

Planning an agenda

Alright! Now that we know who to bring, and where to host our conversation, how are we going to organise the time spent together? Organising a local conversation is not easy and takes a lot of energy on behalf of the organising team. **You want to make the most out of the conversation space.** Having an agenda can help you stay focussed on your objectives in the limited timeframe you have.

It is important to note that the agenda will depend on two key things:

- 1. the amount of time you have together
- 2. your objectives and the objectives of those attending

You may decide to plan the agenda in advance, or decide on the agenda collaboratively with participants on the spot. Keeping the agenda open for collaboration can enhance the ownership that participants feel of the space. At the same time, bringing people together requires participants to give their time and resources, and many may feel a sense of security in being able to anticipate a planned structure to the event.

The deliberateness of pace

The pace of the conversation should be **deliberate**, as it impacts the nature of conversations as well as your choice of conversation methods. How long do you want the conversation to be? You want to think about:

Number of sessions	Length of each session	If more than one session, frequency of sessions
One session? Multiple sessions?	Half a day? A full day? Multiple days?	Consecutive days? Weekly? Monthly?

Having participants get to know one another, allowing for in-depth conversations to develop, and creating space for energisers and breaks, all take time. Simultaneously, long sessions or a high frequency of sessions can be draining for folks, or cause the event to lose momentum. This can also be the case when running a virtual event, where the over-reliance on the brain and eyes to process inputs, struggles with technology, and fewer, shorter breaks all contribute to digital fatigue. Consider the minimum amount of time it would take to have an **energised, engaging and generative** conversational space and develop an agenda around those parameters.

Lastly, remember that these local conversations can be as informal or as formal, and as big or as small as you like. While you may want to cover a lot of ground in one go, design the agenda at a scale with which **you feel most comfortable**.

Conversation flow

Now, how do you want to integrate your objectives and the objectives of participants into the agenda? If you want the conversation to be entirely participant-led, you may want to consider an Open Space methodology for facilitating the conversation flow.

If you prefer to guide the topics of discussion, you will want to choose conversation methods for those topics beforehand that can enhance engagement.

As a basic framework, here are some **must-haves** to include in your agenda:

1. Icebreaker activities for getting to know one another
2. A conversation about participants' expectations and setting intentions for the session
3. Collective decision-making on the principles for participation
4. Conversation activities
5. Breaks in-between activities
6. Closing check-out

[Insert link to an appendix/resources section that includes a sample agenda]

Top tip! Bring skilled facilitators on board that can support the structure and flow of the conversation and guide the development of your agenda. Meet with facilitators before the event to discuss and brainstorm!

Use this kit!

In the chapters to follow, you will find more information on how to facilitate and hold a conversation space. You will also find plenty of ideas for activities and methods specifically designed for enhancing conversations around the different FPIs and their relation to local contexts. Read these chapters and add the activities that resonate with your objectives to the agenda of your event!

See these chapters:

[Chapter 2. Holding space and getting to know each other](#)

[Chapter 3. Playing with tech](#)