

SECTION 3

SETTING UP CONVERSATION EVENTS

At the core of Responsive Dialogues are a series of conversations or dialogues, called Conversation Events. These provide an opportunity to hear participants' insights into their lived experiences of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) challenges and to participate in co-creating solutions to these challenges. Thorough designing, planning, and preparation for these Conversation Events to suit the needs and context of each participant group, is really important to their success.

This section provides guidance on the following:

Module 4: Planning Conversation Events

Module 5: Preparing for Conversation Events

NOTE: Sections 3 and 4 are both important for running Conversation Events, and should be read and used together.

4 PLANNING CONVERSATION EVENTS

MODULE



Conversation Events are at the heart of the Responsive Dialogues project. Here participants are facilitated through a deliberative process which fosters participation and inclusivity in decision-making at local and policy levels. The success of Conversation Events depends on carefully selected and well-trained/briefed facilitators, who are involved in designing, planning, and preparing Conversation Events.

This module provides guidance on the following:

- What are Conversation Events?
- How to develop agendas and session plans?
- How to adapt and contextualise agendas and plans?
- Who facilitates the Conversation Events?
- How to train, brief, and support facilitators?
- How to monitor for continuous improvement?

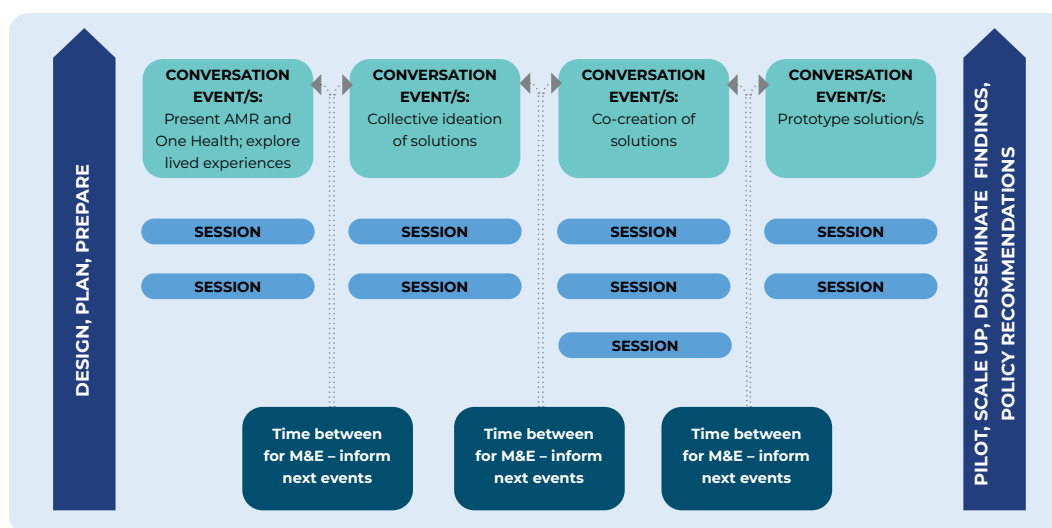
What are Conversation Events?

Conversation Events are a series of interconnected dialogues, each with a different focus, from introducing AMR and unpacking participants' lived experiences of AMR challenges, to participants jointly developing ideas to address these challenges (called co-ideation), and moving to participants co-creating context-specific and doable solutions that can bring about sustainable change at a local and policy level. A Conversation Events Set incorporates this series of interrelated Conversation Events which are run for the same group of participants.

The diagram that follows shows an example of **one** Conversation Events Set that includes a series of four interrelated Conversation Events. Each Conversation Event has a different focus, and is organised into different sessions. See [Modules 6 and 7](#) for more on the flow of Conversation Events.

A Responsive Dialogues project generally runs several Conversation Events Sets with different participant groups. The number of Sets depends on factors, such as project objectives and scope, available resources, participant groups, and context. See the example that follows.

Example of a Conversation Events Set



Notice how in the above diagram, time is built in between each Conversation Event (ideally 10–14 days). This is so that, for example:

- Participants can process their experience and share information with others
- Participants can informally gather responses to feed back into subsequent Conversation Events
- Facilitators and the core implementation team can document, reflect on, analyse, improve, and adapt the process for the next Conversation Event ([see Module 7](#) for more on seeking feedback from participants and others involved in the Conversation Events and using this input to make adjustments to subsequent Conversation Events)
- The core implementation team can report back on progress to stakeholders.

The time between Conversation Events might need to be shortened for various reasons, such as needs, availability of participants and facilitators, preferences of the participants, or simply because of limited funding. Flexibility is necessary as you assess the needs of each context to get the balance right.

Parallel, staggered, and consecutive

Conversation Events Sets may be run in parallel with each other, or they may be staggered, or they can be run consecutively – one following the other. There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach, as shown in the table that follows.

Conversation Events Sets	Advantages	Disadvantages
Parallel	Efficient and can save time, as similar resources are used with each participant group	No time to improve and adapt each Set for each group and context, based on previous learnings Resource intensive – requires more facilitators, materials, and logistical support Complex planning, as it requires co-ordinating multiple Sets simultaneously
Staggered	Efficient, as there is time to allocate resources more effectively and the need for simultaneous resources is reduced More time for improving and adapting each Set based on previous learnings	Longer duration as staggered. Sets may extend over a longer period of time
Consecutive	More time for improving and adapting each Set based on previous learnings It may be easier to secure facilitators or use the same facilitators for each Set	Complex planning, as it requires co-ordinating multiple Sets over a longer period of time, in different locations or with different facilitators



The country examples below illustrate three different ways in which Conversation Events Sets may be organised. Some Sets were held in different geographical areas with 'the same' community, others, like Malawi, did a deep dive in one geographical area, engaging with different communities. Most were face-to-face, although in Thailand there were also virtual Conversation Events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some were held in parallel, others consecutively.

Examples from Responsive Dialogues projects



In the **Zambia** project, **five Conversation Events Sets** were held with different participant groups in different zones. The two Conversation Events in Lusaka and Ndola were held in parallel with each other. Initially, four Conversation Events were planned in each Set. Then, in consultation with stakeholders, it was decided to have six Conversation Events. This took place in the Lusaka district. However, due to budget constraints and the high cost of running Conversation Events, the team decided to revert to the initial four Conversation Events, combining sessions to achieve this.

Conversation Events Sets	Process
Set 1: Chilenje, Lusaka Over 3 months: October to December 2022	1 X Conversation Events Set included: 6 X Conversation Events with a women's group (aged 16–45) (6 weeks, every Friday or Saturday)
Set 2: Matero, Lusaka Over 3 months: October to December 2022	1 X Conversation Events Set included: 6 X Conversation Events with a mixed gender group (expecting couples) (6 weeks, every Friday or Saturday)



Conversation Events Sets	Process
Set 3: Chipulukusu, Ndola Over 3 months: January to February 2023	1 X Conversation Events Set included: 4 X Conversation Events with a women's group (aged 16–45) (every Friday or Saturday with 2-week gap)
Set 4: Lubuto, Ndola Over 3 months: January to February 2023	1 X Conversation Events Set included: 4 X Conversation Events with a men's group (aged 16–45) (every Friday or Saturday with 2-week gap)
Set 5: Maramba, Livingstone Over 3 months: March to May 2023	1 X Conversation Events Set included: 4 X Conversation Events with a women's group (aged 16–45) (every Friday or Saturday with 2-week gap)

In the **Malawi** project, **three Conversation Events Sets** were held consecutively, with different participant groups in one geographical area. Due to logistics, the spacing between Conversation Events was between 3–4 weeks. This allowed participants time to reflect on the Conversation Event and to do 'homework', for example, using visuals only to reflect on their learning.

Conversation Events Sets	Process
Set 1: Farmers Over 3 months: July to October 2021	1 X Conversation Events Set included: 3 X 1-day Conversation Events, spaced 3–4 weeks apart 1 X 2-day Conversation Event which included farmers, experts from veterinary services, AMR Unit, and local policy-makers
Set 2: Prescribers Over 3 months: November 2021 to January 2022	1 X Conversation Events Set included: 3 X 1-day Conversation Events, spaced 2 weeks apart 1 X 2-day Conversation Event with prescribers, experts, and local policy-makers
Set 3: Carers (Men's group) Over 3 months: March to May 2022	1 X Conversation Events Set included: 3 X 1-day Conversation Events, spaced 3–4 weeks apart 1 X 2-day Conversation Event with men's group, and expert (from prescriber group), and local policy-makers

In the **Thailand** project, **six Conversation Events Sets** were held consecutively.

Conversation Events	Process
Set 1: Adult national virtual Over 3 months: May to July 2021	1 X Conversation Events Set included: 3 X 3-hour Conversation Events with participants from diverse backgrounds (1 per month, for 3 months, and 3 hours each)
Set 2: Youth national virtual Over 1 month: November 2021	1 X Conversation Events Set included: 3 X 3-hour Conversation Events with youth (over 1 month, 3 consecutive weeks, 3 hours each)
Set 3: Regional in-person (Northeast Thailand) Over 1 month: December 2021	1 X Conversation Events Sets included: 1 x 3-day Conversation Event with members of the public

Conversation Events	Process
Set 4: Regional in-person (North Thailand) Over 1 month: February 2022	1 X Conversation Events Sets included: 1 x 3-day Conversation Event with members of the public
Set 5: Regional in-person (South Thailand) Over 1 month: between March and April 2022	1 X Conversation Events Sets 1 x 3-day Conversation Event in the South Thailand with members of the public
Set 6: Regional in-person (Central Thailand) Over 1 month: May 2022	1 X Conversation Events Sets included: 1 x 3-day Conversation Event with members of the public



The design process

The core implementation team leads the design process, and may draw on others to give input, such as facilitators, community and national stakeholders, AMR experts, gender experts, materials developers, and graphic artists.

NOTE

Facilitators of Conversation Events may not be involved in the 'top level' design of the Conversation Events Sets. But it is important that they are involved in developing the agendas and especially the session plans for each Conversation Event. (See more on facilitator training/briefing later in this module.)



Whoever is involved needs to be properly briefed on the collaborative nature of the design process to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate. Experts and stakeholders especially should be made aware that they need to be mindful of power dynamics and to hold back from dominating and taking control of the process. See [Module 6](#) for more on briefing stakeholders and experts.

Start with the **'top level' design of each Conversation Events Set**. You can then adapt and contextualise the design for different participant groups, contexts, and modalities, i.e. face-to-face, online, or blended (face-to-face and online).

Work out overall timings, including:

- **Number of Conversation Events Sets:** Information from the groundwork phase will help you to determine how many Sets to run with different participant groups, as will your budget, resources, and time constraints.
- **Number of Conversation Events and sessions:** Use your previous experience as well as best practice from the field to estimate how many Conversation Events to run in each Set. Be flexible – once you are running the Set you might discover that you need to add more Conversation Events, depending on the needs of the participant group.
- **Frequency:** Build in enough time between Conversation Events, ideally 10–14 days. (See above for more information.)
- **Calendars and dates:** Consider particular participant groups, how much time they have, and when they can give this time to engage in Conversation Events.

For example, farmers may not be available for full days or multiple days, and their availability may depend on the planting/farming season. Caregivers may only be available for a few hours at a time. Workers might only be available after working hours and on the weekends.

- **Seasonal calendars:** Consider religious or cultural festivals, school holidays, farming, weather conditions, and other initiatives happening in the same community which might involve national stakeholders, and could impact your timelines.

In the **Malawi** Responsive Dialogues project, the initial Stakeholder Workshop proposed six Conversation Events Sets with specified participant groups. The stakeholders also proposed that we have five participant groups, but we could only run Sets with three groups because of time and budgetary constraints. This decision was made in consultation with the National AMR Coordinating Unit at the Ministry of Health. How many Conversation Events we had with each participant group was also informed by our accumulating load of work and the need to cover all the emerging issues appropriately.



Designing tips

- **Designing Conversation Events Sets is an ongoing and iterative process:** It includes constant monitoring, reflection, adjustment, and improvement.
- **Build in time for the process:** Consider each element that needs to be planned and organised, for example, meetings, workshops, and activities with stakeholders. Each of these elements needs organisation, planning, preparation, facilitation, and documentation.
- **Balance structure and flexibility:** Ensure a logical flow and structure across Conversation Events Set (to tell a logical 'story'). But, be flexible so that these can be adapted and contextualised for each participant group and context.
- **Review the design:** Check the structure and logical flow of the Conversation Events Set and adapt for each participant group and context.
- **Ask experts to review the design:** Ask different experts to review the design using their specific 'expert lens' to ensure that important issues are integrated. For example, AMR experts, gender experts, expert facilitators, and so on.

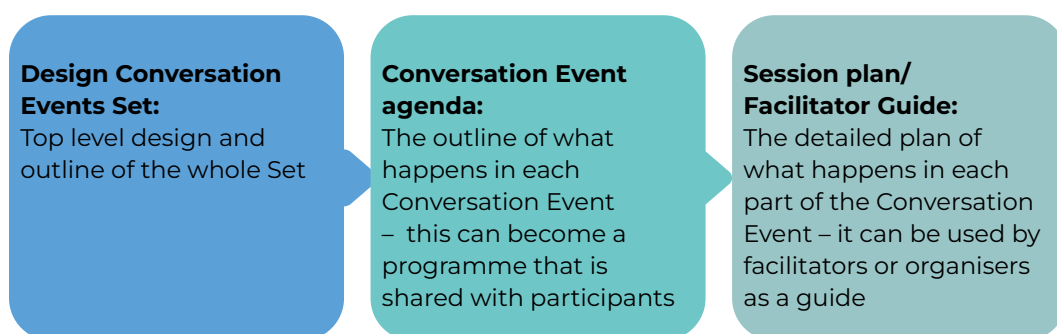


See [Section 6](#) for the *Example: Suggested Steps to Design Conversation Events Sets*; and the *Template: Suggested Steps for Design process*.



How to develop agendas and session plans?

Once you have designed the Conversation Events Set, you can then use this to draft the agenda or high-level outline for each Conversation Event in the Set. The agenda can then be used to develop detailed session plans for each part of the Conversation Events (see diagram below).



REMEMBER

Involve facilitators in developing the agendas for each Conversation Event. (See more on facilitator selection and training later.)



Developing agendas

- Start with the **title, focus, and broad aims** and work backwards from here.
- **Check that the focus of each Conversation Event flows** like an easy-to-follow and logical 'story'.
- **Write the definite activities to do at various fixed times.** For example, introductions, ice-breakers, recaps, closing activities.
- **Write other processes/activities that will take place** to meet the broad aims of each Conversation Event.
- **Build in enough time** for participants to thoroughly explore and discuss information, ideas, and processes, and when appropriate, to present solutions to local stakeholders.
- **Ensure that there are enough breaks** so that participants feel comfortable and energised.
- **Build in time for feedback from participants** on the process and content to inform subsequent Conversation Events. See [Module 7](#) for more on continuous improvement of Conversation Events.
- **Add in buffer time** to account for activities and sessions that may run over, or for unexpected delays, for example, in starting times.

See [Section 6](#) for the Example: *Extract from Agenda for Conversation Events* and the *Template: Agenda for Conversation Events*.





Photo: John Mankhomwa.

Example from a Responsive Dialogues project

In the **Malawi** project, stakeholders helped the core implementation team to narrow down the AMR focus, set AMR priorities, and develop key messages to communicate to participants. This input was then used to design a Conversation Events Set with farmers who use antibiotics in poultry farming, in and around Blantyre District. See [Section 6](#) for an extract from the agenda of four interrelated Conversation Events that were run in Malawi.

Developing session plans

There are many templates that you could use to develop the detailed session plans. Most include standard sections which are aimed at giving maximum support and guidance to facilitators. These can become the Facilitator Guides or Facilitator Notes. See [Section 6](#) for the *Example: Session Plan for an Introductory Session* and the *Template: Session Plan*.

- **Start with the agenda** for the Conversation Event.
- **Break down each aim into objectives.** For each aim, discuss and note down what you want participants to know, think, feel, value, and do to achieve the aim. For example, the aim is to explore and define key antibiotic challenges in farming; the objective might be to present specific content and evidence about antibiotics and AMR to achieve this aim. Or, your objective might be to guide participants to reflect on their current attitudes and practices in antibiotic usage and how these might need to change.
- **Use the objectives to plan the sessions** for each Conversation Event. For example, Session 1: Introduce antibiotic usage in poultry farming.
- **Identify the broad process to follow in each session.** Discuss:
 - What should be presented first (content, information, input)?
 - How will this be presented? For example, how will the AMR topic or key AMR messages be introduced and explored? Who will be involved?

- What participatory activities could be used? For example, in ideation, prioritisation, and co-creation? See [Modules 6 and 7](#) for more on participatory activities.
- What steps are involved in each activity? See [Module 7](#).
- How long will each activity take (average timings/duration)?
- What resources or materials are needed? What must be prepared in advance? See [Module 5](#) for more on materials and resources.
- Will this process help to achieve the objectives of the session and the aims of the Conversation Event?
- Logically, what should be presented next. Go through the same questions for each session.
- **Review the whole session to ensure a logical flow.** Adjust if necessary.
- **Check that there is a gender sensitive and equity focus.** See [Cross-cutting themes](#) for more on gender sensitivity.



Planning tips

- **Vary the presentation style** and ensure a good mix of input, activities, and discussion. See [Module 7](#) for ideas on different participatory activities.
- **Keep 'expert' input or presentation to a minimum** – no more than 10 minutes.
- Build in **enough time for each activity** and for deliberation.
- Build in **enough time to make adjustments** to the Conversation Events as you get feedback from participants, and as the facilitation team reflects on what happened and adapts the agenda and session plans for the next Conversation Event or session. See [Module 7](#) for more on continuous improvement of Conversation Events.



How to adapt and contextualise agendas and plans?

Designing Conversation Events and sessions is an ongoing process of improving, adapting, contextualising, and refining your design, agendas, and session plans. Here are some questions to consider for different groups, contexts, and AMR topics. For each one, discuss what needs to be adapted and contextualised:

- How are your **participant groups** different to each other? For example, are they different ages, languages, cultures, genders, occupations, and so on? What do you think will work in one group but not in another? See [Module 3](#) for more on the community and participant groups.
- Is the **context** in which the Conversation Events take place different? For example, is one in a rural area and another an urban area? Is one in a workplace and another in a community setting? Is one face-to-face and another online?
- Is the **AMR topic/content or focus** different for each group? For example, one group are farmers and another are medicine prescribers?

In the **Thailand** Responsive Dialogues project, during and after each Conversation Event we collected feedback that would inform the next Conversation Event and we would make amendments accordingly.



Who facilitates Conversation Events?

“Facilitation is the art of leading people through processes towards agreed-upon objectives in a manner that encourages participation, ownership and creativity by all those involved.” (DCM learning. See <https://dcmlearning.ie/video-content/essential-facilitation-skills-for-an-effective-facilitator.html>)

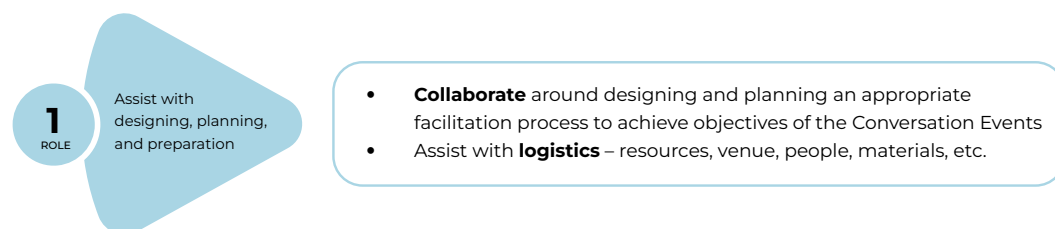
There are different facilitators involved in the Conversation Events. They may be organised in various ways and have different roles and responsibilities, as shown in the table below. However, it is critical that facilitators work together as a **team** and agree on the precise roles and responsibilities of each member.

Who?	Roles and responsibilities
Lead facilitator	
Part of or external to the core implementation team	Works collaboratively with core implementation team
NOTE: If working with an external lead facilitator, select this person carefully. Provide clear guidance on roles and responsibilities. Provide training, including in the Responsive Dialogues approach, objectives, and using participatory facilitation approaches. See Module 6 and Module 7 for more on participatory approaches	Selects, briefs, trains, mentors, and debriefs other facilitators Leads process of designing, planning, and preparing Conversation Events Assists with facilitating Conversation Events, or plays a supportive role, especially if not from local community of participants Assists with preparation of materials Assists with recording and analysing Conversation Events Assists with report back to stakeholders and communities, if required
Local facilitators	
Sub-contracted to facilitate Conversation Events	Before Conversation Events: assist with designing, planning, and preparation
Ideally, they are part of the local participant community, and have local knowledge and language skills	During Conversation Events: facilitate, monitor, and record
	After Conversation Events: monitor and evaluate
Facilitation team	
Lead facilitator and local facilitators work together to run Conversation Events	Facilitation of Conversation Events generally happens in a team, so it is important to agree on the exact roles of each facilitator and try these out

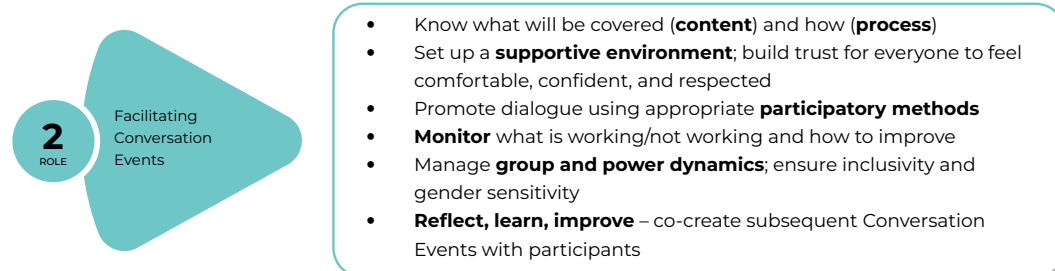
While some facilitators may have specific roles, all facilitators have three key roles, as shown in the diagram that follows.

Three key roles of all facilitators

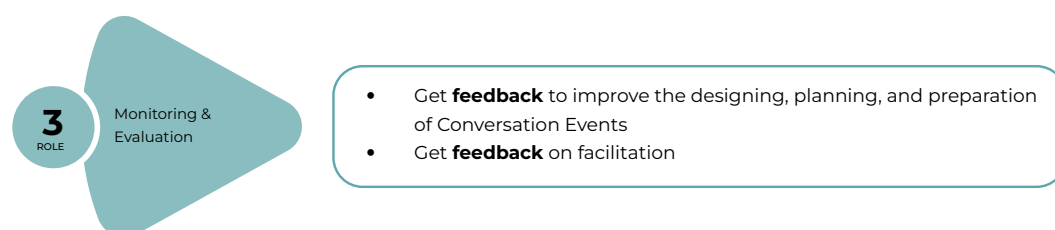
Before Conversation Events



During Conversation Events



After Conversation Events



Example from a Responsive Dialogues project

In the **Zambia** project, the facilitation team was made up of the core implementation team and experts, such as gender experts, pharmacists, nurses, and translators.

The nurses and pharmacists were based at healthcare facilities in the communities where the Conversation Events took place, and were chosen by the in-charge nurses or by community gatekeepers. Their knowledge of the community was instrumental in the success of the Conversation Events in these settings. In addition, their involvement led to the inclusion of key AMR messages into existing programmes in their healthcare facilities, and in this way enhanced the sustainability of the Responsive Dialogues approach.

The core implementation team facilitated most of the Conversation Events, for example, the recaps, introduction sessions, break-out sessions, evaluations, and so on. The local facilitators facilitated different sessions depending on their area of expertise. For example, the head nurses facilitated the sessions on Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) and the pharmacists provided input on antibiotics and antibiotic usage. Back-up facilitators assisted with translation where necessary.

We recommend that Responsive Dialogues projects consider having an adequate number of facilitators for each Conversation Event. In the **Zambia** Responsive Dialogues project, seven additional facilitators were trained across two sites – (Ndola and Livingstone), because the core implementation team had to be split up due to budget constraints.



Select and recruit local facilitators

The criteria below are suggested characteristics of good facilitators that you can use or adapt as selection criteria, to suit your project and context.

Suggested characteristics of a good facilitator

Familiarity with community	Communication skills
From the community of participant group/s	Good communication with individuals and groups
Familiar with local culture, context, and language	Listens actively
Respected in the community	Good organisation and time management skills
Values inclusivity and respects diverse views, socio-economic status, and identities	Works effectively as part of a team
Sensitive to issues of gender and power	Flexible, can adapt to change and adjust timing to context
Compassionate/empathic – perceptive, observant, and sensitive to others	Self-aware of own values, beliefs, opinions, responses; can background these in Conversation Events
	Aware of own strengths and weaknesses
	Some knowledge of the topic
	Prior experience of facilitation; willing to develop further skills



Ways to recruit suitable local facilitators include reaching out to local NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), or academic institutions who have experience of working with local communities, government departments, and different sectors (amongst others). Look into your own network and ask stakeholders for recommendations from their network.

How to train, brief, and support facilitators?

Facilitator training is beneficial for everyone who will facilitate and support Conversation Events, even experienced facilitators and support personnel. Training provides an opportunity to brief everyone properly, to ensure that everyone knows the purpose, order in which Conversation Events happen, activities involved, and their roles and responsibilities. Facilitators can discuss how they can support each other and use their particular strengths to help other facilitators. By the end of the training, everyone should be completely familiar with the structure of Conversation

Events and be comfortable carrying out their roles. Briefing and training facilitators must happen timeously and ahead of Conversation Events.

Training and briefing facilitators

The core implementation team, with input from others as required, should include the following key areas in their facilitator briefing/training:

- The Responsive Dialogues approach – objectives, processes, outcomes. See [Introduction to these Guidelines](#).
- Cross-cutting issues. See [Cross-cutting themes](#).
- Background information about AMR, specific AMR topic, and One Health approach. See [Cross-cutting themes](#).
- Background information about each participant group. See [Module 3](#).
- Design of Conversation Events Sets, agenda of Conversation Events, session plans/Facilitator Guide. (See below.)
- Roles and responsibilities before, during, and after Conversation Events. (See below.)
- How to take notes in Conversation Events, and store them for review and monitoring. See [Module 9](#) and [Section 6](#) for ideas for a *note-taking system*.
- How to encourage participants to give feedback and involve them in co-creating subsequent Conversation Events. See [Module 7](#) for more on the continuous improvement of Conversation Events.



Facilitation training



Photo: John Mankhomwa.

Examples from Responsive Dialogues projects

In **Malawi**, all facilitators had worked on various social science and community engagement projects, using qualitative and participatory approaches. These skills and their previous work experience served as criteria for selecting the facilitators. Concerning training, the core implementation team held drill sessions with the facilitators, briefing them on the project and coaching them on facilitation skills.

In the **Zambia** project, the facilitation team in Lusaka were trained in facilitation skills in a two-day training session before the first Conversation Event. They then went on to train experts /local facilitators in Ndola and Lusaka.



Facilitator training tips



Apart from the above briefing areas, the following facilitation skills are important to cover. See [Modules 6 and 7](#) for more on facilitation.

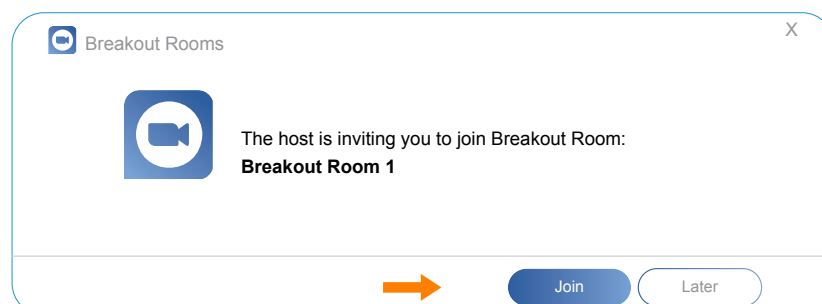
- Participatory facilitation approaches and activities, including for example:
 - Verbal methods, such as discussion, brainstorming, role-plays, drama, stories
 - Non-verbal methods, such as music, dance, art, song, poetry, photography
 - Working relationships to encourage participation, such as pair and small group work.
- Asking questions to lead/facilitate conversations, and probing to uncover more information and to assist with deeper deliberation
- Active listening, paraphrasing, checking meaning, and reflecting back to participants as a way to encourage further reflection and discussion
- Gender responsive facilitation to raise awareness about gender attitudes, norms, and values which can lead to discrimination and even to the failure to prioritise gender solutions
- Managing groups, power dynamics, and conflict in constructive ways
- Managing distractions – time, cell phones, personal/other work commitments
- Facilitating the ideation, prioritisation, and co-creation of AMR and One Health solutions
- Adapting and contextualising activities and processes for each participant group.

Role-play any areas where facilitators are less confident, such as managing power dynamics and resolving conflict. Debrief after the role-plays, reflecting on the scenario and providing constructive feedback.

The best training to be an effective facilitator is practice and experience.



Most Conversation Events are **face-to-face**, but some may take place **online or virtually**. Online Conversation Events require someone with special facilitation skills, for example, someone familiar with working on a communications platform like Zoom, and who can monitor chat boxes and assist with breakout rooms. It also requires someone who can provide technical support if necessary. See [Module 5](#) for more on determining modality.



Practical considerations for arranging facilitator training

The suggested schedule below may help with the planning of facilitator training.

When	Suggested preparation
At least 4 weeks before training	Schedule training dates and times
	Identify and communicate with facilitators and trainers
	Identify suitable venue with suitable training space
	Check tables, seats, equipment
	Arrange other logistics, e.g. lunch, coffee/tea breaks, healthy snacks, accommodation, transport, childcare if necessary
At least 3 weeks before	Inform everyone of practical arrangements for training
	Confirm with trainers and facilitators
	Prepare training material or aides
	Follow up on venue
At least 1 week before	Confirm logistics (venue, lunch, coffee/tea, transportation, etc.)
	Check that training equipment works
	List and buy all training aids and resources, e.g. pens, flipcharts, note paper
A day before the training	Conduct orientation session for trainers of facilitators
	Brief trainers on important considerations
	Check that training equipment, materials, and training aids are ready
	Do final room set-up with seating plan



Mentoring/ongoing support of facilitators

The lead facilitator and/or more experienced facilitators may take responsibility for ongoing capacity building and support of facilitators. For example: they could offer extra coaching before and during the Conversation Events; encourage more peer-to-peer support between facilitators; observe facilitation; and regularly check in to monitor progress, especially with challenging situations, such as shifting power dynamics, gender sensitivity, and so on. See [Module 6](#).

Ongoing support also involves debriefing sessions in which the facilitation team reviews written Conversation Events notes looking at what happened, what worked well, and what could be improved or adjusted. They help to analyse feedback from participants and feed it into the planning of subsequent Conversation Events. See [Module 7](#) for more on the continuous improvement of Conversation Events.

Do a trial run of Conversation Events/sessions

Where possible, do a trial run before the first Conversation Event. This could be with a small group of participants, selected specifically for testing purposes only. They should not be from the community being engaged, but could include friends, stakeholders, or a group of people from a different community. This is also a good opportunity for facilitators to try out different facilitation techniques. Throughout the trial run, take time to get feedback from participants and to update the session plan/ Facilitator Guide.

How to monitor for continuous improvement?

The core implementation team ensures the integrity of the design and planning process of Conversation Events by, for example, monitoring the following:

	Yes
Different stakeholders, AMR experts, and facilitators have an equal opportunity to participate in designing and planning Conversation Events Sets and/or Conversation Events.	
Clear agendas and session plans/Facilitator Guides are developed, resulting in well-designed Conversation Events.	
Enough time is allocated for sessions, allowing participants to fully engage in the deliberation process.	
The presentation style in sessions is varied, ensuring a good mix of input, activities, discussion.	
Gender sensitivity issues are integrated into the design and planning.	
Facilitators are briefed, trained, and a mentoring programme is put in place.	
There is a trial run of a Conversation Event or session, and feedback is used to improve them.	
Conversation Events and sessions are adapted and contextualised so that they are appropriate for each participant group, context, and AMR focus area.	



Checklist of guidance in this module

Tick completed activities/tasks and those that still need completion.

Activities	Yes	To do
Conversation Events Set/s are designed		
Agendas for Conversation Events are drafted		
Content for sessions is developed		
Conversation Events and sessions are adapted and contextualised for each participant group and context		
Facilitators are selected, trained, and briefed		
Design and planning is monitored		



5 PREPARING FOR CONVERSATION EVENTS

MODULE



Thorough preparation ensures that Conversation Events run smoothly and meet the intended project objectives. Preparation includes arranging all the practicalities and logistics, communicating with participants and stakeholders about the plans, preparing for the facilitation of the Conversation Events, including preparing resources and materials needed, and finally, double checking that all preparations have been made.

This module provides guidance on the following:

- What logistics must be organised?
- How to prepare materials for Conversation Events
- How to monitor preparation?

What logistics must be organised?

Practicalities and logistics vary from project to project and are influenced by many factors, including the most efficient use of your capacity, budget, and resources (human, financial, and time). A checklist helps to ensure that all the preparations and logistics needed for every Conversation Events Set are carried out. [See Section 6](#) for a *Logistics Checklist*.



Face-to-face Conversation Events

Location and venue

- **Availability:** Together with stakeholders and community representatives, identify suitable locations in which to hold the Conversation Events. The 'right' venue is one that is accessible and where participants feel comfortable. In reality, however, options may be limited, so work out what is best in the situation and what is available given the schedule and timing of the Conversation Events.
- **Access:** Try to find a venue located in an area that is easily accessible to participants, either by walking to it or using public transport. It should have secure parking for vehicles/bicycles. Make arrangements for people with special needs including, mobility, sight, hearing, and childcare needs.
- **Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE):** Consider issues such as: Will participants feel safe in this environment? Are there any safety or health hazards? Is it clean and free of clutter and dust? What is the noise level like? Is there good ventilation? Is it warm in winter and cool in summer? Ensure the health and safety of the setting so that participants feel secure and comfortable.



Photo: Framaja Photography.

Example from a Responsive Dialogues project



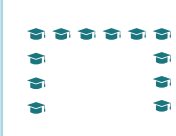


In the **Zambia** project, most of the Conversation Events were held in community healthcare facilities (one was held in a school). The healthcare facility setting had positive and negative implication:

Positive: Accessible and familiar venue. Healthcare facility staff could more easily participate in the Conversation Events.

Negative: In one high volume facility, rooms were changed due to unavailability, a lack of privacy, and a noisy environment. Timing was also changed to holding the Conversations Events during the week to holding them on the weekend.

- **Physical space:** Sufficient physical space is needed for plenary sessions and break-out groups. If indoors, try to ensure adequate temperature control; if outdoors, ensure undercover space. Ensure a sufficient number of tables and chairs, and that they can be moved for different layouts (see the diagram that follows). Check that toilets and exits are fully accessible and working.
- **Set up of the room:** Ensure that the room layout is suitable for optimum participation. Make sure that everyone can see the presenters, flipcharts and screens, that they can share with others on an equal basis, and won't feel intimidated or singled out, for example, if they need special facilities or arrangements due to physical or other reasons.
- **Seating arrangements:** This can affect participant interaction, motivation, and relationships. Each type of seating arrangement may be used to achieve different purposes, as shown in the diagram that follows.

Different seating arrangements

				
<p>Traditional may be better for a lecture than participatory Conversation Events.</p>	<p>Roundtable may work well for whole-group participation or partner conversations.</p>	<p>Horse shoe or semi-circle encourages engagement between facilitators and participants directly opposite each other.</p>	<p>Group pods are designed for small group discussion.</p>	<p>Pair pods are designed for working in pairs.</p>

- **Equipment:** Check whether the venue always has sufficient electricity, Wifi/ internet access, projector, screen, microphones, flipchart boards, and other equipment you need.
- **Facilitation resources:** Ahead of each Conversation Event, facilitators prepare the room – ensuring that all flipcharts, posters, and other resources are ready and on the wall/s where necessary.
- **Materials:** Prepare all materials needed well in advance and check translation or other adaptation needs for each participant group (see below).
- **Double check:** All logistics and practicalities at least twice!

Online Conversation Events

Most Conversation Events Sets happen **face-to-face**, however some may happen **online** or virtually, such as in the Thailand Responsive Dialogues project where two virtual Sets took place. Conversation Events, sessions, materials, and so on needed to be adapted for online usage. You might need the expertise of a skilled online facilitator to help with this, and you will still require several facilitators to take up different roles during the online Conversation Events, such as recording, taking notes, and assisting with breakout rooms.

Organising virtual spaces requires the same attention to detail as preparing for face-to-face Conversation Events. Some issues to consider:

- Which is the most accessible communications platform to use, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams?
- How will you ensure that everyone has 'access rights' to the chosen platform and that they are trained on how to interact on that platform?
- Which are the most appropriate Whiteboard Apps to work with, such as Jamboard or digital collaboration platforms, like Miro? What training do you need to provide on how to use these?
- How will you ensure that facilitators, presenters, and participants are set up with good technical support?
- How will you ensure that there is sufficient internet coverage and access, and that participants have sufficient data?
- How will you ensure constant electricity? Do you need an inverter?

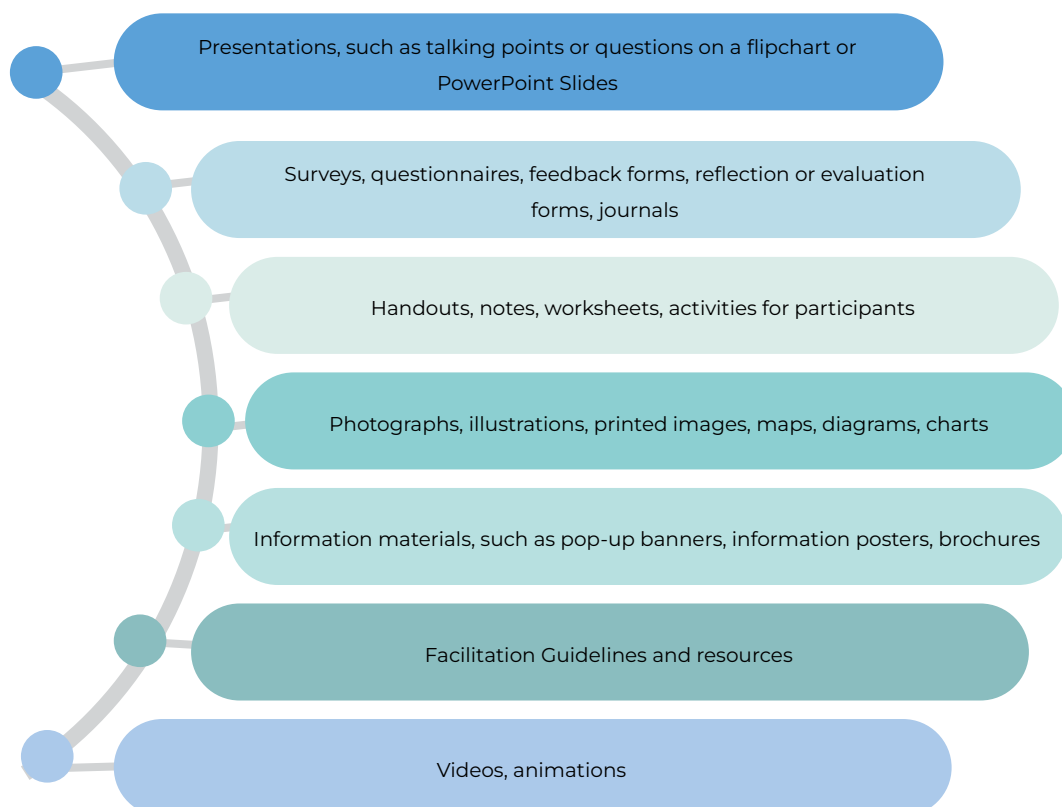
Communication and relationship building

Keep informing all relevant people about the plans and communicating with participants, local and other stakeholders, as well as experts and anyone else who you will invite to specific Conversation Events and sessions.

Tell them about the logistics, such as the venue, the schedule and times of Conversation Events, transport, accommodation plans, and what will be provided, for example, stationery, snacks and meals, childcare, and so on.

How to prepare materials for Conversation Events?

Examples of materials you might need in the Conversation Events



Once you have collected materials and resources, begin to assess how suitable they are for different participant groups and contexts, and what needs to be adapted, translated, or developed as new material.

Differences between developing and adapting material

Developing new material is a time-consuming, lengthy and expensive process. It requires skilled writers, editors, illustrators, photographers, and designers who understand the topic, audience, purposes, context, and so on.

Adapting existing material is less time-consuming, and is sometimes a shorter and less costly process. You decide what needs to be changed, added, or deleted. For example: does it need to be translated and/or rewritten into plain language or in a more user-friendly style? Does it need more visuals? Do the main talking points or questions need to be created on a flipchart or PowerPoint? Depending on what needs to be done, you don't always require experienced writers, editors, illustrators, and so on.

Most often, **materials need to be translated** into a local language. This is a time-consuming process, needs to happen well in advance of the materials being used, and the translations need to be double and triple checked to ensure that they retain the integrity and meaning of the original, and that there are no errors or inconsistencies. Remember too for printing purposes that translations often take up more space on a page.

NOTE

Once material is developed, adapted, or translated, it still needs to be adapted for different Conversation Events Sets or translated for different participant groups.

The chart below outlines one way to assess whether the materials you have gathered can be used as is, or if they need to be adapted or completely rewritten. See [Section 6, Monitoring Form for Materials used in Conversation Events](#).

Example of how to assess materials gathered

Areas of consideration	General materials development principle	Examples of what may need adaptation or rewriting
<i>What topic do you want to present? (content)</i>	Content is relevant to topic, purpose, and audience	Information checking and updating, translation
<i>Who do you want to use the material with? (audience)</i>	Material is appropriate and user-friendly for audience	Translation needed Rewrite in plain language Change examples from urban to rural More representative images
<i>Why do you want to use the materials? (purpose and aims)</i>	Material effectively communicates aims and messages	Adapt to fit purpose, aims, focus Translate so that aims and messages are clearer
<i>Where, when, and how will the materials be used? (context)</i>	Material is suitable for the context in which it will be used	Adapt from online use to face-to-face (or other way round) Adapt/translate for use in under-resourced community
<i>What style and approach will you use to help you communicate the messages and purposes? (approach/method)</i>	Material has appropriate approach to communicate messages and purposes	More participatory, inclusive, and sensitive to issues of diversity, gender (e.g. in language, images, content)

Areas of consideration	General materials development principle	Examples of what may need adaptation or rewriting
<i>What do you want the materials to look like? (design)</i>	Material is well-designed and easy to read and use	Shorten materials Redesign to make more user-friendly
<i>What resources do you have? (human, time, and money)</i> <i>What are your constraints? (human, time, and money)</i>	Material is effective given resources and constraints	Change from colour to greyscale (black and white) for printing Adapt/translate rather than develop new materials Use Word and don't go through production process



Who is involved in materials development?

There might be a skilled writer or editor in your core implementation team, or you might consider contracting someone in. If you have the budget, you might also bring in an artist and a production team to help with design and typesetting.

If the material is to be used by the facilitators, then either involve them in the writing process, or ask them to be reviewers of drafts and to assist with piloting and getting feedback on the materials.

Example from a Responsive Dialogues project

The chart below is from the **Zambia** project, showing the type of material prepared for Responsive Dialogues.

Type of material created/adapted	What was it about? (content)	Why was it developed? (purpose)	Who was it developed for? (audience)	Who developed it?	Who designed it?
Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) posters	Information on UTIs and antibiotic misuse	To sensitise community members on UTIs and antibiotic misuse	Community members (participants)	Eden staff	Graphics designer
Pop Up banner	Information on UTIs and antibiotics misuse	To sensitise community members on UTIs and antibiotic misuse as well as promote visibility of the project	Community members (participants), stakeholders, and partners	Eden staff	Graphics designer



Type of material created/adapted	What was it about? (content)	Why was it developed? (purpose)	Who was it developed for? (audience)	Who developed it?	Who designed it?
Brochures	Information on Responsive Dialogues, UTIs, and AMR	To sensitise community members and project participants on the project, UTIs, antibiotics and AMR	Community members, health facility staff, and project participants	Eden staff	Graphics designer
Animation videos	Information about UTIs, taking medicines without prescriptions, listening to friends, not sharing UTI with husband, antibiotic resistance	To sensitise community members on the dangers of taking antibiotics without prescriptions and the effects of listening to friends on which medicines to take	Participants	Eden staff	Graphics designer and animator

Sample material developed by **Zambia** Responsive Dialogues project.



Image: Zambia Responsive Dialogues project.

Examples from Responsive Dialogues projects



Image: Thailand Responsive Dialogues project.

Both the **Thailand and Malawi** projects sub-contracted a visual artist to help capture the Conversation Events process and key messages.



Image: Malawi Responsive Dialogues project.

In the **Malawi** project, a graphic artist captured the key messages that were co-created by participant groups, as well as the mediums through which they would be disseminated.

How to monitor preparation?

Some monitoring issues to consider regarding preparing for Conversation Events:

- Practicalities and logistics are organised and prepared well in advance of Conversation Events, and are double checked to ensure all is in order
- The most efficient and effective use is made of the project's capacity, budget, and resources (human, financial, and time) to prepare the logistics
- All aspects are monitored to ensure that participants are well taken care of
- There is ongoing communication with all those involved about plans
- Materials and resources are developed, adapted, or translated and are ready well ahead of Conversation Events.

Checklist of guidance in this module

Tick completed activities/tasks and those that still need completion.

Activities	Yes	To do
Logistics are organised prior to running Conversation Events		
Materials are prepared and ready to be used		
Preparation is monitored		

