KULU - WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

GUIDE

ORGANISING A WEBINAR FOR THE FIRST TIME? THIS IS YOUR ULTIMATE 101 GUIDE

As part of the WE-EMPOWER project, a series of webinars on migrant women's democratic rights, economic empowerment, and storytelling were organised. Using interactive presentations, this guide offers a beginner's introduction to creating engaging webinars. It is especially useful for civil society organisations, grassroots movements, and non-profits aiming to enhance their online engagement strategies.

FIRST STEPS: OVERVIEW & COORDINATION

Just like any project, when planning a webinar you must identify the following:

- When will the webinar take place?
- Where will the webinar be streamed?
- What topic(s)/issue(s) will the webinar touch upon?
- Who is your target audience? And who are your speakers?
- Why are we planning the webinar?

In addition to identifying the answers to the questions above, it is important to create a space for documentation and coordination of the work that has been done, is in progress and is to be done.

Similar to when managing a project, managing a webinar can be done in various ways. If your organisation already is working with a preferred project management/coordination method, maintain that method. If not, you can consider exploring platforms such as Trello, Notion, Monday - or just a classic notebook or shared Google document/folder.

TECHNICALITIES: WHEN AND WHERE

When deciding when the webinar should take place, consider the following:

- Is your staff available at that date and time?
- Are the date and time accessible for your target audience? Consider working hours, family commitments, weekdays vs weekends and so on.
- Do you need to coordinate with another timezone?

When discussing where/what platform the webinar should be streamed on, consider the following:

- Do you already have an existing subscription that would allow you to upgrade to webinar streaming features? If your organisation already has a Microsoft Teams or Zoom subscription, you might want to explore those options.
- How many attendees are you expecting? This might affect subscription needs.
- Might you need specific features during the webinar - such as breakout rooms, chat, and live translations? This last point can be thought about at a later stage.

On top of what platform the webinar will take place on, what platform will you use to collect registrations? Free options include Google Forms, Jotform and Typeform.

THE TOPIC: WHAT, WHO & WHY

Once all the practical and technical matters have been covered, comes the actual work: who, what and why. This part of the work will define the actual webinar, the discussions, the questions, the impact - this is the most important and time-consuming part of webinar planning.

What topic(s)/issue(s) will the webinar touch upon?

- Make an informative choice on what topic the webinar will touch upon. Is the topic time-relevant, relevant for your audience, relevant for your organisation to cover, and relevant for the country/region you are based in?

Who is your target audience? And who are your speakers?

Once your topic has been chosen, you must decide two things:

- Who do you want to reach with the webinar?
- Who will be speaking at the webinar?

Consider that some target audiences may not find webinars accessible. Regarding the speakers, it is a good idea to engage with existing partners of your organisation. At the same time, it is also an opportunity to extend your invitation to potential partners or high-level figures in society. Regardless of your choices, consider having a diverse and representative panel of speakers. Depending on the length of your webinar, a panel composed of 2-5 speakers is recommended.

Additionally, you will need a moderator for the webinar. The moderator can be sourced internally or externally, depending on your needs and preferences. The moderator's role will be to introduce, guide and conclude the discussions at the webinar, as well as engage with both the target audience and the speakers.

Why are we planning the webinar?

While working on the what and the who of your webinar, keep the why in mind why is this webinar important.

- What unanswered questions will this webinar answer?
- Why do we need to have this discussion?
- Why should your target audience and your speakers take part in this webinar?
- What is the desired impact of this webinar?
- Does your webinar solve a problem or touch upon a problem needing to be solved?

Answering these questions may bring you the key to creating a successful and impactful webinar.

INTERACTIVITY: KEEPING YOUR AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION

Now that you have worked on the fundamentals of your webinar, think about how you can make your webinar engaging and interactive.

In KULUs experience, using an interactive presentation platform can result in a 91-100% engagement rate from the participants and the benefits of interactive webinars are numerous. Participants feel more engaged, attentive and motivated to actively participate. They also have the opportunity to personally have questions answered and gain a deeper understanding of the topic. At the same time, the interaction allows you as a host to adapt the webinar in real-time based on the reactions and needs of the audience. By creating an inclusive and engaging environment, a more meaningful experience for participants is achieved, resulting in greater value and relevance of the webinar.

Interactive presentation platforms include AhaSlides, Mentimeter, Kahoot, Slido, Crowdpurr and more.

Collaborate with the moderator and the speakers to identify which parts of the talking points can include interactive exercises. Explore the options on the chosen presentation platform and include as many interactive slides as possible.

At KULU, we tried including at least one interactive exercise in each talking point as to keep the audience's attention, incorporate the audience's lived experiences and feed the discussion.

Illustrative example from one of the webinars:

WEBINAR TOPIC: STRENGTHENING YOUR ECONOMIC FUTURE TARGET AUDIENCE: MIGRANT WOMEN IN DENMARK	
Talking Points	*Interactive Exercises*
Introduction	"Money Dreams" • Ask participants to anonymously share their money dreams
Managing your economy, budgeting, income and expenses	Budget exercise • Ask participants to identify fixed and variable expenses, as well as saving opportunities
Saving and owning, financial security, and saving habits	"What is in your bag?" • Ask participants to share items in their bag, identifying possible expensive/luxury items Reflection exercise • Ask participants to reflect upon possible clashes in values between individual saving and sending financial support to your family back home?

Investing in your future, types of investments, non-financial investments	Reflection exercise • Ask participants to reflect upon their "Money Dreams" from the first exercise. Are their dreams investments?
Conclusion	Q&A

PR AND DISSEMINATION

Effective promotion and dissemination are crucial to ensure visibility, (high) participation and engagement in your webinars. Consult with your team on former PR and dissemination strategies to ensure that the strategy for the webinar(s) is in line with previous efforts.

In case your NGO is in need of some guidance, here are some strategies and tips:

Create a PR Plan

1. **Identify Your Channels:** Determine the platforms where your target audience is most active. This could include social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram), email newsletters, community forums, and partner websites.
2. **Craft Your Message:** Tailor your message to the interests and needs of your audience. Highlight the unique value of your webinar, such as expert speakers, interactive elements, and relevant topics.
3. **Visuals and Graphics:** Use eye-catching visuals and graphics to make your promotional materials stand out. Tools like Canva can help create professional-looking designs. Consider whether the design should be in line with your organisation's visual identity or whether the webinar(s) has its own visual identity as a part of a larger project.
4. **Timeline:** Develop a timeline for your PR and dissemination activities. Start promoting the webinar at least 2-3 weeks in advance, with increased frequency as the date approaches.

Sample PR Materials

1. **Initial Announcement:**
   ◦ Text: "Join us for an insightful webinar on [Webinar Topic]! Learn from experts, engage with peers, and gain valuable knowledge on [specific issue]. Register now to secure your spot! [Registration Link]"
   ◦ Visual: Include a compelling image or infographic related to the webinar topic.
   ◦ In the days/weeks following the initial announcement, announce the speakers individually as well as highlights of the webinar.
2. **Reminder Post (2-3 days before the event):**
   ◦ Text: "Don't miss out! Our webinar on [Webinar Topic] is happening in just a few days. Make sure to register and be part of the conversation. [Registration Link]"
   ◦ Visual: Use a countdown graphic or a speaker highlight.
3. **Day-of Reminder:**
   ◦ Text: "Today is the day! Join us at [Time] for our webinar on [Webinar Topic]. Here's the link to join: [Zoom Link]. See you there!"
   ◦ Visual: Graphic/design with the event details.

Partner with Other Organisations and Speakers

Engage with other organisations and the webinar's speakers, especially those working with your target audience or similar focus areas. They can help disseminate the webinar information through their networks, newsletters, and social media channels. You can also collaborate on cross-promotional activities.

Leverage Email Marketing

Use email marketing to send invitations and reminders to your mailing list.

Make sure to:
1. Personalise the emails to make them more engaging.
2. Include clear calls to action.
3. Provide all necessary details (date, time, topic, speakers, registration link).

Engage Media and Influencers

Consider reaching out to media outlets and influencers who cover related topics. A mention or endorsement from a credible source can significantly boost your reach and credibility

CHALLENGES AND TIPS

Engaging audiences to participate and take part in an entire online event can be challenging. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online events were among the only opportunities for people to connect locally and globally. In the absence of such a context, it is our experience at KULU, that audiences prefer physical events, making webinar planning more challenging.

There is no correct answer or method on how to counter these challenges. However, here are some directions and tips that can help you along the way:

- **Plan ahead of time**: While you could nail down the fundamental work of webinar planning in just a few hours, plan ahead of time. Starting too early is better than starting too late. Enough time is needed to revise, revisit and reconsider the work done so far. The end result might be a completely different webinar than initially planned - and that is okay.
- **Budget flexibility**: Budget limitations might affect your webinar planning: choice of webinar hosting platforms, speaker fees, PR and so on. Prioritise budgeting areas if your budget is flexible. For example, you might want to choose a simple, free webinar hosting platform and prioritise your budget for the speaker fees. Or if speaker fees are low, you can prioritise PR and dissemination fees.
- **Consider linguistic barriers:** Consider that some participants may not have sufficient proficiency in the local language to engage fully in your webinar. This challenge was evident for KULU and their partners, as hosting webinars in Danish excluded many newcomers and migrants. We realised early on that the migrant women who would benefit most often lacked the necessary digital and language abilities to participate. Live-translation features of webinar platforms are not always adequate, so providing translated materials in advance or using live interpreters is crucial for inclusivity.
-

- **Consider digital/technological barriers:** Some target groups might be hard to engage online due to not owning or having access to smartphones, iPads or PCs. Additionally some target groups might simply lack the technical/digital skills and knowledge to participate in a webinar and they might not have an email address for communication. Ensure alternative communication channels are available, such as phone calls or physical materials placed in partner organisations or places that are frequented by your target audience.
- **Partner with civil society**: Building on the previous point, if your target audience might be hard to engage online, you might want to consider partnering with civil society actors who are in direct contact with fractions of your target audience. They could disseminate the webinar among the citizens they work with, or even organise a physical screening of the webinar as to have a small group sit together in a hybrid-like setting.
- **Consider a hybrid event**: If your budget and capacity allow, and in continuation of the previous points, you may want to consider organising a hybrid event, or a physical screening of the webinar. The reality is that physical events might be more popular and accessible for certain target groups and it is important to take this into account when planning your webinar. Merging your webinar into a hybrid event or organising local screenings may be more attractive for some audiences, and it is also an opportunity for your organisation to directly engage and interact with the audience.

EVALUATION

Evaluating your webinar is essential to understand its impact and gather insights for future improvements. Here's how you can conduct an effective evaluation:

Pre-Webinar Survey (if time and resources allow)

1. **Purpose:** Gauge participant expectations and gather information on their background in order to create a relevant webinar that would address unanswered questions, doubts, existing issues in society.
2. **Sample Questions:**
   - What are you hoping to learn from this webinar?
   - Have you attended any similar webinars before?
   - How did you hear about this webinar?

During or at the end of the Webinar

1. **Polls and Interactive Questions:** Use interactive tools to engage participants and collect real-time feedback.
   - Example: "How do you feel about the topic discussed?", "What is your opinion on the topic discussed?"
   - These questions could be asked in both the beginning, during or the end of the webinar depending on your talking points and how you wish to include continuous feedback in the discussion.
2. **Q&A Sessions:** Encourage participants to ask questions and provide feedback during/at the end of the webinar.

Post-Webinar Survey

1. **Purpose:** Assess participant satisfaction, learning outcomes, and areas for improvement.
2. **Sample Questions:**
   - How satisfied were you with the webinar? (Scale of 1-5)
   - What was the most valuable part of the webinar?
   - What have you learned from the webinar?
   - How could we improve future webinars?
   - Are there any topics you would like us to cover in the future?

Analyzing Feedback

1. **Quantitative Data:** Analyze survey results, participation rates, and engagement metrics from interactive tools.
2. **Qualitative Data:** Review open-ended responses for themes and actionable insights.

Reporting and Follow-Up

1. **Create a Summary Report:** Include key findings, participant feedback, and recommendations for future webinars.
2. **Share the Report:** Distribute the report internally and with stakeholders.
3. **Follow-Up with Participants:** Send a thank-you email with a summary of key takeaways, a link to the recorded webinar, and additional resources*. Invite them to participate in future webinars.

By following these steps, you can ensure that your webinars are well-organized, effectively promoted, and continuously improved based on participant feedback.

Resources: A resource platform with the webinar recording can be valuable for further reach of the webinar and to continue to develop the webinar series, if desired. Please see the resource platform toolkit (insert link to other toolkit) for further guidance on how to create a resource platform for your target audience.

WE-EMPOWER

PROMOTING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN IN EUROPE

www.wideplus.org/we-empower-project/