



# GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

*For a Successful Virtual Exchange  
Programme on Earth Advocacy*



**LIVE**  
Living Earth Exchanges



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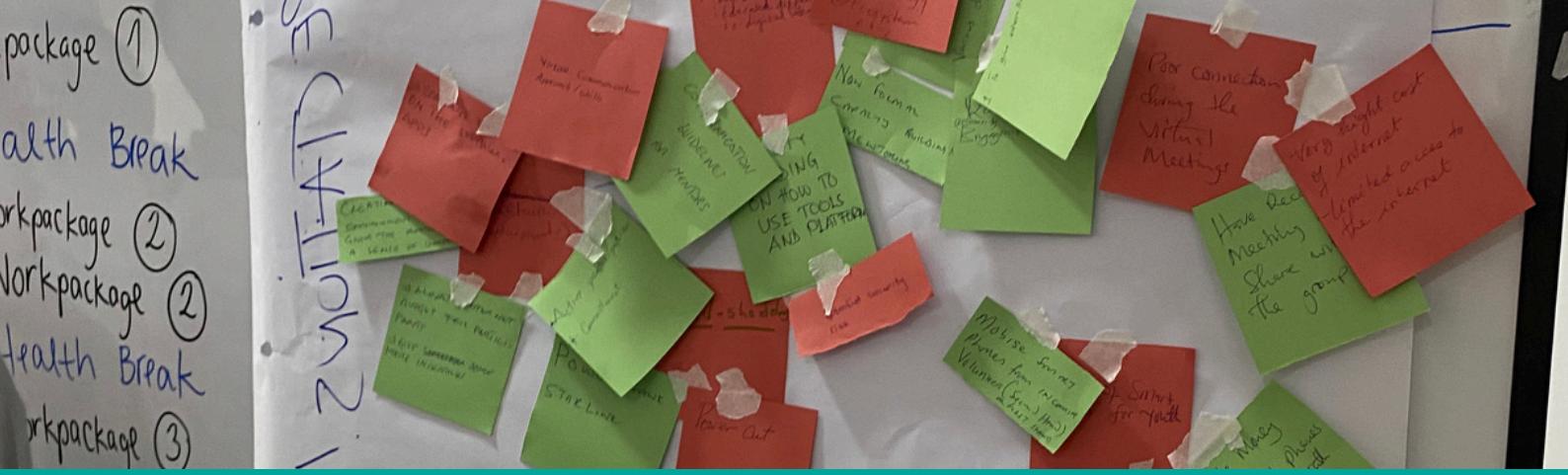
## LIVE-EX: GOOD PRACTICE MAP

This roadmap provides actionable insights and best practices to guide the implementation of effective and impactful virtual exchange programmes in Earth Advocacy. Focusing on inclusivity, local contextualisation, and a decolonial perspective, the LIVE-Ex exchange programme will support youth advocates to drive meaningful change in their communities.

Also, check out the LIVE-Ex handbook for youth workers for an overview of Practical Tools for in-person (or virtual) exchanges. Link: <https://ccivs.org/live-ex/resource-hub-and-certification/>



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## 1. LAYING THE FOUNDATION: PREPARATION AND STRUCTURE

**Comprehensive Planning:** Prior to initiating virtual exchanges, ensure all stakeholders (mentors, participants, and coordinators) are clear about the programme's objectives and the structure of the virtual exchanges, everyone's roles, and expectations.

**Pre-Session Technical Readiness:** Confirm technical requirements, including internet access, software compatibility, and device availability. Address potential barriers like low connectivity by providing alternatives or resources when needed. Define with the participants how they want to communicate as a group (e.g. whether they prefer email, messaging apps like Signal or exchange platforms like Slack). Discuss safety issues and risks of the different options.

**Orientation Calls:** Host virtual orientations to introduce participants to the programme's framework and to clarify possible questions. Include information on the cultural context and the programme's methodologies to establish a shared understanding.



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## 2. PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY AND DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVES

**Cultural Contextualisation:** Tailor content and methodologies to reflect local challenges, languages, and cultural nuances. This ensures relevance and relatability for all participants.

**Empowering Marginalised Voices:** Design activities in such a way that they highlight and elevate underrepresented groups and perspectives, supporting inclusivity and equity in discussions. You can rotate facilitators by assigning facilitation roles to participants, or design scenarios where participants adopt the perspectives of marginalized groups and or use tools like sticky notes or online polls to collect feedback from everyone.

**Respect for diversity:** Discuss with the participants how to create a safe space that ensures differences are respected, where everyone feels welcomed to engage, and where active listening and respecting others when they are speaking are valued principles.

**Decolonising mindsets:** Encourage participants to challenge each other on neo-colonial structures, mindsets and behaviour that still influence the way we relate with each other. Include topics like colonial history and its impact in your virtual exchanges and how this is related to environmental issues. You can find existing resources to get started at the following link:  
<https://ccivs.org/decolonise/knowledgehub/>.

**Accessible Participation:** Use tools and resources that cater to diverse capabilities, including translators, visual aids, and simplified language for complex topics. A few examples include real-time translators or multilingual subtitles to accommodate participants who speak different languages, Incorporate diagrams, charts, and infographics to make concepts more comprehensible for visual learners and or tailor content to be relatable and inclusive of participants' diverse cultural backgrounds.



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### 3. STRUCTURING THE SESSIONS

**Define the Objectives:** Design each session around specific, actionable objectives aligned with Earth Advocacy themes like biodiversity, climate justice, or community resilience. For example, when offering a session on protecting biodiversity through community action, you would ask participants to explore biodiversity issues in their local context, learn practical strategies from experts, and engage in hands-on activities like seed planting or habitat restoration. They identify local challenges, create actionable plans, and commit to specific steps for community impact. Resources and accountability systems support their ongoing efforts.

**Interactive Engagement:** Incorporate energisers, games, and group discussions to maintain interest and promote collaboration. For example, include role-play exercises or scenario planning on environmental challenges.

**Collaborative Outputs:** Encourage group presentations or co-created outputs (like advocacy plans or media campaigns) that reinforce collective learning and action.



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## 4. LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY EFFECTIVELY

**Centralised Information Hub:** Create a digital platform or resource hub where participants can access session materials, updates, and key resources. This could be e.g. on Coda or Google Drive.

**Real-Time Collaboration Tools:** Use platforms like Zoom or Teams for live sessions, Padlet for brainstorming, and Canva for collaborative content creation.

**Continuous Communication:** Support ongoing interaction through WhatsApp groups or Telegram and Slack channels for updates, task sharing, and relationship building.



## 5. SUPPORTING LOCALISED ACTIONS

**Rooting in Local Context:** Guide participants to address issues specific to their local ecosystems and communities, ensuring their actions have tangible, measurable impacts.

**Action Planning Tools:** Provide templates and frameworks (like OBREDIMET) to help participants create clear, structured plans for local projects.

**Mentor Support:** Assign mentors to provide tailored guidance and feedback during the action planning and implementation phases.



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## 6. MONITORING, REFLECTION, AND GROWTH

**Feedback Mechanisms:** Collect feedback from participants and mentors after each session to refine processes and address gaps, e.g. using Mentimeter.

**Measuring Impact:** Collect data like engagement rates, completed projects, and participant testimonials to measure the programme's success.

**Iterative Improvements:** Incorporate lessons learned into subsequent cohorts to continually enhance programme quality and relevance.

## 7. BUILDING A NETWORK OF CHANGEMAKERS

**Support Connections:** Encourage participants to share their advocacy journeys and build networks with peers and mentors globally.

**Ongoing Support:** Create avenues for long-term collaboration, such as alumni networks or annual events to showcase achievements and new initiatives.

**Amplifying Impact:** Share participants' successes widely through social media, community events, and newsletters, inspiring others to join the movement.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

**Preparation is Key:** A well-organised start ensures smooth execution and strong participant engagement.

**Focus on the Local Context:** Tailor actions to address local challenges while linking them to global advocacy themes.

**Empower Participants:** Equip participants with the skills, tools, and confidence to take meaningful actions in their communities.

**Prioritise Inclusivity:** Ensure all voices are heard and valued, creating a collaborative and equitable learning environment.

**Discuss the risks:** Make sure participants are aware of potential risks to their safety and well-being when navigating online and discuss with them how to navigate those risks.

**Leverage Technology Wisely:** Use digital tools to enhance communication, collaboration, and learning.

**Reflect and Adapt:** Continuously improve the programme based on participant experiences and feedback.



## CONCLUSION

This Good Practice Map provides a framework for implementing and refining Living earth virtual exchanges (LIVE-Ex). These practices will help stakeholders to support the programme to remain impactful, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of youth advocates in the Sub-Saharan Africa.



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## Author Corner

Nicolaus Novatus Mukasa



Nicolaus Mukasa is the Project Manager for LIVE-Ex at ICYE e.V. International Office, leading implementation across eight Sub-Saharan African partners. Nicolaus drives collaboration, capacity-building, and youth exchanges focused on digital inclusion and climate justice. With expertise in project design and stakeholder engagement, he ensures impactful, high-standard delivery while promoting innovation and sustainable development.



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