2020 VIRTUAL SKOLL WORLD FORUM WEEK
Sharing our Learnings
Skoll World Forum: Pre-COVID

- 3.5 days each April in Oxford, England
- 1,200 senior leaders in global social impact (by invitation)
- 3 plenaries, including annual Skoll Awards for Social Entrepreneurship
- 20-25 panel + workshop sessions
- Dinners, pub nights, music jams
- 60+ independently-organized Ecosystem Events
Overview of #SkollGoesVirtual

The 2020 Virtual Skoll World Forum Week was an experiment in taking the Skoll World Forum values, brand & platform online. It was our largest, most globally diverse convening yet.

We asked our network to contribute, learn, and connect with each other via virtual Ecosystem Events. This open-source approach was a departure from a traditionally highly-curated Forum delegate base and program.

By the Numbers:

- 1 Skoll Awards Ceremony
- 9 Skoll-hosted panels, workshops, meet ups
- 100 host organizations hosted 130 virtual Ecosystem Events
- 10,000+ participant log-ins from 130+ countries*

*data capture still in progress
Elements We Focused on Delivering Virtually

SKOLL AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENT

Goals: To celebrate and champion the 2020 Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship recipients

Challenge: Moving from a traditional awards ceremony in a performing-arts theatre to a digital/broadcast format. 4 weeks to execute.

Approach: “Live” broadcast included
- pre-recorded documentary videos
- self-captured acceptance speeches & arts performances
- tied together with a host who recorded at home

Distribution strategy emphasized influencers in network + media buys to extend reach

OPEN-SOURCE SESSIONS: CONNECT + LEARN

Goals: To connect change leaders from across our network; foster learning and insights; create equitable platform for mutual support

Challenge: Moving from physical event space in Oxford with ~20 breakout sessions and ~60 independently-organized Ecosystem Events to virtual “home.” 3 weeks to execute.

Approach: Mobilized our network
- 90% of program curation and execution independently-organized by external orgs
- leaned into existing Ecosystem Event concept + tools
How’d We Do It?

3-4 Weeks Out: Cancellation + Pivot

- Core team split into two: wind down of Oxford + spin up of Virtual Forum Week
- Reimagination of Awards ceremony; constant adjustments to plan to align with health polices
- Outreach to activate network: targeted @ grantees, delegates, partners to create and join virtual programming
- Repurposed Oxford Week Elements
  - [Virtual Participation Tool-kit](#)
  - Skoll.org Ecosystem Event submission form - to gather host & event information
  - Skoll.org Forum Week calendar – info / reg hub for 100+ virtual events across week

1-2 Weeks out: Added New Online Elements

- **Live scribe illustrations** to synthesize conversations & create connective tissue
- Braindate – pop up networking space
- [Central google doc](#) for session notes
- SDG / regional network map
- [#SkollGoesVirtual](#) (from #SkollWF)

Up to & Ongoing through Virtual SWF:

- Outreach to network via newsletters, social media, and personal emails
- Review and publish submitted events
- Ongoing support, communication, toolkit updates to support Ecosystem Event hosts
Ecosystem Event
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM BST
Skateistan: Empowering competitors to scale impact
Host: Skateistan
Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nai_nEUFM8&t=7s

Ecosystem Event
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM BST
SANKALP Dialogue: Sustainable Textiles & Vulnerable Communities
Host: Intellecap
Recording: https://youtu.be/MQR3doH5K8

Ecosystem Event
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM BST
From Heropreneurship to Collective Leadership
Host: Fo4Good.Network

Ecosystem Event
12:00 PM - 01:30 PM BST
Policy Driven Investment Models for Climate Finance
Host: Center for Climate Finance

Ecosystem Event
01:00 PM - 02:30 PM BST
Funder dialogue: Exploring networks as a powerful mechanism for impact
Host: Small Foundation
Recording: https://youtu.be/wOQva0ERWoW

Ecosystem Event
02:00 PM - 03:00 PM BST
Upskilling Workers for the Future of Work
Host: SkillNav, incubated by the UNLEASH+ Innovation Lab for the SDGs
Recording: https://youtu.be/3jR4i534B0

Ecosystem Event
02:00 PM - 04:00 PM BST
Digitally Reimagining Cross-Sector Convergence
Host: Catalyst 3030
What Did We Learn?

First, Align on Goals & Comms Needs:

- Aligning first on goals for pivot created space for sub teams to run with ideas quickly
- Identifying activities we could stop doing opened bandwidth for new areas
- Constant changes to external situation required frequent internal team check-ins, and nimble comms and tech teams support
- Challenges:
  - Ongoing adjustments to plan = need to communicate with external audiences frequently
  - Team member bandwidth varied widely depending on home situation

Lead with Your Values:

- Transparency with network was invaluable
- Expanding to be more inclusive, accessible (no financial, time, space, political barriers) = FAR more participants
- Trust in proximate leaders who delivered quality, diverse content = FAR more than we could alone
- Tactical challenges of decentralization:
  - Hard to find people without “central space” + missed serendipity of in-person event
  - Amount of content overwhelming, quality varied. Harder to elevate grantees.
  - No central tech platform
  - Zoombombers
  - Tech tools meant for an in-person event not always ideal for virtual
Getting into the Nitty Gritty
Program Design Tips

• No matter the platform, find ways to make it engaging for audience
  • Activate audience early – use the chat box to ask where people are from, a word that describes how they’re feeling, etc. Check in again throughout.
  • Allow participants to ask questions directly, or ensure you’re crediting by name when you ask
  • Use collaborative tools – built in, or Sli.do; FunRetro, etc.

• Strong host/moderator to steer conversation

• Plan ahead with written run of show, identify questions for each speaker to avoid cross-talk

• Tons of resources out there for virtual program design, a few are listed in our tool kit
Tech Tools / Platforms

• We did not use a single cohesive platform for all events
• Skoll-hosted events utilized Zoom Meetings and Webinars
• Many platforms exist, Conveners.org has published research on the more robust options
• Avoid: Zoombombing
Creating Cohesion Across the Week

• We did not: provide a singular tech platform. The virtual “home” was a calendar.
• Skoll staff provided verbal welcome when possible on partner events
• Live visual scribes + overall virtual wall
• Centralized notes on sessions
• Wrap Up Video
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