LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE ESAC INITIATIVE

Working in a virtual environment…

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Public eHealth Innovation and Equity in Latin America and the Caribbean

eSAC VIRTUAL TEAMWORK

OVERVIEW:

- BACKGROUND

- CONCEPTS & CHALLENGES

- LESSONS LEARNED

- RECOMENDATIONS

Special thanks to Cameron Norman

+ BACKGROUND

- GROUP OF YPs + STAFF… ALL VERY DIFFERENT
  - PERSONALITIES / CHARACTERS
  - PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS
  - COUNTRIES / CULTURES
  - TIME ZONES
  - ROUTINE WORKLOADS: Part Time vs Full Commitment
  - LEADERSHIP SYTLES
  - EXPECTATIONS…

- INNOVATIVE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS (Disruptive)
  - DIFFERENT CONCEPTS/VISION REGARDING PROYECT

eSAC'S Work Environment:
Regional CoP based on
Virtual Teamwork

1 YEAR FOLLOW-UP
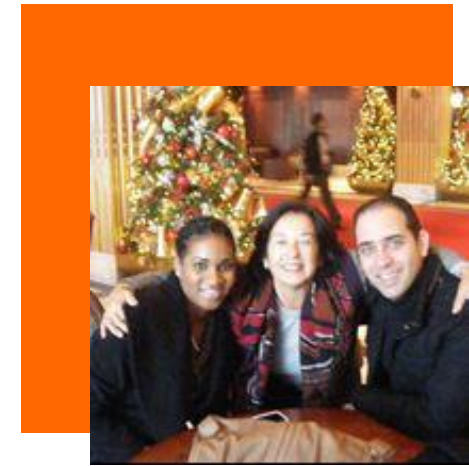
- 110 taped Blackboard Collaborate encounters
- 8 to 12 monthly Skype calls
- 2 face-to-face workshops

VIRTUAL TEAMWORK SURVEY

- Respondents found **virtual teams more challenging** than face-to-face teams in:
  1. managing conflict (73%)
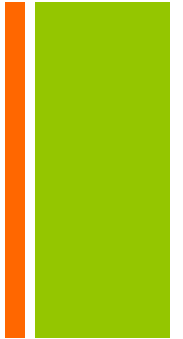 2. making decisions (69%)
  3. expressing opinions (64%).

- **eSAC**
  - Virtual Mediation
  - Turn-around Times
  - Adequate Messaging

- The Challenges of Working in Virtual Teams "VIRTUAL TEAMS SURVEY REPORT – 2010." RW3 Cultural Wizard. NY. April 2010.

VIRTUAL TEAMWORK SURVEY

- The **greatest general hurdles to virtual teams:**

  1. time zones (81%)
  2. language (64%)
  3. holidays, local laws, and customs (59%)
  4. technology (43%).

- **eSAC**

  - Meeting times (Doodle calendars)
  - Define official languages
  - Opposing hemispheres

- The Challenges of Working in Virtual Teams "VIRTUAL TEAMS SURVEY REPORT – 2010." RW3 Cultural Wizard. NY. April 2010.

VIRTUAL TEAMWORK SURVEY

- They also stated that delivering **quality output** (48%) and generating **innovative ideas** (47%) were more challenging in a virtual environment.
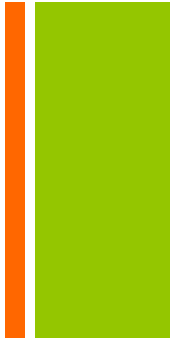
- **eSAC**
- Public Health
- Equity & SDoH
- ICT Solutions for LMIC

- The Challenges of Working in Virtual Teams "VIRTUAL TEAMS SURVEY REPORT – 2010." RW3 Cultural Wizard. NY. April 2010.
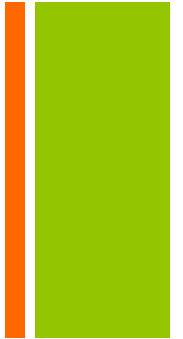
VIRTUAL TEAMWORK SURVEY

- The greatest personal challenges
  - inability to read non-verbal cues (94%)
  - difficulty establishing rapport and trust (81%)
  - difficulty seeing the whole picture (77%)
  - reliance on email and telephone (68%)
  - a sense of isolation (66%).

- **eSAC**
  - Reliance on email, Skype and webinars
  - Need of face-to-face time for planning
  - Virtual networking is "viral"

- The Challenges of Working in Virtual Teams "VIRTUAL TEAMS SURVEY REPORT – 2010." RW3 Cultural Wizard. NY. April 2010.

VIRTUAL TEAMWORK SURVEY

■ The **top five challenges** faced during virtual team meetings were:

1. insufficient time to build relationships (90%)
2. speed of decision making (80%)
3. different leadership styles (77%)
4. method of decision making (76%)
5. colleagues who do not participate (75%).

- The Challenges of Working in Virtual Teams "VIRTUAL TEAMS SURVEY REPORT – 2010." RW3 Cultural Wizard. NY. April 2010.

CHALLENGES - Teamwork

- Misunderstanding from ineffective communication

- Lack of clarity & direction regarding roles and lines of accountability

- Unclear sense of ownership and commitment

- Difficulty with delegation and follow-up

- Slow Decision-Making Process

RECOMMENDATIONS - Members

- **Self motivated** and able to **work independently**;
  - MANAGE PERSONAL TIME

- Capable of **working effectively with minimal external supervision**;

- Must be **results-orientated**;

- Must generate and foster **trust** and **bonding** among the members
  - WORK AS A TEAM

- Should **communicate clearly**, constructively, and positively IN SPITE OF technical or operational limitations.
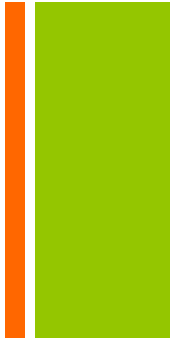
+ RECOMMENDATIONS - Team

- **OBJECTIVES:**
  - Invest time in defining clear goals and sharing a common vision
  - Predefine performance standards and communication rules.

- **COMMUNICATION RULES:**
  - Respect the rules and protocols that everyone understands and has agreed upon.

- **TRUST:**
  - Building and maintaining trust between all the team members.
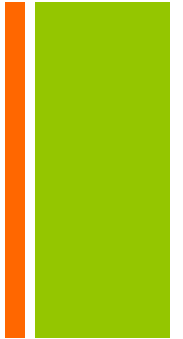
+ RECOMMENDATIONS - Team

- **TIME MANAGEMENT**
  - Set priorities and help manage time and deadlines
  - Support effectively the organization of the daily activities

- **RECOGNITION OF TEAM PERFORMANCE**
  - Be aware of the influence of culture on work styles and to develop procedures to assure intercultural effectiveness
  - Ask for feedback, give recognition and establish a continuing improvement plan

RECOMMENDATIONS - Leadership

- **LISTEN EFFECTIVEY:**
  - be SENSITIVE and ALERT to implicit/explicit ideas, needs, or expectations.
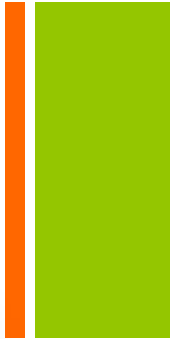
- **COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY**
  - In time – anticipate – use reminders – design Manual
  - Be willing to share information/knowledge "on time"

- **MANAGE TIME EFFECTIVELY**
  - Stick to a routine, PROTECT time from daily activities
  - Keep track of timeline and milestones; update constantly

RECOMMENDATIONS - Leadership

- **WORK COLLABORATIVELY**
  - Be Proactive
  - Be Flexible
  - Be Passionate

- **MAINTAIN FACE-2-FACE CONTACT**
  - Meet face-2-face periodically; invest time and resources…at the least: call by phone

- **SUPERVISE WISELY…**
  - Monitoring "cyber time" is quite challenging

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CONCLUSIONS

- **MANAGING A TEAM VIRTUALLY, IS A CHALLENGE IN ITSELF**

- **TIME MANAGEMENT ACHIEVES A NEW DIMENTION… "CYBER TIME"**

- **VIRTUAL NETWORKING IS TRULY "VIRAL"**

- **COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL, REGARDLESS of THE MEDIUM OR CHANNEL USED, IN ORDER TO BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS.**

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE AND COMMUNICATE…

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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