

# Skill Shares

*An Engine Room Experiment*

## Background

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The engine room is experimenting with methods to help advocacy initiatives directly share experiences, tactics and lessons, without needing to access the international conference circuit, produce reports or flashy presentations, or comb the web for projects relevant to their own work. We want to find mechanisms that make such peer-to-peer sharing as efficient and impactful as possible. We are experimenting with this by convening and sharing online conversations between innovative advocates, to discuss specific tactics and how they work in different contexts. We call them Skill Shares.

## Objectives

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- To provide conversation spaces where advocates can learn and share directly with one another
- To identify, document and share cutting-edge experiences from the field of technology in advocacy
- To develop and strengthen advocacy networks in specific issue areas
- To continually test, reflect and iterate more efficient ways for advocates to access skills and resources

## Structure

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Skill Shares are 60-90 minute online conversations that take place between people in different locations, using audio, video and chat to interact. Skill Shares are based around the discussion of 3-5 specific tactics, each of which includes:

- A brief (< 5 min) presentation of the organization or project by the facilitator;
- A brief (< 5 min) presentation of an advocacy initiative's specific tactic and key takeaways, by that initiative;
- Open conversation (15 min) about why that tactic led to the results it did, what could have been done differently, and how it might have been used in different advocacy contexts.

*Tactics are specific:* referring to activities with specific actors and leading to specific outcomes. Tactics are identified and selected prior to Skill Shares, on the basis of their relevance for



advocacy initiatives. We are especially interested in engaging with advocates that might not already be well connected in international networks or have other spaces for discussing their work.

Thought leaders, niche experts and international resource people will join the 3-5 advocates sharing tactics in Skill Shares, to learn, provide feedback and build connections.

Skill Shares are open to participation by interested parties, but participation may be limited to ensure a productive discussion.

## Preparation

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In preparation for Skill Shares, the engine room reaches out to advocacy initiatives that are doing innovative work and producing compelling results. Specific tactics for sharing are surfaced in the course of conversations with advocates. Specific tactics are agreed in these conversations, and advocates take responsibility for preparing the brief (< 5 min) presentation of that tactic. The engine room takes responsibility for presenting a brief (< 5 min) and accurate presentation of that advocacy effort.

## Outputs

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For skill share participants: The engine room hopes that these conversations will inform and inspire participants and concretely impact their work. We will make focused efforts to track and document the uptake of tactics shared in the convenings.

For those who don't attend the convenings: Conversations will be documented through summary blogposts and full recordings (taking into account issues of privacy and security).

