**Top 10 Lessons Learned from IDDS Lahore**

**1.  Team Communication with Each Other**

Frequent and clear communication with your team cannot be overestimated - whether through weekly calls, emails, or through a shared site like [Trello](https://trello.com/)  [Base Camp](https://basecamp.com/)  or [Slack](https://slack.com/?tiered_signups=1&story=video&v=2)   It's good to make sure everyone knows what's up and on the same page.  For IDDS Lahore, they found [Slack](https://slack.com/?tiered_signups=1&story=video&v=2) to work really well as well as a [WhatsApp](https://www.whatsapp.com/)Group - esp. since they had pretty good internet connection and fluency with the apps.  There might be a method or platform that works better for you and your team, but it cannot be overstressed the importance of talking to each other regularly and feeling free to ask each other questions - or share cool ideas with each other :)

**2.  IDIN Communication with Teams**

I'll be popping in more to all organizer calls (once a month if possible).  IDIN staff communication has mainly been through myself (Sher) to lead organizers of each summit to then communicated with their teams.  This puts a HUGE burden on the lead organizers and it's understandable that some messages get lost, forgotten, or miscommunicated.  To reduce the load - I've asked IDIN staff to reach out directly to organizing teams (not just myself or the lead organizer) using the list serves. **If you and your team would like to add IDIN staff added to your organizing team list serve (so they can always stay up to date on how the summit is developing), let me know and I can add them in.**

**3.  Highlight and Reiterate IDIN Resources**

There were some questions on how IDIN staff supports teams.  So I've started a [growing list of IDIN staff and how we support summits](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TJ8bwWc0o9fGEMx7Hnb0ujiNF0bLrauvWT71i4VyzA8/edit?usp=sharing)   Amy is going to ask IDIN PIs to add their names and expertise to that list as well.  I've also asked our friends at Olin to share a bit about how they support summits too - so their info is on the way. And I'll add my role on there too :)  Once we have everyone's info, we'll add this to the [website](https://www.idin.org/idin-staff-support).

I've heard from many people it's been difficult to remember where all the important links are. [I**'ve now added a new section to the website called "Organizer Toolbox**](https://www.idin.org/idds/organizer-toolbox)**"**that has a list of ALL the important IDIN resources available for you and your organizing team.  :)

**4.  Remind People What Needs to be Turned In, When, and Why**

Some organizers and participants were forgetting what needs to be turned into IDIN, why, and when.  We've now added a simple list to the [Organizer Toolbox](https://www.idin.org/idds/organizer-toolbox) called [Documentation Expectations](https://www.idin.org/idds/organizer-toolbox/documentation-expectations) that list the 6 things that are needed by 2 weeks after a summit and why.  I'll remind everyone during Organizer Orientation and an email on the closing of the summit as well.

**5. Project statements should be done and sent out to participants no later than 2 weeks before the summit starts - ideally 6 weeks or more.**

The IDDS Lahore team found that there was little time to prepare on the ground with other last minute preparations.  Trying to create a timeline for project framing is hard, but the IDDS Lahore team recommends setting yourself a reasonable timeline that allows enough time for communities/organizers/IDIN/etc. to look at the projects together & offer critical feedback as needed but to have a very hard 2 week deadline.  Things are never perfect and that is the nature of design. sometimes decisions should just be made to allow for other types of freedom (like time to explore other stakeholders involved in that project space, doing background research in the sector, maybe even really working out the problem framing tree and other tools to continue checking that the project framing makes sense, and ensuring the participants are mindfully mixed in teams by their skills and perspectives). This is especially critical for shorter summits, but even a month summit is still a short period of time, relatively.

**6.  Participant Experience Coordinators should be apart of the curriculum team and building the schedule**; **someone locally with a car should be hired to do logistics.**

Unfortunately, there was a lack of local logistical support (which happens at several summits) and a bulk of logistics was passed onto the Participant Experience Coordinator and 3 of the local organizers - all 4 of whom would have liked to spend more time with participants.  One recommendation, the IDDS Lahore team and I would like to make is consider hiring a local to run errands and take care of the the food, housing, and transport logistics so the Participant Experience Coordinator and local organizers can focus more on the participant experience.  It's also helpful if the PEC can have a team of participant supporters to help with communication leading up to the summit and also can play a more active role in creating the curriculum overview and schedule - since they will have a good pulse on participants, what they can handle, and what they might be interested in and/or qualified to teach, etc.

**7.  The Curriculum  and Schedule should be shared with all your organizers (so they know what the master plan is and what their role is in it).  Any updates should be shared at all organizer team meetings.  Don't make the schedule too full!! :)**

What oftentimes happens with most summits is organizers split into committees or groups to work on particular areas.  While it's great for efficiency - sometimes the curriculum committee begins to create a plan that the rest of the team is unaware of and - because life gets busy - decisions get made and are not explained or communicated clearly to the rest of the team in time.  We recommend doing the visioning and master planning together as team as far in advance as possible.  And, when not possible, clearly communicating with the rest of the organizers how can view the most up-to-date vision and plan along with when/how they can add their voice and opinions to the decision making process.  Sometimes, it's hard to make consensus decisions on what to take out and what to keep in and the schedule becomes very full for participants.  This is where the help of the lead instructors as the deepest listeners will come into play - listening to the ideas of all the organizers, finding common roots, and helping to shape the curriculum into something that matches those common roots - and still leave room for participants (and you as hard-working organizers! :)) to rest.  It's extremely helpful and imperative for lead instructors to effectively communicate the conclusions for schedule & why certain choices were made out to the team and talk together about what they can do if they disagree with a decision (and what kind of time limits you have). For this reason, we highly recommend you and your team set up a type of team charter together that includes how decision-making will work for these types of decisions (I know Amazon has already started this and it's been helping) and what the timeframe is like for response and/or disagreements and resolutions.

**8.  It's tough to do, but a lighter schedule that incorporates participant sharing is better than a jam-packed schedule :)**

Nearly every IDDS runs into the problem of overpacking the schedule.  It's EXTREMELY tough to prioritize and decide what to cut from a list of amazing sessions and activities :). I'm happy to help with this if needed and I know Ben, Amy, and other organizers would too so feel free to reach out to each other as "3rd party eyes".   I know it's tough - but you gotta do it.  Your participants will thank you later for it and you'll be thanking yourself you did it :) I think IDDS D'Kar was one of the few exceptions (due to community members going home at night) where the schedule was just enough - not too packed, but not missing key pieces.  I've been asking IDDS Lahore organizers as I talk to them - knowing what they know now, what sessions would you cut and what would you keep / do more of?  Several so far have mentioned reducing some business sessions and Design for X (esp. in a two week summit) and mentioned being more intentional about saving space for an empathy night, skill share sessions, and/or optional topic-based discussions. This will look different for each summit, but could be a great spot where the PEC can play the role of a deep listener who really gets a lot of suggestions alongside the 'why' and context, and then works with the instructors to ensure the 'right' participant experience is happening.

**9.  Organizers should have fun practicing the IDDS co-creation tools as they are co-creating and planning the summit together.**

Some of the IDDS Lahore organizers wisely pointed out that organizing an IDDS is just another IDDS co-creation project in and of itself - why not use the very collaboration tools we teach about during an IDDS (ex. working styles worksheets, team charter, problem framing trees, etc.)?  So over the course of the next few months, we'll be working with teams to help incorporate these into your next team meetings to spice it up and practice the tools with each other.  Stay tuned!

**10.  Make sure the curriculum matches with participant learning needs.  Where possible, invite participants to share their experience on a panel and/or help to facilitate some of the sessions.**

A key of IDDS is providing opportunities for people to learn from and share with each other - beyond just morning circles or participant presentations, but in the actual day schedule as well.  Giving opportunities like panel participation or live case studies might be really rewarding in many ways (it worked really well in IDDS Zero Waste) and maybe even skill sharing sessions if there is time (worked well in IDDS D'Kar).  The current IDDS curriculum we have is very basic - and sometimes we have participants who are expert in particular areas (design, local culture, etc.). It is difficult to craft a curriculum that matches a diverse learning groups needs, but one solution is to engage particular participants in helping to facilitate sessions.  For ex. sending out the schedule a few weeks in advance of the summit and inviting experienced designers to help facilitate sessions / share experience on design or inviting local Ugandan participants to help facilitate sessions on Ugandan cultural norms and practices if they are interested to share.

**\*Bonus\* For IDDS cultural sessions - don't worry about teaching culture, instead focus on making participants aware of the local norms and relevant historical context.**

This can be accomplished in a variety of ways -but the point is to not stress about teaching \*all about the culture\* to participants, but focus more energy on sharing what the relevant local norms, phrases, and context are for the summit and/or the types of projects you're working on.  We want participants (especially those coming from outside the country) to have an understanding of the context they are entering into and how that affects the design process.