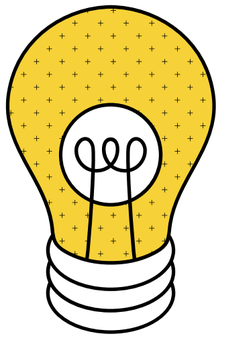
TOOLKIT ONLINE PARTICIPATION

Your TOP guide to make online work easier

OBESSU
Organising Bureau of
European School Student Unions

WELCOME TO THE SHORT VERSION THE TOOLKIT ON ONLINE PARTICIPATION



WHAT TO EXPECT?

The toolkit is divided in 8 chapters:

1. Building your online world
2. Making your online world accessible for everyone
3. Building your online community
4. Online facilitation
5. Online campaigns
6. Online Statutory meetings
7. Online Knowledge management
8. Online safety

CHECK OUT THE FULL VERSION WITH MUCH MOOOORE DETAILS HERE

1

BUILDING YOUR ONLINE WORLD

1.COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR TEAM

Dear old **emails** are always great for official communication so you can keep track of what has been said or who was involved.

When sending emails, use a **clear, specific, and short subject** line summing up the content of the email. It is much easier for the receiver and it makes it easier to search for information

Using your **email signature** well can also be helpful. You should have information about your organisation, including alternative contact details.
Emails should not be your main method of ‘saving’ this information (or even your second method, or your third!), but being able to search someone’s emails to find an important detail if they’ve left the organisation can sometimes be hugely valuable.

For more informal and organised communication

Slack

Basecamp

Trello

Hangouts

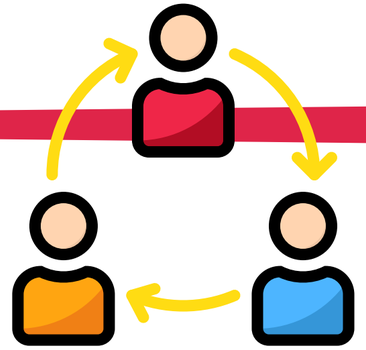
These apps are all free!

We recommend to avoid personal communication channels in order to keep work and personal life well separated!

2. SHARING DOCUMENTS WITH YOUR TEAM

Google Drive is a big ally in this case: Google docs, forms and sheets all in one place.

Not a Google fan?
Dropbox, **OneDrive** and **ICloud** can be your allies in this case. To transfer large files **wetransfer** is the solution!



3. ARRANGING MEETINGS

Doodle Poll and **Poll Unit** are our friends and allow us to find common date and time to schedule the meetings.

Google Calendar allows you to invite your team and send notifications for any updates.

2 MAKING YOUR ONLINE WORLD ACCESSIBLE

1.WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT MIGHT AFFECT SOMEONES' PARTICIPATION IN YOUR ACTIVITY?

- Type of device and its speed
- Time availability
- Care Responsibilities of people at home
- Religion
- Different psychological needs
- Familiarity with technology
- Involvement with other people in the event
- Fine motor function
- Sensory Perception (eg visual, auditory)
- Language familiarity

SOME TIPS...

1

If you have a small group and you know everyone who'll be involved, **you can describe the format to each person individually and ask if there's anything that could help them to be fully involved**.

If you have a larger group think about what frustrations or hindrances happened for people with similar things in the past.

2

You should make sure you have **follow-up feedback surveys in place**, so that if someone has a difficult experience they can easily feed in what would have helped them for you to do better next time.

3

Use external information. For example, **live captioning, and making sure there is enough 'break' time structured** into the event, are both fairly simple fixes that can help many!

Lots of information on these sorts of things is available online.

4

Make sure people have the option to ask **anonymously** and make sure it is clear that anyone can ask for a form of adaptation!

Remember: there's value in trying something
even if
it turns out not to be helpful -
don't give up, and keep adapting.

Full chapter here

3 BUILDING ONLINE COMMUNITY

Ingredients to build your online community

Your membership

A way to communicate
(social media, website, direct contact)

Shared interests

Ways of setting tasks and staying
on top of them between yourselves

Nice social time!

The recipe

Keep a work-life communication balance

1.Adjust the workloads

2. More effort to separate work and private life, since they happen in the same place

3. Colour code for emails: red - orange and green according to the urgency

Plan social time

1.Social and informal events

2. A loooot of teambuilding activities

Stay in touch!

Newsletters, social media, webinars, calls and hybrid activities in abundance

Full chapter here

ONLINE FACILITATION

1.THE FACILITATING TEAM

Consider a team of **three facilitators.** One of them should be ‘tech facilitator’ or ‘tech support’.

Divide the tasks: Introducing the activities - Facilitating dialogue - Summarising content- Note-taking Time-keeping

It is important to value the ‘**passive’ facilitation** which may be less obvious than simply guiding the session. For example, the facilitator that is not ‘currently engaged’ in carrying out the activities has an advantaged position of **observing the group dynamics**, observing body language and catching any cues of tiredness or discomfort.

All three facilitators should be equally aware of each other’s roles, and preferably **able to take on a different role** should the need arise.

2. HELP PEOPLE TO FEEL COMFORTABLE

Introduce **yourself and your pronouns**

Choose the **order of introduction** by asking each person

Choose your **breaks and communicate** them

Use **different ‘activity styles’** including games, quiet reflection, partner work, group work.

Allow **space for socialising**

Give enough time for people to respond

Let participants know how public or confidential the meeting is

3. THE TECHNOLOGY

Explain how to use the **platform**

Set the **rules** (Unmuting, speaking turns etc)

Log in **10-15 minutes in advance**

4. THE SETTING

Make sure to communicate beforehand **what participants should bring**

Communicate what kind of **environment** is required for the session (space to move, silence)

Invite participant to **turn on their cameras**, but do not force them

Use the **gallery view**

5. VISUALS

Use visualization tools to help to keep the focus level like **slides and pictures**

Summarise what has being said in a written format

If you decide to use **subtitles,** remember to communicate it before the session and explain the purpose

6. EMBODIEMENT

to help focus and to shift the energy **engage participants also on a body level**, not only on a cognitive one.

You could plan activities or games in which they can use their body and have a physical interaction.

7. THE TOOLS

Some tools that we recommend: **Kahoot, Mural, Mentimiter, Padlet**.

Before using them, **make sure everyone can access a device** that support the tools

Check out all the million **online ideas**

Full chapter here

5 ONLINE CAMPAINING

BEFORE STARTING...

Be ready to be **flexible**!

Use an **understandable and inclusive** language

Be aware of other campaigns in that policy space **- don’t reinvent the wheel**

Check your **hashtags**

Still use the **physical space** even though you’re mainly online - hang flags out of windows, take photos, use you banners, etc.

ENGAGING WITH MEMBERS

1. Share with the members **what the campaign is for and what you need from them**. Make sure to take time to explain it to people so they feel the ownership and can take part.
2. Create a **campaign toolkit** with materials that they can share or edit (for example, filters supporting your campaign)
3. Create a **hashtag** around your campaign and encourage them to share their own experiences on the hashtag
4. Ask members to **contribute** by creating something (posters, videos, etc.)
5. Make sure there is also something people can do with minimal effort (for example, sign and share a petition)

ENGAGING WITH POLICY MAKERS

1. Speak to other unions/NGOs that might have already links with relevant policy-makers and try to **team-up**
2. Ministers respond best when **contacted by multiple people**. Approach them directly or through local representatives
3. When contacting a politician, **research them first**. Find out what interests them, what you have in common, and how you can use that to engage with them.
4. Encourage your members to **contact their local representatives**. Providing a template e-mail to adapt and send can help.
5. Policy makers respond better to **meetings** than emails.
6. Make sure that your demands are **specific**, and can be followed up on. Make sure you give to politicians a **written version** as well. It will hold them more accountable!

Full chapter here

6 ONLINE STATUTORY MEETINGS

First check if you are allowed to hold online statutory meetings – **check your statutes** and make sure that you are following all the procedures that need to be considered.

You need a **platform** where you can all meet and discuss and potentially a second platform for **voting** if your meeting requires that. Get to know each platform that you will use in advance, so there are no surprises.

Send all the **information in advance** so people can prepare and still feel like it is an important meeting! Consider sending some guide about how to use the platform you have selected and other tools that you will be using. You can organise a **pre meeting session** so they are ready.

Prepare a **facilitating team**

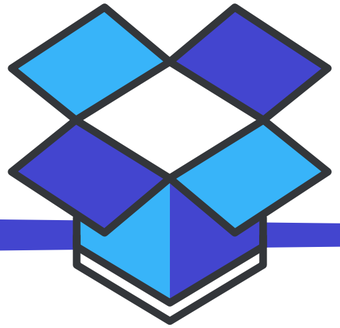
Test everything prior to the meeting (connection, different functionalities)
Prepare the **proposals in advance** so everyone can read them before.
Make sure you take enough **breaks** and give yourself some buffer time since things might take longer.
Find a great **chair/facilitator and test test test**!

Full chapter here

7 ONLINE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

THINGS TO STORE:

Tasks Deadlines Responsibilities
Information needed to do a task
Contact details
A list of who's already been contacted,
Information about accessibility needs for the individuals concerned
Organisational policies/guidelines
Progress updates on work or projects
'Internal' documents (finished, or in progress)
Legal documents



WHERE?

For tasks you might want to use an **online management system** like Trello, while for documents you might want to use **Google Drive** or **cloud** or another internal server.

We recommend you store it somewhere that can be **accessed by more people** so it is not all linked to an individual, in case that individual leaves. Depending on your budget, you can consider some paid servers, you can back everything up on an external hard drive, there are options to explore!

When saving documents, always think '**would this title make sense to someone else**?' and avoid useless and endless researches

AND FINALLY... HANDOVERS!

Prepare a **handover document** so even when you are gone, the person/people can check the most important information, eg, important contacts, log in details etc.

Make sure you **forward important emails** people might need to follow up on.

Some organisations have a short handover, such as a day or two and then the person who is handovering is gone and has no responsibility anymore. For some people and roles it works, but if you think this is not enough, discuss how you could provide a more **continuous handover** and to what extent could/should the former person be involved

Keep your **systems easy to update** - as you go along, think, would this make sense to me as a filing system if I wasn't already used to it?

Encourage each other to **'info store'** as you go

Making a handover document is easier if you're just 'finishing off' things you wrote down as you went along. So set time aside each month to update your 'information stores', and **hold each other accountable** to it!

This also means that if someone leaves unexpectedly without having time to make a document, you still have some good information stored.

Full chapter here

8 ONLINE SAFETY

IT IS ESSENTIAL, AS IN LIVE EVENTS, TO KEEP THE DIGITAL SPACE SAFE AND COMFORTABLE FOR EVERYBODY!

Take time to reflect with your team on how to create a safe and comfortable space online too, which measures and activities are you going to put in place and how you would react in case any security breaches occur, as it's almost impossible to prevent them all, especially in open meetings.

How to build a safe space depends strongly on the type of online event or meeting you are hosting as well as on the needs of the group, for example:

Internal meeting for members you know **vs**
Open webinar for everyone on the internet to be able to join

Interactive meeting/session **vs** podcast or panel discussion

Open online course **vs** course with participants selection

BEFORE THE EVENT

Get familiar with the platform and with all the possible functionalities as well as security breaches.

Create a **code of conduct** to share with participants in advance

Allow for joining the meeting only **under registration**

Choose **a person in the team** participants can reach out in case they feel uncomfortable or bullied

If you work with minors and want to use the camera and record it, you need **parental consent** from them. You can add this to the registration form.

For bigger events, set up an e-mail address where participants can send their **reports** of inappropriate behavior or another reporting system where participants can report these incidents

Discuss with your team and especially with the main facilitator what to do in case a participant **violates** the code of conduct

DURING THE EVENT

Remind the **code of conduct** in the beginning of the meeting

Remind **basic online safety principles** such as not giving any personal data online to people they don't know

As a host you might be able to mute everyone/specific people)

For bigger events, have a person whose only task is to **moderate the comments**
Another option is that questions are only sent or visible to the speakers and the moderators, allowing for a prior check

For a longer course (for example of several sessions) it may be better to have space during the session itself for participants to **agree on their own code of conduct** (as you would do in an on-site training event

Explain all the **technicalities** and rules in the beginning of the meeting/session: for example, to write their names and their MO in the user name

AFTER THE EVENT

You can include in the **evaluation form** a question about safety and comfort during the meeting, to keep improving and knowing what works and what can be done better

If there's any security breach during the meeting itself, keep in mind to **follow up** with participants and debrief with them If there is any security breach during the meeting, check the reporting system of the platform you are using.

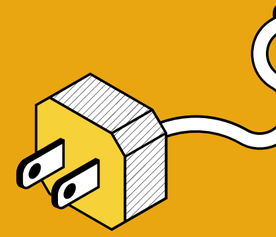
It can also be useful to check if your country has any system or regulation in place to **tackle hate speech online**.

If hate speech online is a recurring issue in your organisation, you can address the topic directly through the materials of the **No Hate Speech campaign** and the No Hate Speech network

Full chapter here

ALL THE RESOURCES

We remind you that this is the short version of the Toolkit on Online Participation



Find all the detailed resources here:

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- Making your online world accessible for everyone
- Building your online community
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- Online campaigns
- Online Statutory meetings
- Online Knowledge management
- Online safety

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