

VIRTUAL DIALOGUE

Online Methodologies and Training for Gender Equality

22 July 2020 – 5 August 2020, Community of Practice (CoP) Online Platform

Webinar: Wednesday, 22 July 2020, 09:00 New York /15:00 Central European Time

CONCEPT NOTE

Introducing our Virtual Dialogue

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 alone, for example, 5.8 million people were engaged in some form of learning online.¹ Now, with hundreds of millions of learners 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 implies “*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

This Virtual Dialogue is a timely chance to discuss how online methodologies can help us deliver transformative training for gender equality in the context of COVID-19 – and beyond.

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 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 classroom environments, it may fall back on a top-down learning style that negates feminist pedagogies. As we increasingly turn to remote ways of working during COVID-19, ‘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 its challenges.

What does this mean for training for gender equality? The time is ripe to reflect on how online methodologies can help us navigate the COVID-19 crisis, and the ‘new normal’ in a post-COVID world, to continue delivering transformative training for gender equality. This is the focus of the UN Women Training Centre’s upcoming **16th Virtual Dialogue on “Online Methodologies and Training for Gender Equality”** in July 2020.

¹ Allen, I. E., Seaman, J., Poulin, R., and Straut, T. T. (2016). *Online report card: Tracking online education in the United States*. Babson Park: Babson Survey Research Group.

² Yang, Y., Cho, Y.J., Mathew, S., and Worth, S. (2011). “College Student Effort Expenditure in Online Versus Face-to-Face Courses: The Role of Gender, Team Learning Orientation, and Sense of Classroom Community.” *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 22(4), 619–638; Batalla-Busquets, J.M., and Martínez-Argüelles, M.J. (2014) Determining factors in online training in companies, *International Journal of Management Education*, 12, 68–79.

³ Kash, S., and Conway Dessinger, J. (2010). “Paulo Freire’s relevance to online instruction and performance.” *Performance Improvement*, 49(2), 17–21.

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>

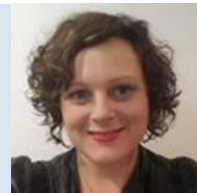
⁸ Wuensch, K., Aziz, S., Ozan, E., Masao, K., and Tabrizi, M.H.N. (2008). “Pedagogical Characteristics of Online and Face-to-Face Classes.” *International Journal on ELearning*, 7(3), 523 – 532.

Objective and key questions

The **objective** of this Virtual Dialogue is to discuss:

- ✓ **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** 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?

Webinar panellists (22 July 2020) [additional panellists to be confirmed]



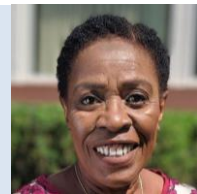
Dr Lucy Ferguson, UN Women Training Centre (MODERATOR)

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 organisations, 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

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, among other issues. He is currently a researcher at the Research Institute of the University of Bucharest (ICUB) 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 (formerly of UNICEF)

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. A Kenyan national, she has a PhD in journalism and mass communication from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is driven by her passion for improving child, gender and human rights globally.



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.

Format

Week 1

Webinar & forum
member to pose your questions for the Webinar!

The Virtual Dialogue will kick off with a live English-language [Webinar](#). Invited experts will give short presentations on online methodologies and training for gender equality, followed by a Q&A session with the audience. We invite participants to submit questions via the **Webinar’s ‘questions’ facility**, which the moderator will pose on their behalf. We will post the recording on the CoP platform and the Training Centre’s YouTube channel.

The Virtual Dialogue will involve a [two-week forum discussion](#) on the UN Women Training Centre’s Community of Practice (CoP) platform where participants can able to share thoughts, experiences, and raise questions for reflection.

Weeks
1 –2

Discussion
forum

Follow-
up

Virtual
Dialogue
Report

The discussions will be synthesised into a **Virtual Dialogue Report** that will be disseminated through the CoP and UN Women’s communication channels. **All participants who ask questions in the Webinar and participate in the forum will be credited in the report.**

How can you participate?

You can take part in this Virtual Dialogue in two ways – by participating in the live panel discussion during the [Webinar](#) (22 July 2020) and/or by contributing to the open [discussion forum](#) on the CoP platform, which will be open between 22 July–5 August 2020. The **Virtual Dialogue is open to everyone**, including members of the UN Women Training Centre’s Community of Practice (CoP), UN Women and UN system staff, gender and development experts, training practitioners, academics, representatives of governments, civil society, women’s organizations, research institutions, and all those interested in online methodologies and training for gender equality. We particularly welcome the participation of gender trainers and trainers in other fields, whose insights will enrich the debates.

Background: What are Virtual Dialogues?

Virtual Dialogues are online discussions that promote debate and the exchange of good practices, ideas and information on training for gender equality. They aim to be effective, inclusive processes of collective knowledge production with the end goal of improving the quality and impact of training for gender equality, while highlighting its transformative potential. Virtual Dialogues respond to the interests, needs and motivations of [UN Women Community of Practice in Training for Gender Equality \(CoP\)](#), an open platform for discussion for gender experts and practitioners, as well as a clearing house of [resources](#), [institutions](#) and [training opportunities](#) related to training for gender equality.

Past CoP Virtual Dialogues 2013–2019

- [Beijing+25 and Training for Gender Equality](#) (2019)
- [Privilege, Power and Training for Gender Equality](#) (2019)
- [SDGs and Training for Gender Equality](#) (2018)
- [Men, Masculinities and Training for Gender Equality](#) (2018)
- [Intersectionality and Training for Gender Equality](#) (2017)
- [Understanding Change through Training](#) (2017)
- [Professionalization of Trainers](#) (2016)
- [Theory of Change and Feminist Pedagogies](#) (2016)
- [Compendium of Good Practices](#) (2016)
- [Resistances in Training for Gender Equality](#) (2015)
- [Online and Mobile Training for Gender Equality](#) (2015)
- [Training for Gender Equality and Beijing +20](#) (2014)
- [Transformation through Training](#) (2014)
- [Knowledge on Training for Gender Equality](#) (2014)
- [Evaluation and Training for Gender Equality](#) (2013)

Save the Date

Join us for the Virtual Dialogue Webinar on 22 July 2020 ([register here to participate!](#)) and the two-week discussion forum on the UN Women Training Centre’s [Community of Practice \(CoP\) platform](#).

For more information, please contact ruya.leghari@unwomen.org