



## CONVENE & CONNECT

*Convening is the art of bringing the community (of practice) and relevant stakeholders together to connect members and engage them in meaningful conversations. The diversity of a community and a risk-free and inclusive environment help develop conversations and engage members.*

Start small, create the conducive environment to convene and network people.

Proper community management to ensure diversity of views, prioritize equity for access to opportunities and resource and where everyone feels they belong and can actively participate.

Diversified, equity and inclusiveness environment where there is diverse representation, fairness and everyone feel valued and heard.

### Activities oriented to developing the practice – Meeting Agenda

#### WHAT

Facilitators often assume that one of their main jobs is to keep the group to the agenda (and participants often expect them to). In a traditional team meeting or training workshop, the agenda is meant to drive the process, because it is the point of the meeting to cover all the items on the agenda or curriculum.

#### WHY

The role of the agenda in a community is to give an initial structure so people can engage. It acts more like a road sign than the journey itself. The key question for a community meeting is not whether the meeting is following the agenda to the letter, but rather whether activities are creating value for members. If there is an opportunity for learning (including a promising insight, an animated conversation, a productive conflict, a new challenge, a celebratory moment), then adapt the agenda as you go.

#### HOW

Community of practice meetings vary a lot in content and structure. It is important to let each community discover what works best for them. Invite members to be imaginative about how they address their common challenges and make progress together. The table below shows the outline of a generic community of practice meeting.

Activity	Description
<b>Check-in</b>	The meeting host invites any new member there for the first time to introduce themselves. Then members share stories about: What did you do with any insights you got from our previous discussions? And what happened? The idea here is to see meetings, not as separate events, but as part of ongoing learning loops. Again, enabling these loops is a key dimension of community facilitation.
<b>Opening Activities</b>	This is a space for members to bring up any challenge or topic to other members in the community. If it is short or urgent, the community can deal with it then. If it needs a lengthy discussion or more preparation and designed interaction, it is included in the learning agenda for a further meeting or a subgroup conversation. This opening space could simply be a live poll (online or in-person) or it could be something more elaborate such as a rotating café style conversation. In a small group, it could be an opening routine that is part of the agenda.
<b>Social learning activities</b>	<p>The bulk of the meeting is spent on focused learning activities that further the learning agenda of the community or respond to requests for help by members. Some communities dedicate a good part of this time to practice groups, both for doing their own thing and for engaging the whole community in providing feedback.</p> <p>As mentioned before, synchronous time is precious and needs to be used to interact rather than share information, which is best left to emails, newsletters, or recordings. Examples of activities, which can be done online as well as face to face, are described in the next section. Note that these activities may take place over more than one meeting. It is a good idea to invite members to take the lead in setting and facilitating different activities. The more practiced members are at creating activities for productive conversations on the go, the easier it is to deal successfully with emerging and important issues.</p>
<b>Reflections</b>	<p>Members reflect on the current meeting and the evolution of the community of practice from their perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What have we accomplished and what should we include in our shared memory?</li> <li>• What challenges are we facing? What should we do next to push our practice forward?</li> <li>• What's working or not in our meetings?</li> <li>• How are we doing as a community?</li> <li>• Who else needs to hear what we are doing?</li> </ul> <p>Whether meeting online or face to face, we often open a shared document like a Google doc for these moments of reflection (see Shared reflection at the end of section below for more detail on process).</p>
<b>Check-out</b>	<p>Before leaving, members share their reflections on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some of the learning highlights?</li> <li>• What are we going to do with what we are learning and what difference do we hope it will make?</li> </ul>

	The idea of this type of check-out is to help push the learning into practice and initiate learning loops to follow up on and feed back into the community over time.
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