



SCHOOL for
THINKTANKERS

PROGRAMME
OVERVIEW

● On Think Tanks

CONTENTS

WELCOME	3
INTRODUCTION	4
STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY	4
PROGRAMME	7



WELCOME

Dear participant of the 2021 School for Thinktankers,

We are happy and excited to welcome you to the first online School for Thinktankers edition. In this document you will find useful information that will help you prepare for the course. Please take the time to read it, make notes, and plan ahead to make the most of the programme.

If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Baertl: abaertl@onthinktanks.org or Cristina Ramos: cramos@onthinktanks.org

We look forward to getting to know you. Get ready for rich discussions and reflections with experienced thinktankers, trainers and colleagues from around the world!

On Think Tanks

[#schoolforthinktankers2021](#)

| 3

INTRODUCTION

The [School for Thinktankers](#) is designed to prepare the next generation of think tank leaders. A think tank leader cannot rely solely on being a great researcher, they also must be managers, networkers, and communicators. Unfortunately, many researchers and think tankers do not get to build many of these skills during their careers; and by the time they are ready to take on leadership roles it is (almost) too late. The School for Thinktankers wants to remedy this problem by creating a space to learn about the many dimensions of working in, and leading, a policy research centre.

Taught by senior thinktankers and expert practitioners, the programme has a practical approach. It is designed to:

- Prepare and inspire the next generation of think tank leaders.
- Build a community of emerging think tank leaders to support and learn from each other.
- Encourage participants to reflect on their own organisation and how to support its development.

On Think Tanks

#schoolforthinktankers2021

Our approach to develop and deliver the Online School for Thinktankers:

- Is based on evidence: it draws on adult learning theories, and builds on lessons learnt during the delivery of previous on-site schools and other online courses we have run.
- Encourages participants to bring and reflect critically on their experience, and on the lessons and experiences shared in the programme.
- Helps participants to address ongoing professional dilemmas.
- Enables participants to experiment with new approaches in their workplace
- Promotes engagement between participants, trainers, and course facilitators to form a sense of community, as learning and improvement is usually a social process in which conversation and feedback is vital.
- Enables participants to receive guidance and supervision from a range of experienced think tankers and experts.

14

STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

This section outlines the different components and elements that make up the School for Thinktankers.

TIMING

The programme will be delivered Monday to Saturday for two weeks (starting 25 Jan) from 12:00 GMT to 15:00 GMT. We have sent a google calendar Invite so you can block the time in your agendas.

WEBSITE

All course materials, details, access to slack channel and links for live sessions are available on the website www.ott.school in the School for thinktankers course (password: *policyblunder*)

LIVE SESSIONS

The live sessions will be held in zoom. You will find the link to each session on the website, inside each module. Speakers will give a presentation and engage in a dialogue where participants can ask specific questions, engage with experts, and discuss with their peers, some sessions will have online groupwork.

Sessions will be recorded and then uploaded to the website, but we encourage participants to attend each session as the richness of the experience stems from engagement with fellow participants and trainers.

Each day will start with a summary (recap) of the day before by one of the participants. The summary should be short and highlight the presentations, discussion, or anything interesting from the sessions or discussions. If you want to sign up to do a recap, [please complete this form](#).

MATERIALS

We have prepared a background document and videos to give you an overview of the key issues in each topic (which you will find on the website). Both types of materials offer essential definitions and highlight fundamental questions, and they seek to trigger reflection and discussions and help you embark on your learning journey.

Additionally, all presentations used by trainers will be uploaded to the website in their corresponding modules.

ENGAGEMENT

We will use Slack for day-to-day communication and engagement (you should have received an email with your login details, if not please contact Cristina). All participants and trainers are part of the slack channel, as well as past participants of the school for thinktankers, so please take advantage of the platform and use it to connect with your new network.

ABOUT YOURSELF

We have set aside two live sessions for participants to get to know each other and the work each does. As you will see below (participant's section) all attendants have remarkably interesting profiles, coming from all over the world and focusing on different issues. To be able to get to know each other better please prepare a short 1-2 minute presentation about yourselves and your current work ([like an elevator pitch](#)) and a longer 5 minute presentation (could be spoken or using any other format) for those sessions.

STUDY GROUPS

As an additional activity, and to support both learning and engagement, we have developed tasks to be undertaken as a group activity. Participants should choose the task they are interested in completing ([please answer this form to do so, deadline 21 January](#)). We will then group participants based on the chosen tasks and time zones and let each of you know how you've been grouped.

The tasks are voluntary but are an interesting part of the school which will let you explore an issue in more depth and engage with peers at a deeper level, therefore we encourage all participants to complete them.

To complete the tasks participants should use school materials, explore each other's organisations, ask trainers or their peers, and/or identify best practice from other thinktanks (you can use the [Open Think Tank Directory](#) to identify organisations).

The detail of the tasks can be found in the course website.

LEARNING JOURNALS

We have developed a learning journal (uploaded to the website) which is a tool to help you plan and reflect on your learning experience. We will use those questions through the programme to help you reflect, but also encourage you to complete it on your own.

CERTIFICATE

At the end of the training, participants who have successfully completed the course will receive a certificate. The criteria to receive this certificate is: attending at least 12 live sessions, engaging in slack discussions, and participation in your study group.

PREPARING FOR THE SCHOOL FOR THINKTANKERS

We encourage participants to:

- Take the time to read the programme, the background document, watch the videos, explore the [OTT website](#) and reflect on how the concepts relate to your own work.
- Note down any questions or thoughts, which might be useful for discussions at the school and/or for your personal learning journals.
- Actively use Slack for questions, comments, or resources you would like to share with others.
- Review the profile of your peers and trainers and start connecting with them (in slack and social media).

PROGRAMME

Through the duration of the School for Thinktankers participants are expected to participate in slack discussions. Additionally, participants should agree on a suitable time with their fellow study group participants to discuss and work on their tasks.

WEEK 1

TIME	MONDAY 25/01	TUESDAY 26/01	WEDNESDAY 27/01	THURSDAY 28/01	FRIDAY 29/01	SATURDAY 30/01
12:00 GMT	Welcome and programme overview	Module 1. Think tanks and evidence-informed policy. Session 2 The Role of think tanks in Evidence informed Policy.	Module 2. Governance and management. Session 1. Governance and management of volunteer-based organisations	Module 2. Governance and management. Session 2. Leading a think tank: challenges and key functions.	Module 3. Policy relevant research. Session 2. Policy relevant research and influence.	Module 4. Communications. Session 1. Making the strategic work: policies and protocols to build a solid communications operation.
12:30 GMT	Getting to know each other					
13:00 GMT	Module 1. Think tanks and evidence-informed policy. Session 1 What is a think tank? History, roles and models in differing contexts. Enrique Mendizabal	Peter Taylor	Maria Isabelle Wiesser and Lukas Hupfer	Lizza Bomassi	Simon Maxwell	Carolina Kern
13:30 GMT		Participants' presentations	Participants' presentations	Module 3. Policy relevant research. Session 1. Undertaking research management: independence and relevance.	Crosscutting session Founding think tanks.	Transparency/ Integrity workshop.
14:00 GMT	Expectations-group discussion					
14:30 GMT	Expectations and learning objectives			Chukwuka Onyekwena	Orazio Belletini and Nicolás Ducoté (Open to alumni)	Andrea Baertl

WEEK 2

TIME	MONDAY 01/02	TUESDAY 02/02	WEDNESDAY 03/02	THURSDAY 04/02	FRIDAY 05/02	SATURDAY 06/02	
12:00 GMT	Branding workshop. Naomi Isaacs, John Schwartz and Ellen Mather	Module 4. Communications. Session 2: Communication Strategies.	Module 5. Fundraising and financial management. Session 2. Sustainability and business development	Module 5. Fundraising and financial management. Session 3. Exploring funding and engagement models: strategy and management	Module 6: Monitoring, evaluation, and learning of policy influence.	Setting up a think tank workshop.	
12:30 GMT							
13:00 GMT			Keith Burnet	Anthony Boateng	Scarlett Varga and Milena Gaitán	Dena Lomofsky and Stephen Yeo	Enrique Mendizabal
13:30 GMT			Module 5. Fundraising and financial management. Session 1. Finance for non-financial managers.	Crosscutting. Data-based Storytelling and the Power to Influence	Module 6: Monitoring, evaluation, and learning of policy influence.	Participants present study group work	Reflection session and programme wrap-up
14:00 GMT							
14:30 GMT			Sonja Stojanovic Gajic	Memuna Forna	Dena Lomofsky and Stephen Yeo		