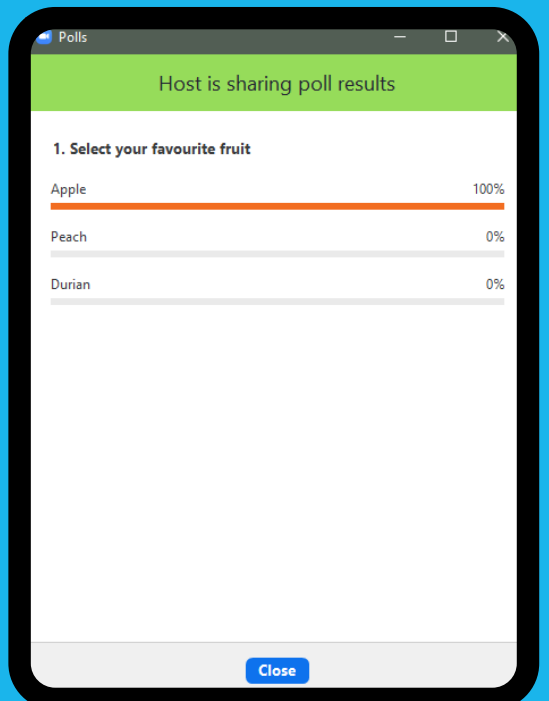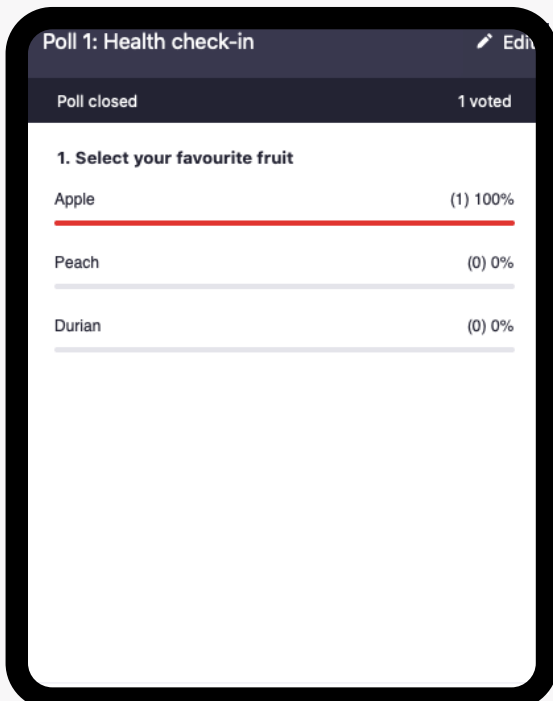
Retrieve participants lists

After your meeting, you may want to send everyone who registered a link to the recording, a feedback form, all the presentations, and the outcome of the meeting. On the left there is a second menu, under the personal menu, called "admin". Click on "account management", then "reports", then on "meetings". Once you have entered the meeting report page, you select from which previous meeting you want to retrieve the participants list or poll results, then you click "generate," and a CSV report will download to your computer. This is a plain file with lists of data that you can open in Excel or google sheets.
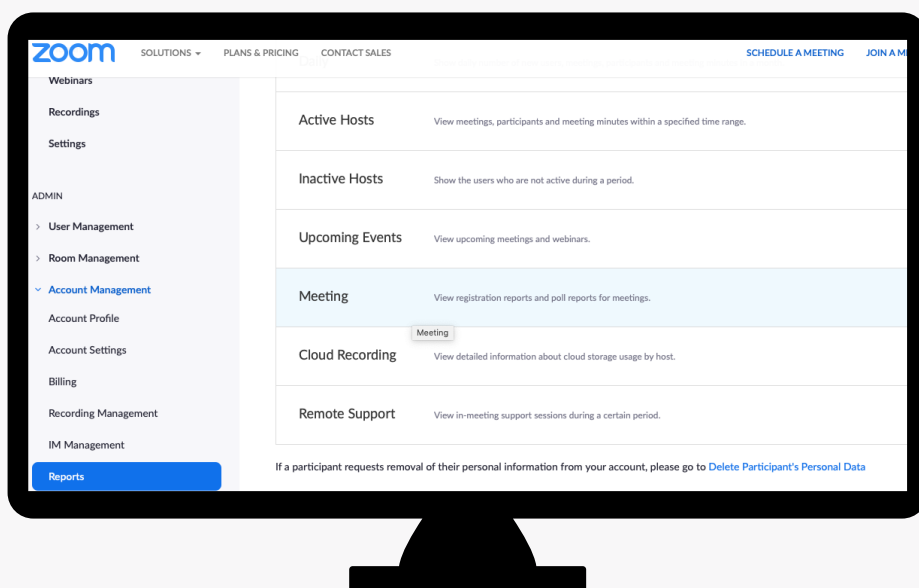
Image description
Screenshot of the home page when you log into your Zoom account. On the left the option "Reports" under the Admin meny is highlighted in blue, on the right, "meeting" is highlighted in blue.

Recordings

For recordings and chat messages, there are two options: they are either stored locally (on your computer) or in the Zoom account cloud. If you select to save them in the cloud, then you'll access the recordings in the personal menu under recordings. Keep an eye on your cloud storage so that you don't run out. Everything you need to know about recordings can be found here: frequently asked questions about local and cloud recording.

Software skills for safe meetings

As the amount of virtual meetings have increased, so have the amount of uninvited guests dropping into these meetings. Known as "Zoom-bombing," this practice has garnered much media attention because it is a tactic often used to spew hate to unexpecting attendees. There are lots of steps we can take as hosts and moderators to protect ourselves from these kinds of interruptions. Though this clearly relates to the third section of this toolkit, "Digital Safety," we are including this here for one reason: if you master your software skills, you can create safer online meetings.

Turn off file-sharing function

You might have read about trolls spamming chats with documents. This is easily fixed by disabling "file transfer" in the personal settings.

Disable screen-sharing

Always disable participants' ability to screen-share if you are planning on hosting a large online meeting. You can still give access to specific participants by making them co-hosts. In this way, you have full control over who can and who cannot share their screen. You do this in the personal settings, before starting the call.
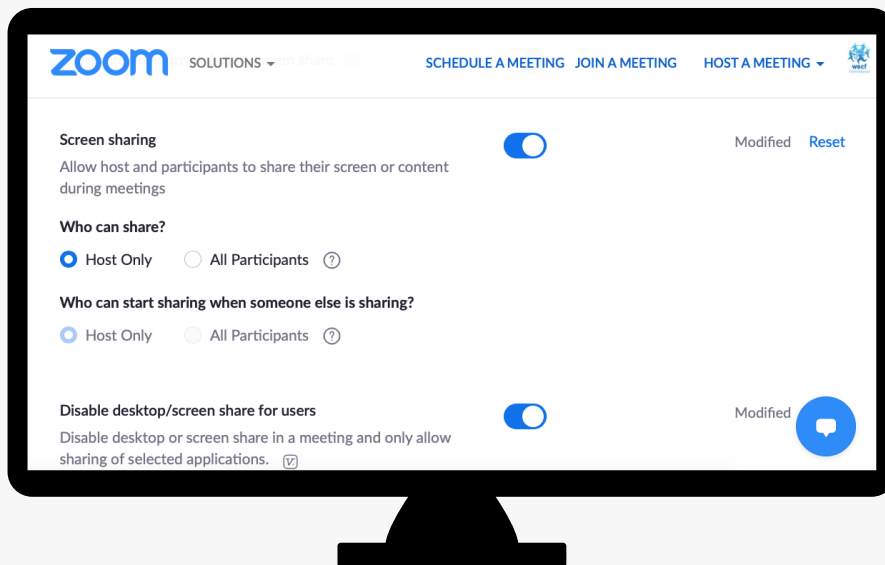

Image description
Screenshot from the personal settings page, showing screen sharing options.

Don't publish meeting links on social media

It just makes them very public and if you are a target of trolls, it also makes it easy for them to join. Instead, have participants register. After they fill in the integrated form, the meeting link will be shared with them, and it's unique to each registered participant. The registration form on Zoom is rather accessible, but do remind people in the invite that if they have any issues registering, they can contact the accessibility facilitator.

Only use your Personal Meeting ID (PMI) with people you trust

The PMI shouldn't be used for big meetings as it is a static link. Once someone random gets hold of it (if you have shared it with big groups), they can in theory try and rejoin your link at other times. Make sure you only use this call link with a few people you trust, and not with strangers. For big calls, or calls with strangers, schedule a meeting instead. Learn more about PMI here.

Disable video

Unless it's a meeting where everyone is keeping their videos on, we recommend the meeting facilitator actively turn off people's videos. It is distracting if a few people have their videos on, while most people keep them off, and it takes screen space from the presentation. Hover over the name of the person with the video on, and click on "stop video" (see page 19).

Mute participants

The same goes for muting participants. Mastering this skill and how to remove problematic people from your call will immediately make your virtual meeting safer! You can always remind people to mute themselves, but a good facilitator will actively mute people so participants don't need to listen to background noise such as typing, loudly sipping on a coffee, or the shrill sound of a TV. Learn more here.

Waiting room

This is a great function where no one is automatically added to the call, but the hosts can screen people trying to join the meeting and either approve or reject them. This is where it is so important that you have a technical facilitator, someone who can help you manage the waiting room while you are moderating (or vice versa). To use this function, you have to enable it in two places: in the personal settings and in the settings of the scheduled meeting. You can lock the meeting and disable the waiting room after the call has started if you want to stop people from accessing the call, e.g., if you are at the end of the call. You do so by clicking on the security button on the settings bar. Learn more here.
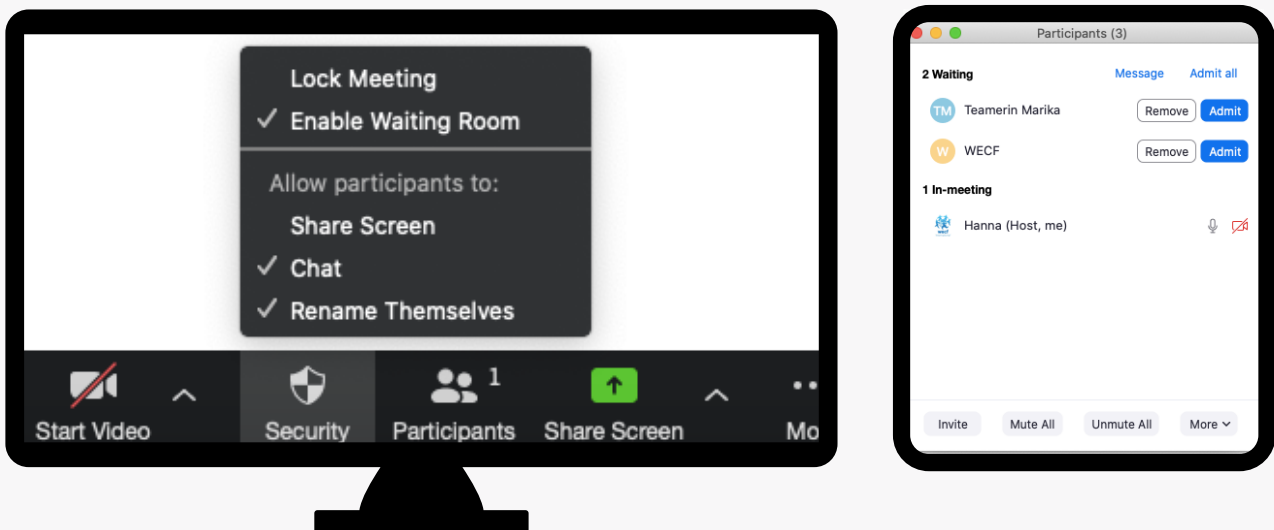
Image descriptions
Left image: screenshot of the bottom of the menu panel in a call, where "security" has been clicked on and a menu with security options has popped up.settings page of a scheduled zoom meeting with "required registration" option selected. Right image: the participants list, where participants in the waiting room is listed at the top with two options next to each name: remove/admit.

Remove unwanted or disruptive participants

On the settings bar of the call, you can click on the "participants" button. If the button is not visible, then click on the three dots in the bar and click on "participants." If you do, the participant list pops up. Hover your mouse over the participant you wish to kick out, and options regarding them will appear, click on the option that says "remove." Learn more here.

Allow removed participants to rejoin

Once you remove someone from a call, they cannot rejoin. In the account settings you can allow for removed participants to rejoin. This is helpful if you removed someone by accident, however, use this function with care for big meetings where you think trolls might join. [Learn more here](#).

Disable private chat

We usually keep private chat on for online meetings with our networks, but if you are planning to have a large meeting on a sensitive topic with loads of new people, then you might want to disable private chat as it could be used for spamming participants with unwanted content. You can now turn off the private chat after the call has already started. Click on the button with three dots then select who your participants can chat with. [Learn more here](#).
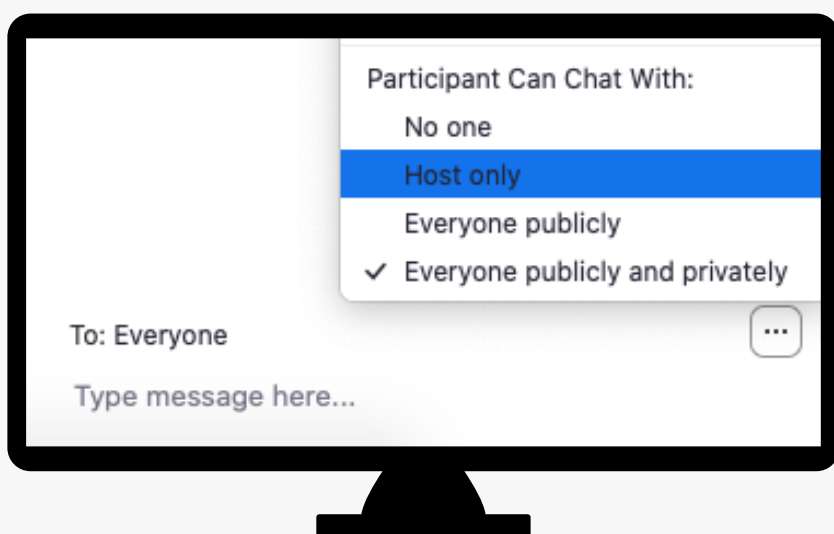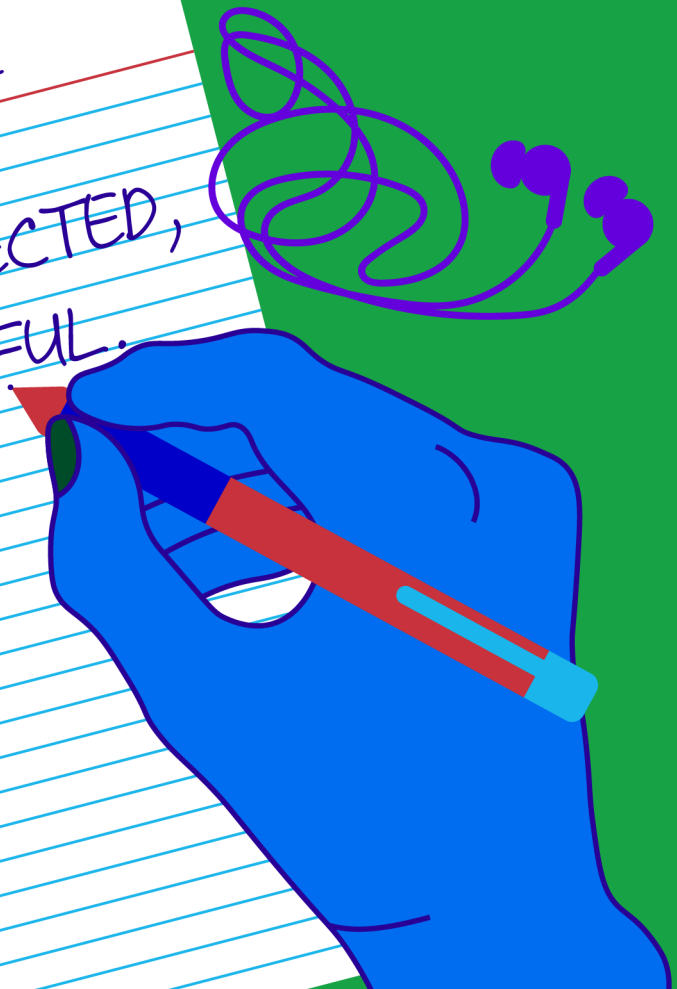

Image description
Screenshot of the meeting chat, where the thee dots menu has been clicked and it shows the participants option of who they can select to chat with.

Digital safety

Digital safety

Here we dig deeper into the question around "why digital safety". We look at what are the Feminist Principles of the Internet? How do you use technology for feminist creativity and care? What are some practical steps you can take to be in control of your time engaging online. Guest speakers were Jennifer Radloff & Erika Smith from Association for Progressive Communication

🔗 [Watch here](#)

We all know that digital safety is important. In the time of global lockdown during COVID-19, many of us have seen a whole range of headlines in the news that make us feel we're at more risk using the internet than ever before. With all of our dependence on the internet to connect us, we might even feel unsafe.

But what do we mean when we say unsafe? There can be so many things brought up for people - fear of Zoombombing, which is when trolls drop into your Zoom calls unwelcome to spew hate, or it could be fear that large corporations that own these platforms are taking down information about you. It could also just be a fear that you don't know how to use the tools available to be your best self, and participate fully, and that's a valid fear. All of these fears can hurt our ability to host and participate in virtual organizing and meetings right now. We might not be able to get rid of all of them immediately, but finding strategies to practice are critical.

In the previous section, we included tips and tricks on managing software to keep meetings safe, like how to use registration, how to use waiting rooms to allow entrance to calls, how to mute or kick out people who are disruptive or hateful. You should feel empowered using those tools, but there's a lot more at hand around fear and our use of the internet right now than just being a whiz at Zoom.

There have been feminists all over the world who have been thinking deeply about what a feminist internet looks like and how feminists can navigate the internet and all its complexity for decades. This is the time to lean on their expertise, and envision what this internet could look like for all of us! We encourage everyone to read the Feminist Principles of the Internet - centered around access, movements and public participation, economy, expression, and agency - as an internet vision "to fully enjoy our rights, engage in pleasure and play, and dismantle patriarchy" online. We are organizing online with the knowledge that we are working towards a more feminist internet where all of our meetings and work keep us feeling safe, connected and powerful.

Let's learn more from some feminist internet safety organizers doing incredible work around the world, in their own words!

Safe Sisters in East Africa

From the Safe Sisters "About" page: "It's hard enough being a human rights defender without having to worry about our technology betraying us. It's not possible to expect everybody to keep up with the steps necessary to avoid viruses, loss of important files, spying, hacking, blackmail, account hijacking, and other unfun digital emergencies. On top of that, women human rights defenders especially face cyber-harassment and bullying online. East Africa needs a league of women technologists working within civil society who can dispense appropriate advice and support for people facing these high-tech challenges.

Safe Sisters is a fellowship program for women human rights defenders, journalists or media workers, and activists that trains them to be able to understand and respond to the digital security challenges they face in their work and daily life. Through a combination of self-study, tool practice, mentorship, workshops, peer sharing, and small grants, these cohorts of women will join forces to take on the most pressing digital challenges that keep women from being able to live and be online safely.
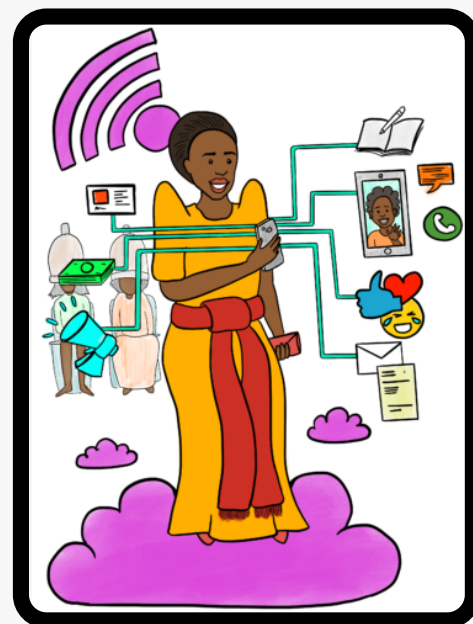
Image descriptions
Image 1: A colourful illustration of a person standing on a cloud holding a phone that is connected to various social media outlets. Image 2: A colorful illustration of a young person holding puzzle pieces with technological objects in the background.

The Digital Security Trainer's Assistant, is a guide for new and experienced digital security trainers, who want a friendly, easy-to-follow guide that they can keep with them as they learn and train. Written by digital security trainer, Natasha Msonza, the guide draws from her experiences learning and training others on digital security. It may be especially useful to digital security trainers people who have engaged in a digital security training of trainers (TOT) program-who are still finding their feet."

Take back the tech!

From Take Back the Tech's "About" page: "Take Back The Tech! is a call to everyone, especially women and girls, to take control of technology to end violence against women. It's a global, collaborative campaign project that highlights the problem of tech-related violence against women, together with research and solutions from different parts of the world. The campaign offers safety roadmaps and information and provides an avenue for taking action. Take Back the Tech! leads several campaigns at various points in the year, but our biggest annual campaign takes place during 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (25 Nov - 10 Dec).

During campaigns, Take Back the Tech! announces actions that combine creative and strategic use of information and communication technology (ICT), with the issue of VAW. Campaigners organise actions that respond to their local priorities, such as workshops on online safety, media monitoring on rape reporting, solidarity actions on the streets and in online spaces and discussions on women's right to privacy.

Take Back The Tech! was initiated in 2006 by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) Women's Rights Programme and has grown into a diverse movement of individuals, organisations, collectives and communities. It is the result of research papers published in 2005 that looked at the connection between ICT and VAW, an issue that received little attention or discussion at that time. After sharing the findings with women's rights and communication rights advocates in different spaces, APC found this to be a critical issue that compelled further attention and deeper engagement. Find out how to take action.

Image description:
A screenshot of the homepage picture for Take Back the Tech, a person holding a cord and swinging it.
Link: www.takebackthetech.net

Cyber women digital trainings

From Cyberwomen's "About" page: Cyberwomen is a digital security curriculum with a holistic and gender perspective, aimed at offering trainers with tools to provide in-person learning experiences to human rights defenders and journalists working in high-risk environments. The guide is geared towards both professional trainers and those who want to learn how to train others on their digital protection, and include gender considerations as they do so. It is made up of training modules, interactive games, recommendations for evaluating the training, as well as audio-visual and graphic materials as instructional aids. There are some recommendations about which modules to use for different learning levels, time and contexts. You can browse the guide online.

FTX: safety reboot

From FTX Safety Reboot's "About" page: The FTX: Safety Reboot is a training curriculum made up of several modules for trainers who work with women's rights and sexual rights activists to use the internet safely, creatively and strategically. It is a feminist contribution to the global response to digital security capacity building and enables trainers to work with communities to engage technology with pleasure, creativity and curiosity.

The FTX: Safety Reboot is for trainers working with women's rights and sexual rights activists on digital safety. Trainers should be familiar with the obstacles and challenges faced where misogyny, censorship and surveillance are restricting activists' freedom of expression and ability to share information, create alternative economies, build communities of solidarity and express desires.

The FTX: Safety Reboot explores how we occupy online spaces, how women are represented, how we can counter discourses and norms that contribute to discrimination and violence. It is about strategies of representation and expression and enabling more women's rights and sexual rights activists to engage technology with pleasure, creativity and curiosity. It is a feminist contribution to the global response to digital security capacity building, bringing the APC Women's Rights Programme's unique methodology and approach, which we call Feminist Tech eXchanges (FTX). Find the modules here.

Image description
A colourful and playful illustration of a person sitting cross legged, in a meditation pose, with an empty speech bubble hovering over them.

What can I do to improve my software skills before my meetings?
Put on a fake meeting for yourself and a friend! It's a great strategy to try to run through some of the skills you are learning before you are in the high-pressure moment of actually hosting your meeting. If you are using Zoom, set up a separate call with a friend or colleague ahead of your real meeting. With just the two of you in the room, practice some of the host skills you are learning: muting and unmuting the attendee, putting down their raised hand, sharing your screen, responding privately in the chat box, and kicking them out of the call. If there is anything that you forget or find confusing, you'll have the time and space beforehand to actually practice.

My organization uses [X platform] for our meetings. How can I find out their accessibility services?
Check out some of the linked accessibility pages for common platforms below. Most platforms describe what services they provide on their website; if you see something missing (i.e., translation services), it is usually safe to assume they do not provide it.

- [Zoom's accessibility page](#) and the [Zoom accessibility FAQ](#) (also see [Known issues with Zoom](#))
- [Skype's accessibility page](#)
- [Hangouts Meet accessibility features](#) ([different from free Google Hangouts](#))
- [Using Google Hangouts with a screen reader](#)
- [GoToMeeting's accessibility page](#)
- [Bluejeans' accessibility page](#)
- Discord has no posted accessibility information, and has [accessibility issues](#). We do not recommend using it.
- AnyMeeting does not have an accessibility page.

No one in my organization is very familiar with these kinds of platforms. How can I encourage learning within my whole organization?
Put on your own training! This toolkit came from a series of three webinars to train feminists so that they themselves could pass along these skills in their organizations. Distribute this toolkit and create a one-hour tutorial session where your colleagues can learn from you. If you don't feel comfortable hosting one yourself, create a time when you can all watch one of the recorded training webinars together, and then discuss any lingering questions and crowdsource answers.

I feel like everyone knows these skills except me. How do I start?
First of all, this isn't true! We are all learning and are at different stages of familiarity and comfort with different software tools. You might be an expert at one platform while someone else is just learning about it, and vice versa. The key to growing your skills in one area is practice, practice, practice. The second webinar in this series does a deep, introductory dive into Zoom, so that is a great place to start, and there are many effective tutorial videos on YouTube for each platform.

What is end-to-end encryption?
End-to-end encryption ensures that only the two "ends" of a chat can see the messages: the person sending them and the person receiving them, and no one in between, like the platform itself (i.e. WhatsApp). In general, it is a recommended safety setting for your personal chats and messages. For some platforms, end-to-end encryption is automatically activated, and for others, you will need to activate it yourself.

These platforms can be expensive. Where do I find the resources to afford them?
It might be worth exploring some of the urgent response funding that is becoming available as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, as well as to lean on our principles of feminist solidarity. Reach out to funders or partners to see if you can borrow someone's Zoom account, or have a partner host a meeting for you.

Should I have antivirus software in my computer in preparation for virtual meetings?
Antivirus software is a good idea for everyone to have, beyond just for your virtual meetings. From links in emails to browsing the internet, there are, unfortunately, opportunities for viruses to infect your computer when you are doing work online. These risks are actually very low in virtual meetings, because you are mostly able to control who is entering these meetings, but it is still good practice to download antivirus software. A simple google search, as well as asking colleagues in your country and region, can help you determine what are popular and effective antivirus software programs.

Are private messages included in cloud recordings on Zoom?
No. Zoom only records public chat messages during the recording session. The host will get a transcript of the chat after the call has finished, but it will not contain your private messages, only the private messages you sent to the host.

My organisation cannot afford speech-to-caption translators, how do I ensure that my meeting is still accessible?
If you are having the meeting with a network, you can always reach out to the others to see if anyone else has funding or if everyone can chip in a bit. You can also include this in your budget-line when writing funding applications. But if these are just not optionable for you, then check if you know someone who is quick at taking extensive notes and ask if they can help you out during the call, by writing in a google doc that you share with the participants.

More resources

There are many more incredible resources available - see a small sampling here that have influenced our work and that allow you to learn even more about specific tools and skills.

Organizations/Websites
- Association for Progressive Communications
- Feminist Internet Principles
- FTX: safety reboot
- FTX: develop your internet dream place
- genderit.org
- takebackthetech.net
- Tactical Tech - "Technology is stupid": How to choose tech for remote working
- UNITAR's online facilitation cards

Toolkits/Guidance
- Leading groups online: A guide to leading online courses, meetings, trainings and events during the coronavirus pandemic
- How to facilitate workshops while you grieve
- WECF's best practices for hosting a successful virtual forum or consultation
- TaxJustice's lessons learned from organising our first virtual conference
- Frida Funds' working style and principles – for healthy online collaboration
- HubSpot: How to run a successful virtual event
- Progressive stack and standing for inclusive teaching
- Tips for hosting a multilingual online conference
- Closer than ever: Keeping our movements connected and inclusive – APC's response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Safe sisters guide booklets (in English, Kiswahili, and Burmese)

Interactive tools
- 75 digital and interactive tools
- Miro - brainstorming tool
- Padlet - interactive notice board
- Mentimeter - voting tool

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Planning virtual meetings: methodology & accessibility

Accessibility forms

Below are examples of pre-call and post-call forms to send out to attendees, inquiring about accessibility needs and gathering feedback for the future. As you can see in the post-call form, feedback is gathered from both an accessibility perspective as well as a content-based perspective, asking participants to reflect on the whole series of calls. Modify these forms to fit your needs.

Post-Call Form: Organising virtual meetings episode 3

Mara (mara@wedo.org) was the Accessibility Coordinator for this call. Please email, take a moment to fill out this form, or send a voice memo to her email if easier.

Name and email (optional, if you would like to be in touch, or this can be anonymous)

Your answer

Are there things we can do next time to make this event more accessible to you? (before, during or after)

Your answer

Feedback on the training series

How have you found these three training sessions?

	helpful - I learnt a lot	I knew some, I learnt some	I already knew most of it	I would like to learn more
Episode 1 - methodology & accessibility	○	○	○	○
Episode 2 - nuts & bolts (on software)	○	○	○	○
Episode 3 - on technology	○	○	○	○

Are there questions you still would like answers to in future calls?

Your answer

What was your favourite part of the training series?

Your answer

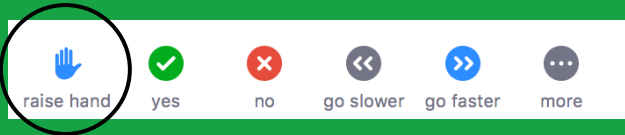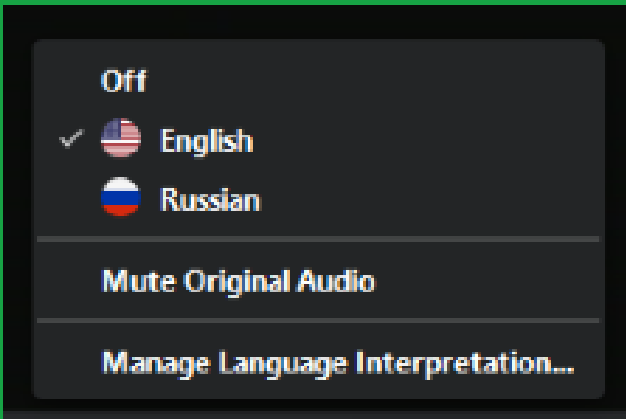Is there anything we could have done better?

Your answer

Submit

Pre-Call Form: Organising virtual meetings episode 3

Mara (mara@wedo.org) will be the Accessibility Coordinator for this call (you will learn more about this on the call!). Please message her during the call if any needs arise, and please take a moment to fill out this form, or send a voice memo to her email if easier, about any needs before the call.

What can we do to make this event more accessible to you? (before, during or after)

Your answer

Name and email (optional, if you would like to be in touch, or this can be anonymous)

Your answer

Submit

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Planning virtual meetings: methodology & accessibility

Call instructions

Below is a resource created by <u>UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia</u> to share with your participants prior to the Zoom meeting:

1. Make sure you have access to the Zoom e-platform and join the meeting by clicking the link.

2. Turn off any non-essential software and other electronic devices for better internet connection.

3. Join the meeting 10 minutes prior to the actual start time to ensure connectivity.

4. Turn off your video, except for when you are speaking.

5. Keep muted when you are not talking.

6. "Raise hand" when you would like to speak and wait until the moderator invites you to unmute.

7. Follow the time limit suggested for interventions.

8. Use the chat box if you have comments or questions.

9. Feel free to share any key points for the planned discussion before the meeting and/or immediately after the meeting.

10. You will be given a brief by the moderator of the session about the interpretation feature.

11. If you are in a session with multi-language translations, click on the globe ⊕ and select the language you would like to hear.

12. If you have a problem, please write to the host in the chat. We will help you.

13. Never speak on the "off" channel.

14. Due to the nature of simultaneous interpretation there might be some delays; therefore, please be patient until you hear the interpreter and speak/listen by considering language interpretation.

15. Do not mute the original audio and do not switch your channel during the session.

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🌐 **wecf.org**