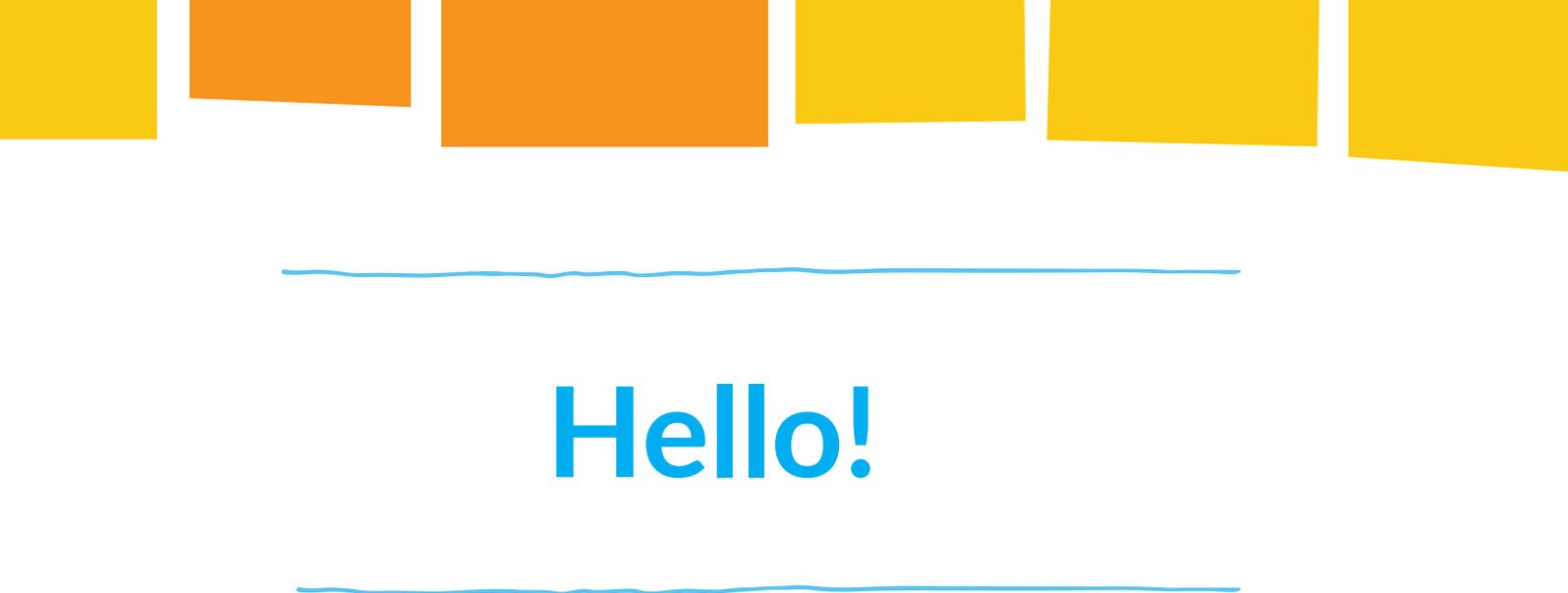# Meetup Toolkit

Hello!

Welcome to OpenIDEO Meetups!

We're excited that you're considering bringing OpenIDEO design challenges into your community. This Meetup Toolkit is here to guide you through the process of sharing OpenIDEO challenges locally.

Take a look through it when you're getting started, use it as a template when you're looking for inspiration or refer to it as a guide when you need to get unstuck. No matter how you use it, we know you'll enjoy being a part of such a collaborative, open and fun design and innovation process – so let's get started!

What is OpenIDEO?

OpenIDEO is an open innovation platform where we tackle design challenges for social and environmental impact. OpenIDEO has over 50,000 community members from 170+ countries — and each member brings unique skills, experience and insights to our collaborative efforts. On OpenIDEO we value these key principles (**learn more here**)

These values are present in all of our work together, from the way we share ideas to how we communicate with one another. These values will be important for you and your fellows OpenIDEATORS to understand and incorporate in your own efforts too.

Since OpenIDEO is a digital platform that relies on virtual collaboration, it can sometimes be confusing to take these online challenges and translate them to 'offline' moments you can share with your friends. For some, getting involved may be as simple and discreet as hosting a brainstorm among friends. For others, it might mean something bigger like starting an OpenIDEO project in your community. It all depends on what works best for your community's culture, interests and schedule. The most important thing is to share OpenIDEO challenges with your community in ways that feel high-impact, engaging, authentic and fun.

Thanks!

...for organising and hosting an OpenIDEO Meetup!

Really, thank you. You have a great Meetup ahead of you. In order to ease the process, we've included this toolkit with information on how to set-up and run an OpenIDEO Meetup.

Why facilitate a Meetup?

Now that you've got a little background on OpenIDEO, you may be asking, "So, what's the point of a Meetup?" What we envision at OpenIDEO is the chance for our collaborators to build and foster concrete relationships with each other. The OpenIDEO platform is a great place for all 50,000+ community members to find the most diverse inspiration and ideas from all parts of the world but we believe smaller groups with greater individual accountability are just as important. Meetups, in our opinion, a great way to facilitate these more personal relationships between OpenIDEATORS.

What's the role of a facilitator?

Notice how we said 'a' facilitator as opposed to 'the' facilitator? Right now you are a rare breed, but we are eager to grow the facilitator group as much as possible with the coming challenges and we'd love your help!

Your role is to essentially bring the OpenIDEO.com platform to life in your local community. The point of these Meetups is to put faces to the brainstorms and give participants a voice and sense of ownership. Other than that, this opportunity is to try to create a group identity that engages with the OpenIDEO platform offline. This will be explained below, but hopefully you'll get some people excited enough to become OpenIDEO Meetup facilitators in your city along with you!

The Challenge Journey

Every 12-week OpenIDEO design challenge follows the same process:

Asking a Big Question:
All challenges start with a big question to get us in the right frame of mind. Often these questions are phrased as a 'How Might We....' as this tends to be open-ended, generative and optimistic.

The Brief:
Every challenge includes a brief that introduces our challenge sponsor, the issue we're tackling and our goals for the challenge.

Inspiration:
In Inspiration we explore the challenge topic and share existing examples to learn more. We may also conduct user interviews or other hands-on learning activities. Inspiration is not the time for ideas; instead our focus is gathering knowledge, understanding opportunities and informing our future designs.

Ideas
Concepting is the idea phase, when we collaborate to design concepts that address our challenge question. We also host in-person, offline brainstorms to generate ideas and then post these ideas on the website. After Concepting ends, we'll run a short Applause phase to get the community's instant feedback on the ideas we designed together. This feedback helps inform which concepts move on to Refinement.

Refinement:
Refinement marks the unveiling of a challenge's shortlist – usually 20 concepts that the community and the sponsor think best answer the challenge question. In Refinement we edit, iterate and test concepts. We may also host prototyping workshops for our favorite shortlisted ideas.

Evaluation:
In Evaluation we review the shortlisted concepts and provide feedback on them, usually through multiple choice questions. It's our chance to share input with OpenIDEO and the challenge sponsor before the winning concepts are chosen.

Winners Announced:
At the end of every challenge, a set of winning concepts – usually between 8 and 10 – are announced. We have multiple winning concepts because we want solutions that tackle our challenge question from a variety of angles. Some winning concepts are big, resource-heavy, long-term ideas that our challenge sponsor may undertake. Others are less resource-intense and shorter-term concepts that you or any of our community members could take forward.

Realisation
In Realisation we share updates related to a challenge after it's ended. We use these stories to celebrate our challenge concepts' path to impact – as sponsors and community members plan, pilot and implement ideas to make them real.

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Let's get started with the essentials...

Kinds of Meetups

Since there are distinct phases throughout the challenge, let's try to discern the differences of meetups in each phase.

Inspiration phase: The Inspiration Meetups are a chance for the group to really get to know each other. We believe this is a time in which robust conversations take place, and people get a chance to really dive deep into the challenge topic

Ideas phase: The Ideas phase Meetups are going to have a lot of meat to them - this is the time for a deep-dive brainstorm with lots of radical ideas. This may be the time to revisit some of the inspirations thought up during the Inspiration phase Meetup and build off of those!

Refinement phase: Refinement phase Meetups are a chance for the group to touch base with one another and try to and iterate and prototype ideas dreamt up during the Ideas phase.

Meetup Timing

Inspiration phase: Ideal Meetup timing for the Inspiration Phase is **3-4 days** after the launch of the challenge, and **within 5 days** of the conclusion of the Inspiration phase.

Ideas phase: Ideal Meetup dates for the Ideas phase are the **very beginning (1-2 days from start) or middle (7 days from start)**. Meeting later in the phase is OK, but may not give you a ton of time to iterate your idea or get community input.

Refinement Phase: Ideal Meetup dates are **in the middle (~4 days in)** of the Refinement Phase. This is to allow participants to build out any prototypes they have and give them time after the Meetup to refine based on input.

Maintaining communication: **The biggest threat to losing a drumbeat in the Meetups is the timing between a challenge's phases, or between challenges themselves.** We recommend that after a challenge has concluded, you send out an email asking for some takeaways from the challenge – and perhaps a question if anyone is interested in starting a venture from a challenge idea.

Space

Obtaining space can be challenging, especially if a big group is expected. Here are some tips on obtaining a space for your OpenIDEO Meetup:

- Try to estimate from the beginning how many attendees will be at the Meetup. An easy way to do this is send out an initial email or invitation to those in your area participating in the challenge to get a temperature check on interest.

- Search for local schools, libraries, cafés, corporate spaces in your network or co-working spaces in your area.

- Don't rule out the great outdoors! If it's a beautiful day, hold the Meetup outside! This may not work as well with the Inspiration Phase Meetup (wifi requirement) – but bring the post-it notes and sharpies outside and let the fresh air bring you some new ideas!

Tip: *Try to look for a space with round tables and space to stand up. Big whiteboards are also very helpful to facilitate a visual conversation (especially in the Ideas Phase Meetup).*

Materials

Materials are a very important part of planning an OpenIDEO Meetup. Here are some suggestions of what to include or recommend that participants bring to the Meetup:

- Post-it notes and sharpies
- As mentioned above, space with a whiteboard is very helpful
- Laptops and a space with wifi is ideal
- Snacks always help
- Open mind, penchant for collaboration and a keen eye for stalled conversations (so you can help jumpstart them)

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Sample Agendas

1. Inspiration Phase

a.   Introductions (30-45 min)

b.   Overview of brief with facilitator (5-10 min)

c.   Structured brainstorming time (1 hour)

        i. *Groups should be 4-6 people*

        ii. *Enable people to switch groups for Inspiration phase, try to aim for every 15 minutes, use the inspiration from previous group to combine and facilitate more inspiration sharing*

d.   Reconvene and share quick takeaways (10 min)

e.   Unstructured socialising (10 min - end) Ideas:

        Happy hour

        Potluck style

        Other projects

        If you're willing, encourage people in the invite to bring some of their own projects that need some fresh inspiration. This could be a great social aspect.

2. Ideas Phase

a.   Introductions (30-45 min)

b.   Structured brainstorming time (1 hour)

        Groups work well together with around 5-8 people, this seems to be the right size to get a diverse set of ideas, yet make sure that everyone's voice is heard and digested

d.   Reconvene and share 30 second takeaways (10 min)

e.   Unstructured socialising (10 min - end)

3. Refinement Phase

a.   Introductions (30-45 min)

b.   Structured brainstorming time (1 hour)

> *Groups should be 4-6 people, this ensures that* **prototypes** *are seen, dissected, and critiqued in a timely manner. It is recommended that you rotate group members, so all participants have the ability to review all prototypes.*

c.   Reconvene and share 2-5 minute takeaways for the group to fully understand the prototypes being shown(10 min)

d.   Unstructured socialising (10 min - end)

Bringing it back to OpenIDEO.com

One big challenge is how to bring the wealth of ideas from a Meetup back to OpenIDEO.com so that all that local goodness is shared with our global community. Towards the end or just after the Meetup, take the chance to post any inspirations or ideas you thought up onto OpenIDEO. We also recommend putting a blurb at the bottom of your idea, saying something along the lines of, *"This Inspiration / Idea is a product of the collaborative efforts by the [city] Meetup on [date]"*, so that folks know the originas of your idea - and maybe even host their own Meetup next time!

ProTip: *Update your OpenIDEO profile so folks can dig who they're collaborating with. Think skills, experience, passions & wit!*

Tips

Keep an eye out for avid participants and passionate contributors.

These folks are going to be your organically cultivated backup. Tap their potential and invite them to help co-facilitate the next Meetup with you. This is OpenIDEO, collaboration is everywhere!

Establish Google Group with your Meetup area

This is a great way to keep in contact with your OpenIDEO Meetup participants between phases and especially between challenges. Keeping ongoing dialogue in this medium will allow for further collaboration and prevent a loss of a drumbeat from an otherwise thriving Meetup group. Bonus: If you feel like it, encourage group members to bring design challenges to the group that may not relate to the OpenIDEO challenge, to create a diverse brainstorming team.

Jumpstarting conversations

Is a group in your OpenIDEO Meetup stalled? Is there someone who is not participating as much you believe they could be? Here are some tips on energising a stalled conversation or a quiet participant:

For groups

- An easy way to start the conversation again is to **repeat your idea**. This may sound useless, but after some conversation, people's thoughts on it could change, and the conversation will commence again.
- **Try to come up with a new idea quickly**. In this instance, quantity over quality: it doesn't matter what you come up with, just throw any old idea out there and it will probably facilitate some kind of conversation. Start it out with something like, '*What about...', 'How might we...' or 'What if...*'
- **Switch the groups up**: it may not be 'time' according to the agenda, but if a group has reached its natural limit, change it up. Encourage people to seek out fresh faces and reorganise the groups to facilitate hybrid ideas and create a sense of cohesion.

Tips

Jumpstarting conversations for individuals

Tip: *some people just aren't as social as others. Don't try to force anything. Each situation is different, so make sure to gauge the individual and see if he or she is just an observer type. Remember, diverse groups are a part of OpenIDEO!*

- Similar to jumpstarting a group, throw out an idea and follow it up with "what are your thoughts on this [name]?" It will also give them the sense that their opinion is valued (which, of course, it is) and hopefully encourage an open and honest dialogue.

Template Email

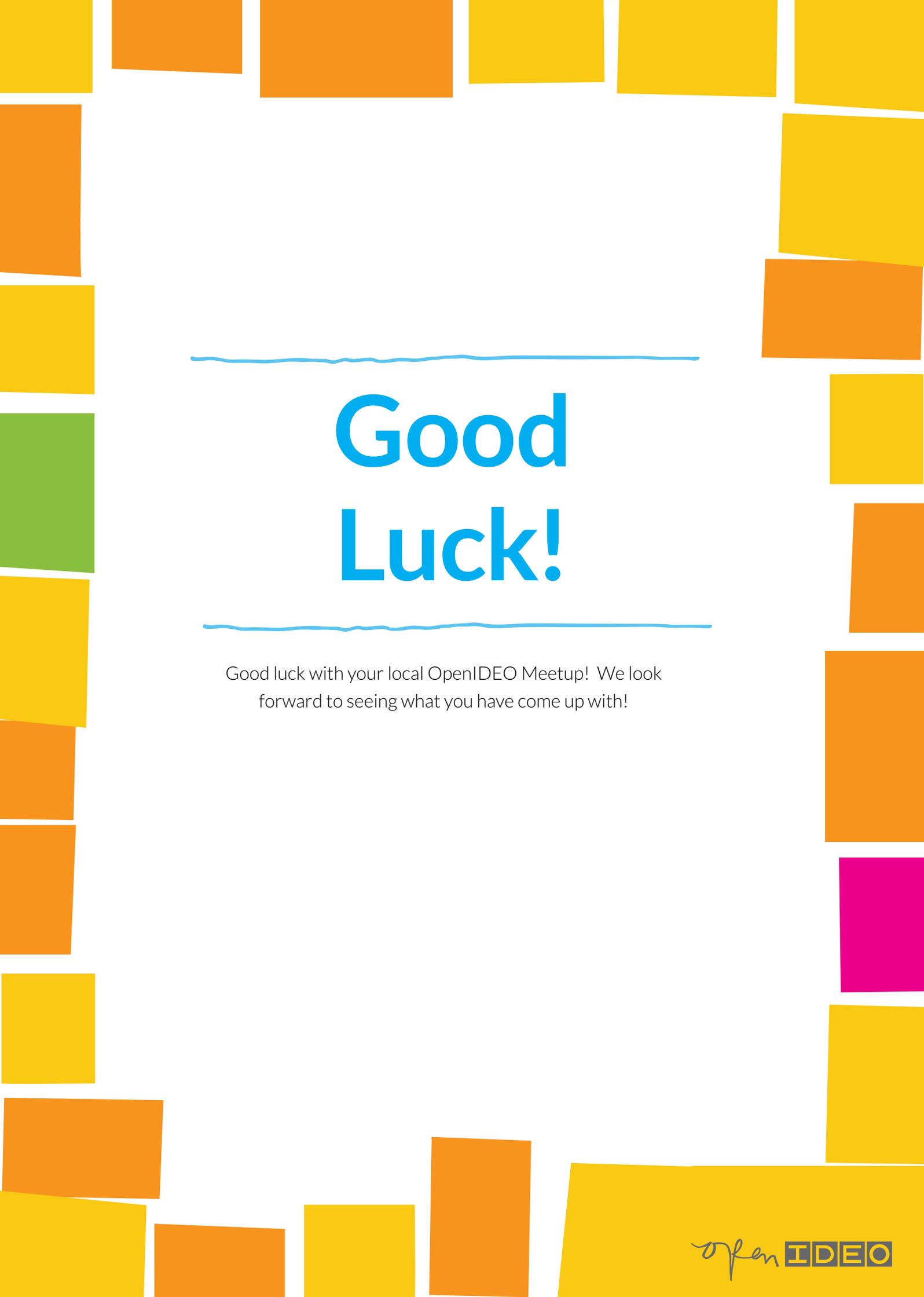Hi **[your city]** OpenIDEO collaborators,

I'm a volunteer local facilitator for OpenIDEO. While collaborating online allows us all to build global solutions, local Meetups help build social bonds and form new collaborations as well. I'm looking for a small number of people to join us in person to have some fun, meet each other and start some social connections around the collaborations on OpenIDEO. We hope this OpenIDEO Meetup can be a great addition to the online collaboration you take part in on OpenIDEO. Join us to help form specific community goals locally for our group, whether it is to test out some of our favorite ideas from past challenges over the next year or to have a deeper discussion and share it back with the global community. OpenIDEO talks about the ultimate goal of each of these challenges being a mix of sponsor and community implementation of ideas, so anyone with any of these goals is welcome.

Take part in helping us build our local OpenIDEO community on **[date] / [time].** We'll have a session packed full of some of the best OpenIDEO content to spur your creativity and then a debrief on what we as a group would like to do locally to spur social change.

RSVP by replying to this email and letting me know you're interested. If you would like to attend, but cannot make it on **[date]**, please let me know that as well. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to email me at **[contact info].**

Thanks, and looking forward to meeting you soon,
[Name]

(Thanks to New York City OpenIDEO Meetup organiser <u>Sylvia</u> *for this great email template!)*

Good Luck!

Good luck with your local OpenIDEO Meetup! We look forward to seeing what you have come up with!