ONLINE METHODOLOGIES AND TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

VIRTUAL DIALOGUE REPORT 2020

UN WOMEN TRAINING CENTRE

TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY
ONLINE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The 16th Virtual Dialogue hosted by the UN Women Training Centre's Community of Practice (CoP) explored how online methodologies can help us deliver transformative training for gender equality in the context of COVID-19, and beyond.

The Virtual Dialogue in July-August 2020 was a space for participatory discussion on the use of online methodologies in training for gender equality. As the COVID-19 pandemic rages, the time was ripe to reflect on what kinds of online methodologies work well for training for gender equality, what their limitations are, and how we can strengthen these methodologies – including by integrating an intersectional perspective – to evoke transformative change through training.
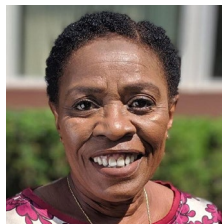
218 PARTICIPANTS

5 WEBINAR PANELLISTS
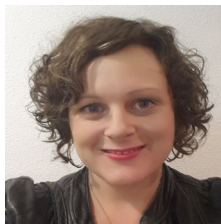
DR LUCY FERGUSON	**WAITHIRA GIKONYO**	**FRANK ELBERS**	**DR NATHALIE WUIAME**	**JOHANNE LORTIE**
UN Women Training Centre (Moderator)	Rain Barrel Communications and others	Research Institute of the University of Bucharest	Gender Equality Academy	ITC-ILO

⌄ Objectives To discuss:

WHAT
What kinds of online training methodologies work well for training for gender equality?

What are the limitations of these methodologies for training for gender equality, especially in how we share knowledge, and address resistances, behaviour change and experiential adult learning?

HOW
How can we strengthen online training methodologies to evoke transformative change towards gender equality? How can we better integrate an intersectional perspective in these methodologies to promote inclusion?

⌄ What are Virtual Dialogues?

Virtual Dialogues are online discussions on topics related to training for gender equality that form part of the UN Women Training Centre's Community of Practice (CoP). They are inclusive processes of learning, sharing and collective knowledge production that aim to improve the quality and impact of training for gender equality worldwide.

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 is the defining crisis of our time. It has affected every facet of our lives, not least learning. Before the pandemic, online learning was already on the rise. In the United States of America alone, 5.8 million people were engaged in some form of learning online.[1] Now, with hundreds of millions unable to access face-to-face classes, online alternatives are proliferating at breakneck speed.

We know that online training offers a range of benefits – it is convenient, relatively accessible, flexible and cost-effective.[2] Self-paced online courses let people learn at their own pace, while moderated courses strive to replicate the classroom environment in a virtual setting. In terms of methodologies, online learning can imply *"a more equitable and democratic process of disseminating knowledge"*[3], that offers "promising opportunities for devising the liberating educational climate that thinkers such as Freire have discussed."[4] For example, *"accessibility is key to the Freirean idea that overcoming [...] limits and gaining access to information and learning is a 'practice of freedom'."*[5] Research demonstrates *"that positive student learning outcomes are associated with online teaching modalities."*[6]

But we also know that online training is challenging and highly gendered. Worldwide, the digital gender divide is substantial. In low and middle income countries, only 54% of women use the internet and they are 20% less likely to do so than men.[7] Virtual environments do not replicate the rich non-verbal and implied social communication that face-to-face learning allows, such as the *"body language of students [that] provide[s] a feedback mechanism for instructors".*[8] If online learning does not enable the same quality of interaction as classrooms, it may fall back on top-down learning styles that negate feminist pedagogies.

As we increasingly turn to remote ways of working during, 'Zoom fatigue' is setting in. As Susan Blum puts it, *"because videoconferencing is nearly a replication of face-to-face interaction, but not quite, [...] it depletes our energy."* Online trainers may not be trained in how to deliver online learning by adapting their content and approaches to distinct its pedagogical requirements. Without knowing how to do this, they cannot harness the potential of online learning, or mitigate the challenges it involves.

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[4] Ibid., quoting Schwartzman, R. (2007). "Electronifying oral communication: Refining the conceptual framework for online instruction." *College Student Journal,* March, 37–49.
[5] Kash, S., and Conway Dessinger, J. (2010). "Paulo Freire's relevance to online instruction and performance." *Performance Improvement,* 49(2), 17-21.
[6] Yen, S.C., Lo, Y., Lee, A., Enriquez, J.M. (2018). "Learning online, offline, and in-between: Comparing student academic outcomes and course satisfaction in face-to-face, online, and blended teaching modalities." *Education and Information Technologies* 23, 2141–2153.
[7] Global System for Mobile Communications (2020). Connected Women: The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2020. London: GSMA. Available: https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GSMA-The-Mobile-Gender-Gap-Report-2020.pdf
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KEY MESSAGES

MOVES TOWARD ONLINE LEARNING

There has been a gradual shift from face-to-face to online learning in recent years. By 2019, investments in educational technology had grown to create a US$20 billion industry. A plethora of information and communications technology (ICT) tools are widely used in different forms of online training – from language applications (apps), virtual tutoring, video conferencing and other forms of mobile learning software. Already on the rise before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, online training looks set to grow exponentially as demand for remote learning soars.

### LEARNING PREFERENCES: ONLINE OR FACE-TO-FACE?

When polled on whether they preferred to adapt a face-to-face training to an online setting, or wait to deliver the training in person, the vast majority of audience members during the Virtual Dialogue Webinar selected the first option. This suggests a growing demand for online training for gender equality. Inputs by the Webinar participants also speak to how far online methodologies have yet to go to meet this rising demand adequately. In response to a poll on how satisfied they are by online training for gender equality during the COVID-19 pandemic, most respondents reported being only 'somewhat satisfied' with their experiences.

Most webinar participants want to adapt face-to-face training to an online setting

Most consider their recent online training experiences only 'somewhat satisfactory'

How satisfactory have you found your online training experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic?

12%
Not at all

27%
Very satis-factory

61%
Somewhat satisfactory

Given the choice would you rather adopt a face-to-face training in an online setting or wait until you can deliver it in person?

8%
Face-to-face

92%
Adapt it to an online setting
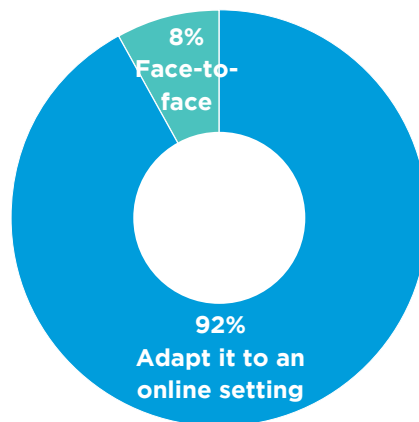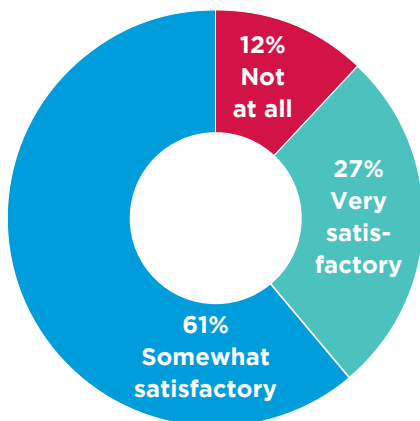
EXAMPLES OF ORGANIZATIONS' ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) launched online courses in 2001, out of necessity as it could not meet the rising demand for face-to-face courses. Since 2010, HREA has had a full-fledged programme of courses on gender equality and women's empowerment. Its courses are 'moderated', 'facilitated' or 'instructor-led', ranging from four to 11 weeks long. It also offers self-directed/self-paced courses.

- The Gender Equality Academy – a project financed by Horizon 2020, itself a programme financed by the European Commission – aims at developing and implementing a coherent, high quality capacity building programme on gender equality in research and innovation. Based on state-of-the-art knowledge and expertise, the Gender Equality Academy provides tailor-made training material to different target groups, such as decision-makers, equality officers, and researchers. It offers training in different formats, including in-person training, face-to-face workshops, webinars, and summer schools.

  In the wake of COVID-19, the Gender Equality Academy has adapted its 'Distributed Open Collaborative course' (DOCC) from a face-to-face format to an online setting. The DOCC is now an online tool for capacity building on gender equality – a digitally-delivered, learning programme inspired by the DOCC model by the US-based FemmeTech network. It aims to apply feminist principles of teaching and learning, and to use a participatory approach and processes – hence the 'd' for 'distributed'. As the DOCC is a self-paced course organized around seven modules, participants can either follow the curriculum or choose which module they want to explore. Although it is self-paced, it is combined with live events, such as webinars that enable participants to engage in live sessions.

- The International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO) has been delivering online courses for years, especially on gender. In 2004, the Gender Campus was one of the first sets of fully online courses developed by the ITC-ILO. It has since grown to deliver all kinds of new trainings, including blended training – for example a course developed with the UN Women Training Centre for UN system gender focal points (GFPs) which will be delivered fully online in 2020. Gender training modules and an eCampus are available, including training on gender mainstreaming and sustainable development, which involves 'tutor learning'. The ITC-ILO also has self-guiding/self-paced courses. In the autumn of 2020, it will deliver a course on gender and organizational change which involves coaching and action planning. The ITC-ILO's blended participatory gender audit certification course involves both online and face-to-face elements. In autumn 2020, the ITC-ILO plans to deliver this course face-to-face with European participants, while piloting an entirely online version of the course in Arabic.

  The ITC-ILO uses different modalities for its regular courses on gender and diversity – such as tutored learning, self-guided learning, Zoom coaching, webinars, a community of practice, and resources. In addition to individual training, it delivers capacity building and collective learning for organizations. For instance, the Gender Equality Organization Self-Assessment (GEOSA) builds – at a distance –builds momentum for change in organizations. It hones their capacities to develop their own gender and diversity action plan, and to undertake self-assessment. This collective learning process is led by internal change agents with the support of the ITC-ILO.

COVID-19'S IMPACT

Online platforms are enabling millions of people, who are unable to access face-to-face opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to access education and training. For many of us, the situation is very different from our normal working lives.

COVID-19 has accelerated the demand for online tools and platforms. In the last six months, several new platforms have come up, which are competing in terms of tools. While many are free, expensive packages are also available for high-tech interactions.

BENEFITS OF ONLINE TRAINING

Extending our reach

Online platforms offers us opportunities to extend our reach, enabling learning to reach out to large numbers of participants, either for free, or in cost-effective ways. In particular, it addresses restrictions regarding travel and related expenses that are involved in face-to-face training.

Self-reflection

What makes online learning unique is that it can allow for more time for reflection. During a six-week online course, for instance, there is far more time for reading and self-reflection than in a three, four or five-day face-to-face workshop. This is important when we talk about gender equality and transforming gender relations.

This time for reflection can help us avoid the trap of 'fast gender' that face-to-face workshops can experience, especially those that with short timeframes. In this way, online training for gender equality gives us the opportunity to delve deeper into structural issues that underlie gender inequality.

"What COVID-19 has done is accelerated that demand and use for online tools and platforms [...] It's a world we need to get used to and to adapt ourselves to, even those of us of a certain age who are not used to technologies."

**– Waithira Gikonyo,
Webinar panellist**

"Face-to-face in Turin, we are missing our participants. We have an empty campus right now [...] It is not a lot of fun but online [training] is working quite well."

**– Johanne Lortie,
Webinar panellist**

"Sharing knowledge and expertise is a pathway to change biases, one person at a time."

**– Laurene Huffman,
Webinar audience participant**

Two things stand out when we speak about online learning. First of all: reflection. What makes online learning unique is that it allows for a lot more reflection. This is very important when we talk about gender equality and transforming gender relations. The second is assessment, including self-assessment.

**– Frank Elbers,
Webinar panellist**

Assessment

One of the downsides of face-to-face workshops is that there is very little time for formal, informal or self-assessment. By contrast, there is greater scope for assessment in online settings. This is important as it allows learners more scope to gauge their understanding and determine to what extent they are picking up concepts.

CHALLENGES OF ONLINE TRAINING

Despite its benefits, online training for gender equality poses a number of challenges. It is yet not a full-grown sector and must address several hurdles to unleash its potential to foster transformative change.

Labour-intensive

Preparing online training is labour-intensive. This is challenging, especially when trainers do not have the budgets or time frames built in for such efforts. Although online learning is, by and large, cost-effective, creating learning management systems, developing and moderating online content involves significant investments of time and resources.

Lack of creativity in migrating content online

The Webinar panellists pointed to a lack of creativity in the design of virtual learning. In the post-COVID era, most trainers are taking materials used in face-to-face workshops and putting them online. It is important to understand what materials and methods will, and will not, work well in online settings. It is also important to distinguish between self-paced or moderated online learning, and adapting face-to-face training to an online setting. Rapidly migrating content online can be difficult without a thorough understanding of how virtual learning differs from face-to-face learning, and without comprehending how to use online opportunities in ways that uphold feminist pedagogical principles.

> "Developing these materials is labour-intensive, although most people think it is easy when they see an online course. It means a lot of effort in terms of manpower."
>
> – Waithira Gikonyo, Webinar panellist

> "It is important to distinguish between self-paced or moderated online learning, and what we are trying to move towards: delivering some form of face-to-face training in an online setting. We should be very clear about making those differences."
>
> – Dr Lucy Ferguson, Webinar moderator

> "One of the things I observe is a lack of creativity in the design of virtual learning. So far, the reaction has been: 'We have these materials that we've done face-to-face. Let's quickly transfer them and migrate them online'."
>
> – Waithira Gikonyo, Webinar panellist

Knowledge acquisition vs attitudinal change

To date, online learning technologies have been best suited to cognitive knowledge acquisition. Many online tools – such as page turners that move from slide to slide – are fairly mechanical. This makes attitudinal and behavioural change especially difficult.

To overcome these challenges, we need to think outside the box in terms of how we 'do' online gender training to evoke lasting change in learners' attitudes, values and practices.

Digital divide

The challenges of online training include the digital gender divide. Around the world, millions of people do not have internet connections. This is especially true of women, most notably in developing countries. We must consider the impacts of the gender gap in access to, the usage and control over information and communication technology (ICT) when pursuing online training for gender equality.

Learner fatigue

Without the possibility of immediate, face-to-face interaction with others, online training can result in learner fatigue. Concentrating on purely virtual courses or zoom meetings is difficult, a fact laid bare since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even with Zoom tools like 'breakout rooms', it is difficult to convince learners to work together without supervision.

Losing opportunities for informal discussions between participants that are possible in face-to-face training removes a major source of motivation, a space to connect with others and to build support networks.

Online training must work especially hard to engage participants, both through content that is interesting and with tools and methods that are engaging, including avenues for informal debate between learners.

"Attitudinal and behavioural change is very difficult [even] in face-to-face contexts and short timeframes. That is a challenge that online learning has not really managed to tackle."

– Frank Elbers,
Webinar panellist

"For online training to be more effective and democratic [...] and to ensure we leave no one behind, there is a huge and urgent investment to be done for women's and girls' technology literacy. The democratization of access is fundamental to achieve transformative results."

– Vanilde Furtado,
Webinar audience participant

"A big challenge is learner fatigue and concentration. How do you keep people engaged? Because learning is about engaging with others. Sitting in front of your computer or iPhone or iPad is very tiring, and then learning tends to take longer."

– Waithira Gikonyo,
Webinar panellist

Anonymity

Another difficulty is a greater degree of anonymity of the participants in online learning.

This makes it more difficult to build bonds of trust between learners, which is necessary if they are to engage meaningfully with one another.

Anonymity compounds the challenges posed by a lack of time or space for informal discussions, where participants can get to know one another and build trust.

> "[In online training] you are losing informal talks that you have in face-to-face training. Participants always welcome this informal time where they get motivated."
>
> "To engage in training you have to trust the others. Within an online format there is a certain anonymity of other participants, so it is more difficult to engage."
>
> **– Dr Nathalie Wuiame, Webinar panellist**

SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE ONLINE TRAINING

The Virtual Dialogue participants highlighted practical solutions to improve online training for gender equality and overcome the challenges it faces.

Start with the learner and be creative

Our starting point should always be the learner. In any form of training for gender equality – whether online or face-to-face – we first need to ask: 'what is it that we want a learner to learn?' This should be the beginning of all online training efforts. That is, it is important to start from what people need to learn, rather than starting from the materials that we already have and trying to adapt them for online settings.

We need to link the learners' needs to very specific learning objectives. Then we must ask, 'what is the best way to achieve these objectives?' This requires us to be creative as we explore how we can achieve learning objectives in an online environment. Will the learning objectives be best served through online lectures? Quizzes? Assignments?

> "Our starting point should always be the learner [...] We need to find creative ways, starting from defining learning objectives and then seeing what learning trajectories, methodologies, tools, platforms we want to use."
>
> **– Frank Elbers, Webinar panellist**

Dialogue and discussions? Or a combination of these methods? Do we need to look at blended learning? More thinking is needed about what participants want to learn and how we create good experiences for them to learn online. Once we have started by defining learning objectives, we can identify the learning trajectories, methodologies, tools and platforms that we want to use. Only then can we effectively begin to tailor existing materials to online settings, which may involve revisiting learning goals once we decide what methods and tools are most useful and available to us.

Put technology 'at the service of' gender equality

We must ensure that we put technology at the service of gender equality. Technology is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. We need to explore how to use technology to engage, share and interact more with participants to promote social justice and foster real action that advances gender equality. Online learning means much more than just web-based modules. For the ITC-ILO, for example, it means looking at different modalities within a technological environment.

Give voice to different perspectives

Changing attitudes is extremely important for any form of training for gender equality. It is vital that online training upholds the feminist pedagogical principles, such as the fact that knowledge does not only emanate from one voice. For instance, Gender Equality Academy's Distributed Open Collaborative Course (DOCC) prioritizes 'giving voice' to participants' different perspectives. Learners can access a forum and a blog where they can post assignments, reflections, and exchange ideas. This creates possibilities for really exchange. It is important that online training offers avenues for networking between participants, rather than relying on top-down interaction.

Focus on intersectionality

How can we look at online learning from an intersectional perspective? It is important to ensure that online learning reaches out to women, men and people of different gender identities, in all their diversity. We keep intersectional identities at the forefront of our online training efforts, recalling that experiences differ depending on different identity markers – sex, gender, ethnicity, race, location, nationality, disability, socio-economic background, class/caste, etc. If we want to work on transformative learning in training for gender equality, we must engage with intersectional identities. For instance, to change gender relations, we need to think of creative ways to reach different groups, including privileged men and decision-makers.

Use accessible tools

Not all existing online tools are accessible for participants with disabilities, for instance, learners who are blind or visually impaired. In order to be more inclusive, we need to make sure that the online tools we use are accessible and meet the requirements of participants with different needs.

> "The DOCC is organized in a way that you give a voice to different people and different perspectives [...This is] getting back to the feminist pedagogical principle that knowledge is not only coming from one voice. I also think it is really important that there is networking between participants."
>
> – Dr Nathalie Wuiame, Webinar panellist

> "This may sound odd, but to me an intersectional perspective in the context of gender training is about reaching privileged white males – i.e. decision-makers. It is interesting, because as privileged and white as they are, you [...] rarely find them in gender training. If we have one man in a group of 25, it is random, but if we have two, we have a critical mass – which of course is extremely sad." –
>
> – Frank Elbers, Webinar panellist

Explore innovative techniques to engage learners

Exploring creative techniques to engage learners is proving useful in online training for gender equality. For instance, the Gender Equality Academy's webinars and DOCC are experimenting with techniques like working groups, chat, Q&A, polls, roleplay and combining platforms. These platforms include platforms dedicated to online facilitation technologies, such as 'MIRO', that allows the use of sticky notes and posters. The Gender Equality Academy is also using co-facilitation because to mitigate the difficulties in following the different threads of online conversations.

Mix methods and tools

It is useful to use a blend of methods and tools in online training, such as audio clips, video materials, individual assignments and group discussions. For instance, learners can be given small research projects to complete between training sessions, which they discuss as a group during the next session.

Moving forward, it will be important to invest in new tools that can help learners feel as comfortable as they did in the classroom environment.

Use icebreakers

Starting with an icebreaker and warming up round are key ways to engage participants and employ a participatory approach in online training. While these are not necessarily approaches that are associated with online learning, they are possible and extremely important. Allotting sufficient time to wrap up online sessions is equally vital, ideally with a facilitator or participant summing up the knowledge exchanged during the session.

> "We are combining platforms, for example, platforms that are more dedicated to online facilitation technology, such as MIRO which allows you to use sticky notes and posters."
>
> – Dr Nathalie Wuiame, Webinar panellist

> "Introducing new tools can allow us to feel almost as comfortable as we did when we did our [face-to-face] workshops. [...] We should be pushing all these billions of dollars in investments towards giving us the tools to be able to do those kinds of things online."
>
> – Waithira Gikonyo, Webinar panellist

> "We prefer to do blended [training], which is the best way."

> "We really need to make sure that the tools we are using are accessible and they meet requirements of people with disabilities so that everybody can participate in our online courses."
>
> – Johanne Lortie, Webinar panellist

Use case studies and roleplays

Case studies and roleplays are useful tools to move beyond knowledge acquisition in online learning and explore strategies to change attitude and values. As they similar to simulations and help to evoke empathy, case studies can make online training more effective and potentially transformative.

Similarly, roleplay exercises that are well-thought-out enable learners to put themselves in the shoes of others and explore what they may experience. For instance, the Gender Equality Academy often uses a 'persona', designed to represent a vulnerable group, that can help participants get an idea of what other people experience.

Provide coaching

We need to look at coaching, an area that tends to be overlooked in both online learning and face-to-face learning. Coaching reinforces learning by providing support to learners as they strive to apply what they have learned. This makes it an excellent way to aid the implementation of learning, whether on gender mainstreaming, gender integration approaches, or other types of activities to transform gender relations.

> "Case studies are the closest one can get to simulations. They are considered very effective when it comes to acquiring new skills, knowledge and changing attitudes."
>
> **– Frank Elbers,**
> **Webinar panellist**

Enable informal exchange and build trust

As noted above, the lack of informal exchange in online learning is a major challenge. To address this, the Gender Equality Academy's DOCC is experimenting with off-topic discussions through a forum blog, and by organizing informal online get-togethers online. Dedicating specific time slots to informal exchange acts as a major source of motivation by offering opportunities for bonding, encouraging empathy and enabling networking between participants.

> "One main advantage of virtual learning is to make it possible to have people working in their own time, including time zones. When students come from different parts of the world, get[ting] together online is a challenge."
>
> **– Claudy Vouhe,**
> **Webinar audience participant**

> "Coaching is an excellent way to provide support and reinforce learning whether on gender mainstreaming, gender integration approaches or other activities that aim to transform gender relations."
>
> **– Frank Elbers,**
> **Webinar panellist**

> "The pedagogy of coaching is crucial."
>
> **– Suneeta Dhar,**
> **Webinar audience participant**

Having short follow-up sessions after a longer training session, or dividing modules into several short sessions, can also improve participants' engagement. Recapping information is a useful exercise. For example, the Gender Equality Academy followed its sessions with a document highlighting all the questions and answers that were discussed in a session. These were distributed before each subsequent session, alongside reading material. This was well welcomed by participants and contributed building trust.

Engage agents of change

To improve online group work, trainers can identify and brief participants who can act as agents of change. In this way, they can play a role in encouraging participation in breakout rooms or forums.

Limiting audience numbers

When you have online technology and you have no limits in terms of audience participants, it can be good to just limiting the audience in particular if you want something that is more participatory and allow for more self-reflection and reflexivity. You can allow time for presentation and interaction by restricting the number of speakers.

Develop applications

Applications (apps) can be useful tools for online learning. For instance, when the ITC-ILO was unable to deliver corporate leadership training face-to-face, it identified businesses' interest in having an easy-to-use app to enable group capacity building among their staff members. In response, the ITC-ILO developed an app called Malkia – Women managers rise up: Skilling for success. Targeted towards women line managers to rise up in their businesses, the app was developed through collaboration between the organization's Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP) and the International Labour Standards and Gender Equality Unit (ILSGEN).

> "We experimented with short sessions that we followed with a document [with] all the questions and answers that were discussed during the session [...] That was welcomed by participants and really contributed to better engagement and trust."
>
> **– Dr Nathalie Wuiame, Webinar panellist**

> "[The app Malkia] is one example where we thought we are not able to replace face-to-face leadership training, where there are a lot of underlying issues that you need to tackle, but we can help with something like an app which includes scenarios, coaching and a wide range of content for reflection."
>
> **– Johanne Lortie, Webinar panellist**

> "Different apps are required [...as are] simulated scenarios to engage online participation, combined with informal online gatherings to fully explore topics."
>
> **– Mandie Richards, Webinar audience participant**

While an app cannot replace face-to-face leadership training, it can support learning by highlighting scenarios, facilitating coaching and providing a range of content for reflection.

Explore virtual reality and artificial intelligence

Organizations like the ITC-ILO are exploring the use of advanced technologies, such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence, in online learning. Participants receive a pair of large glasses by post so that they can participate in virtual reality training, in which scenarios are built using artificial intelligence. These scenarios may depict a dialogue between two colleagues, for instance. The participant takes on the role of one colleague and strives to diffuse a situation, or seeks to convince their colleague about the existence of resistance to gender equality.

The interaction simulates a real-life discussion, in a similar vein to roleplays and case studies. The 'body swap' methodology, in which a participant puts themself in someone else's place is another type of virtual reality simulation that can be used in online training.

Use gamification

Gamification –the process of applying gaming designs and concepts to learning – can be used in online training for gender equality in order to make sessions more entertaining and engaging. The ITC-ILO, for example, puts participants in a gamification scenario in which they have to decide what the best solutions are to overcome a case of sexual harassment. There are three settings in this scenario: a situation of sexual harassment in a garment factory, at a construction site, and at a bank. During these three scenarios, the participant identifies the best ways to address the situation and prevent further sexual harassment.

To ensure that gamification does not trivialize or over-simplify complex, sensitive issues, it is important to pair it with sufficient time for reflection, discussion and myth busting.

> "[Using virtual reality] you have an interaction which is simulating a real live discussion. [...] The methodology called 'body swap', where you put yourself in the place of someone else, is a bit like virtual reality. I have tried it myself on disability and you really feel it."
>
> – Johanne Lortie, Webinar panellist

> "[With] gamification, we are looking at putting the participant in a situation where they have to solve an issue and they are part of the scenario, so they have to decide what are the best solutions."
>
> – Johanne Lortie, Webinar panellist

> "It is worth discussing how and when gamification can be used and when it may be less appropriate. It can risk simplifying a complex issues – it all depends on objectives and the audience. [...] Gamification for issues like sexual harassment should be complemented with reflection and discussion, as well as myth busting!"
>
> – Adriana Greenblatt, Webinar audience participant

Try to recreate the classroom environment

The ITC-ILO is trying to recreate the classroom environment in online training through a discussion forum and interaction with tutors. This has several advantages, including participants' access to a wealth of global expertise without the need to travel.

Accept the limits of online training

It is important to accept the limits of online training for gender equality, while continuing to explore new methodologies and push online learning to its maximum potential. Rather than giving up on the benefits of online training because of the challenges it entails, we must accept its limits, be realistic with our learning objectives, and continue to strive to improve learners' experiences.

> "There are some things that we cannot achieve as trainers [...] Especially when it comes to gender equality, I think it is very important to keep in mind that we cannot throw learning at people when we try to bring about transformative change." –
>
> – Frank Elbers, Webinar panellist
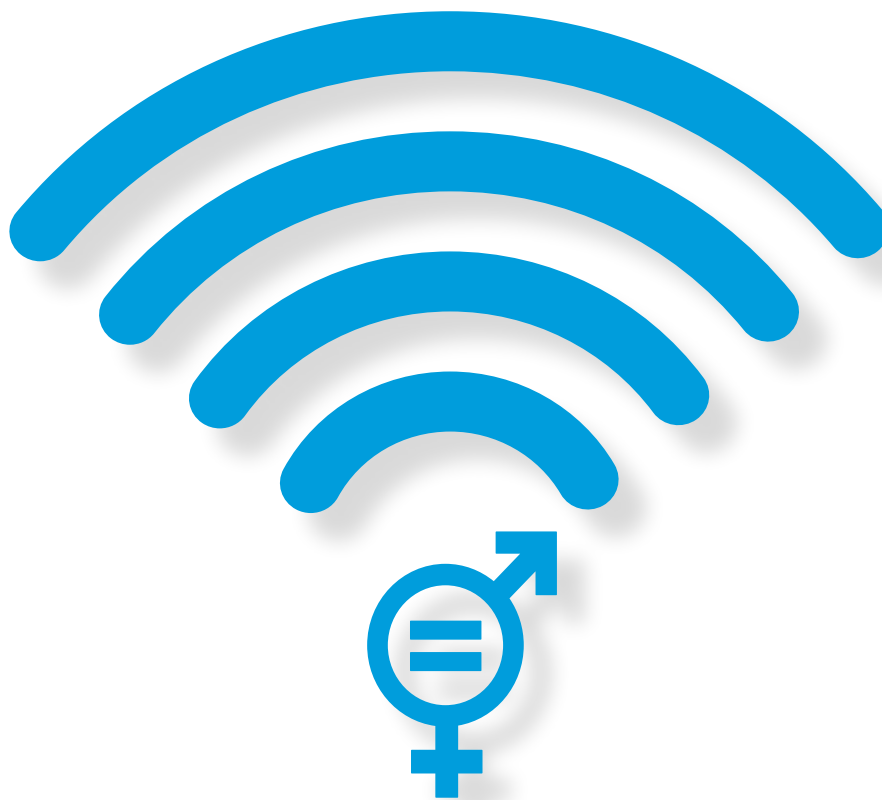
WAYS FORWARD

HARNESS THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF ONLINE TRAINING

The Virtual Dialogue participants suggested a number of ways forward for online training for gender equality, in order to advance the transformative potential of online methodologies.

Measuring the impact of online learning

It is useful to explore and conduct further research on questions raised by the Virtual Dialogue participants (see below), such as which groups - disaggregated by sex and other intersectional markers - are responding favourably to online training, and how best to measure the impact of online learning. We are at the beginning of this process, and work is specifically needed to evaluate the impact of online training for gender equality, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Working paper mapping feminist online training

The UN Women Training Centre's mapping of feminist online training, this Virtual Dialogue discussion and this report will feed into a Working Paper on Feminist Online Methodologies. Due to be published in the autumn of 2020, the paper will explore how we can deliver training for gender equality online in feminist ways.

Questions from the audience

Discussions during the Virtual Dialogue Webinar were enriched by a number of comments and questions posed by audience participants, including:

- "I see new opportunities (I am and others are experimenting with) to go beyond cognitive through activities that engage the whole body (somatic approaches), visioning, sharing experiences, for example, awaken different senses, and evoke empathy. I would love to hear other examples from panellists or participants of creative examples of how they have moved beyond the cognitive!" – Adriana Greenblatt

- "How can we use online trainings to change attitudes, to unpack stereotypes, to have a real impact on the way learners think? Which strategies could be used? Since it seems to me that a change on those practices seems easier to achieve in physical trainings, where there is more room for empathy." – Agostina Allori

- "One key advantage I see with e-learning, particularly when it spreads over some weeks and is not-self paced, it that students have time to read. [...] My experience as a facilitator with e-learning [...] is that students must provide that effort so we don't fall into the trap of fast-gender! I ask students to write their autobiographies, keep time-budget (to work on care issues), mini-research on family or colleagues, produce quiz (in teams); co-moderate with students (in turn). Fast-gender is short-cuts, over - simplification of issues, gender recipes to learn the basics in order to tick the right gender boxes ... Fast-gender is usually more technocratic than feminist!" – Claudy Vouhe

- "E-learning addresses cognitive knowledge and typically fails at affective/attitudinal changes. This is the case when you take existing materials and put them online. However, it is possible to create effective training for gender equality, if you do three things. 1) if you revisit the learning goals, 2) if you re-design the learning activities (with the learner in mind) to see what will ensure the appropriate levels of learning, and lastly, 3) if you include visually-compelling experiences with audio, video, and synchronous meetings (participatory inclusive discussions, role-plays, feedback) to demonstrate and practice what supports training for gender equality." – Khaitsa Wasiyo

- "How far could the "virtual reality and artificial intelligence" reach the society? Is there any way that it could reach indigenous people?" – Vivi Nevida

- "Thank you Nathalie for bringing up 'informal get together'. We also had a similar experience, when people had less motivation to participate in online courses due to the lack of 'networking' experience. We have introduced in the agenda 'informal online gatherings', and participant appreciated it a lot!" – Olga Bezbozhna

- "One of the challenges - many people who require training have no access or limited access to resources. How can spaces

- be created taking cognizance of these inequalities?" – Mandie Richards

- "Reflection required before transformative learning can happen, as open minds required and privilege recognized, which is often not acknowledged. Will online learning be able to reach 'white privileged males/decision makers'?" – Mandie Richards

- "Who is responding more favourably to online training, women or men? Any other disaggregated data?" – Jorge Vivar

- "How to measure the impact of online courses in women empowerment?" – Gabriela Sanchez

- "Which competencies should be developed to improve pre-emptive educational programmes on gender-based violence?" – Denise Delgado Guante

- "Online learning is a good method, is there a possibility for UN Women to continue this online learning programme after the pandemic?" – Anissa Indras

PARTICIPANTS

The success of this Virtual Dialogue is thanks to our participants' dedicated engagement. This report is based on the contributions of our expert Webinar panellists and our audience of 218 Webinar audience member participants. The Webinar was moderated by Dr Lucy Ferguson, UN Women Training Centre Consultant, and introduced by Ruya Leghari, Community of Practice Consultant for the UN Women Training Centre, who moderated the forum discussion and wrote this report.

218
participants in the Virtual Dialogue Webinar and forum

WATCH THE WEBINAR

Virtual Dialogue on Online Methodologies and Training for Gender Equality

Virtual Dialogue 2020 - Online Methodologies and Training for Gender Equality.

VIRTUAL DIALOGUE WEBINAR
ONLINE METHODOLOGIES
TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY
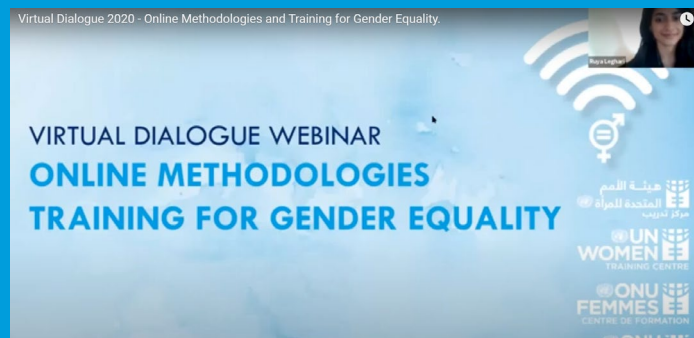
WEBINAR PANELLISTS (22 JULY 2020)

Dr Lucy Ferguson, UN Women Training Centre [MODERATOR]

Lucy is a specialist in gender equality and women's empowerment. A consultant for the UN Women Training Centre, she has written extensively on using feminist pedagogical principles and working towards training that is reflexive, focused on process and grounded in the transformative potential of participatory training encounters. She has worked with several international organizations, including UN Volunteers, the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNDP and UNWTO. Her latest book is *Gender Training: a Transformative Tool for Gender Equality*.

Frank Elbers, Research Institute of the University of Bucharest (ICUB)

Frank is a freelance journalist, lecturer, researcher and trainer who has worked on gender, human rights and development in Central and Eastern Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa for 25 years. He specializes in gender mainstreaming, gender norms, gender analysis, gender auditing, and engaging men and boys. He is currently a researcher at the Research Institute of the University of Bucharest and was a visiting fellow at the Arab Institute for Women at Lebanese American University in Beirut from 2016-2018. He is the former Executive Director of Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) and served as Chair of the Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe Network (DARE).

Waithira Gikonyo, Rain Barrel Communications and Jolimangol Associés

Waithira specializes in designing and implementing social and behaviour change initiatives across several social sectors for UNICEF and UNFPA. An experienced trainer and facilitator, Waithira served as a Senior Learning Advisor for UNICEF for over 12 years. She has partnered with several universities to develop Massive Open Online Courses that have enrolled thousands of learners globally. She is an Associate of Rain Barrel Communications, based in New York, Jolimangol Associés, based in Senegal, and StratMan LLC, based in Las Vegas. A Kenyan national, Waithira has a PhD in journalism and mass communication from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Johanne Lortie, ITC-ILO

Johanne is a gender, diversity and inclusion expert with 25 years of experience on women's economic empowerment, organizational change and diversity management. She has been developing and delivering training at the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO) for the past 17 years on gender in the world of work, gender and organizational change, the ILO's participatory gender audit methodology certification programme, and has been running gender audits in several organizations. Johanne trains on gender and diversity employment policies, women in business and corporate sector, and women in mid-level management in the corporate sector. She is also an expert on knowledge sharing facilitation and is a Certified™ Professional Facilitator from the International Association of Facilitators (IAF).

Dr Nathalie Wuiame, Gender Equality Academy

Nathalie is an expert in gender mainstreaming, a senior lawyer and researcher in the fields of employment, social inclusion and equality. For nearly 20 years, she has worked on the integration of gender in policies, laws and public administration through the delivery of manuals, guidelines and training for civil servants and researchers. As a professional facilitator, she has organized and facilitated a number of conferences and workshops at the EU and the national level in Belgium. The Gender Equality Academy GE Academy has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 824585.

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.