

The South-South Learning Network provides effective ways to learn and share best practices in HIV prevention in sub-Saharan Africa



**SOUTH TO SOUTH
LEARNING NETWORK**
The HIV Prevention Interchange

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BACKGROUND

HIV prevention in sub-Saharan Africa remains a complex challenge, requiring innovative approaches to reduce HIV incidence. The South-South Learning Network (SSLN) is a programme designed to strengthen national HIV prevention programmes in 15 African countries through shared learning of best practices in HIV prevention (Figure 1). In the mid-term evaluation of this 4-year programme, the preferred and most effective learning activities for SSLN countries were identified (Figure 2).

Figure 1: SSLN 15 Focus Countries



Figure 2: SSLN Activities

- **PSATs & PSAT Lites:** A self-assessment of a specific HIV prevention pillar in one country.
- **Webinars:** A platform for sharing a session on a specific topic online.
- **Country Champion Meetings:** A platform for champions in one country to meet and learn on specific topics.
- **Regional Champion Meetings:** A platform for champions across counties to meet and learn on specific topics (e.g., Pan Prevention Workshop).
- **Intercountry Link-and-Learn Sessions:** A platform for smaller groups of countries to engage with peer countries to find solutions for challenges arising from the implementation of their programmes.
- **Mentoring:** A pairing of one country with another to provide training on a specific topic over an extended period.
- **Site Visits:** A virtual or in-person site visit for specific topic learning.
- **Documentation of Best Practices/Case Studies:** A process of documenting a specific HIV prevention activity to share with others.
- **Online Resource Hub:** Website, newsletters, repository of HIV prevention materials, and videos of trainings for YouTube channel.
- **Technical Assistance:** The process of providing targeted support to country champions on specific topics, either ad hoc or identified through the PSAT.

METHOD

SSLN offers countries thirteen types of learning activities and each country has a unique set of activities they attend based on their programme needs. A mixed-methods approach was used to establish the effectiveness of the SSLN programme which included an in-depth review of programme documents, an online survey completed by country HIV prevention stakeholders (n=296), and in-depth interviews (n=60).

RESULTS

The most frequently attended activities were webinars (65%), completion of prevention self-assessment tools (64%), country champion meetings (61%), Link & Learn sessions (35%), and regional champions meetings (28%) (Figure 3).

Participants showed a clear preference for in-person engagements. The five activities that were perceived as most effective were the in-person activities, which came out strongly in both the survey (Figure 4) and the key informant interviews.

The interviews unanimously highlighted the effectiveness of activities with small-group interactions. Passive information activities such as webinars, online resources, and virtual site visits, seemed less effective, but are often a conversation starter and a jumping-off point for more intensive engagement.

Figure 3: Number and Proportion of Survey Respondents Who Participated in SSLN Learning Activities

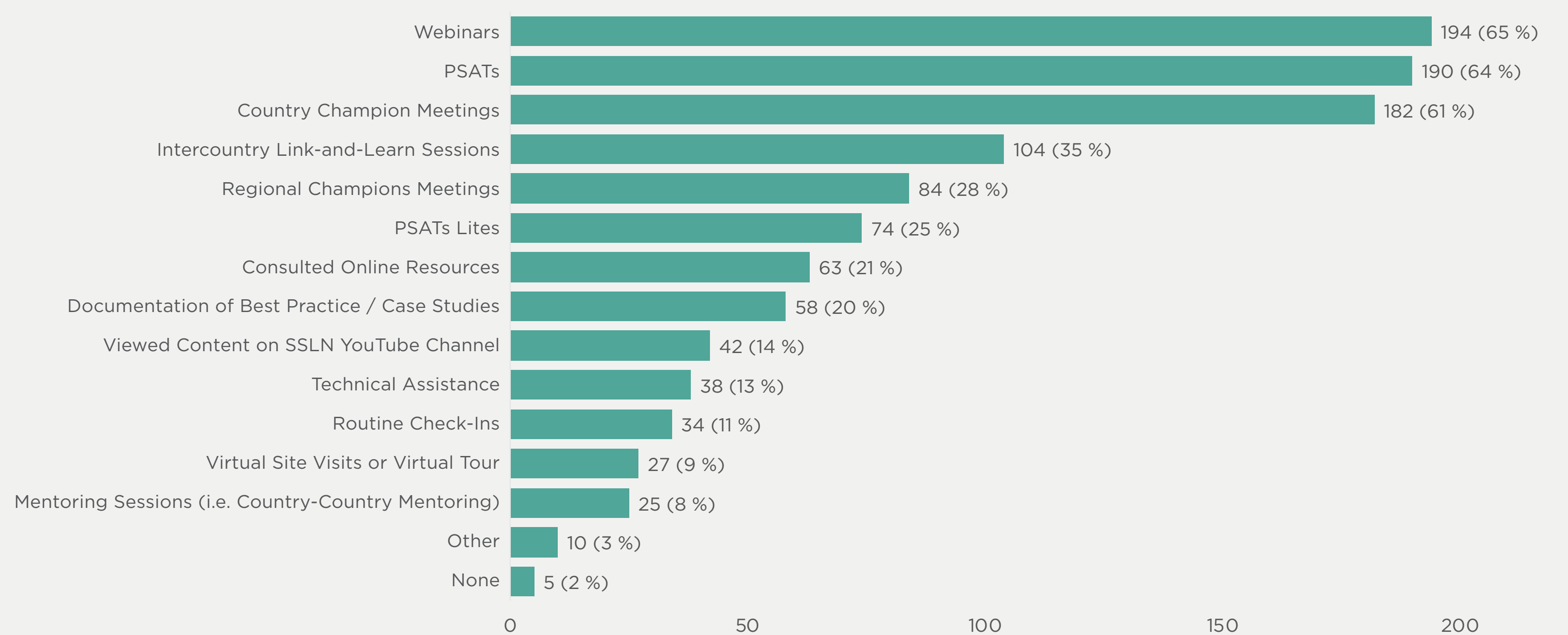
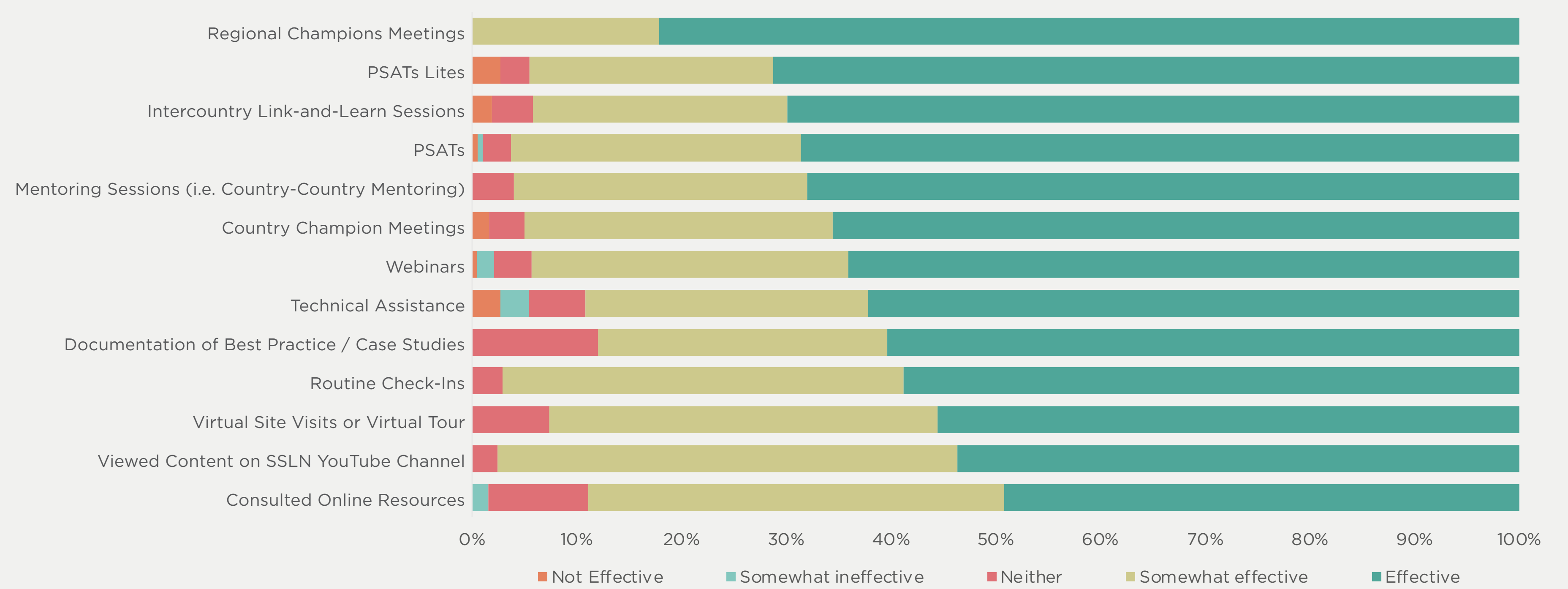


Figure 4: Perceived Effectiveness Among Survey Respondents of Different SSLN Learning Activities



CONCLUSION

The SSLN's activities, especially in-person learning activities, are highly valued and most effective in sharing best practices in HIV prevention. Initiatives that want to promote similar learnings should focus on promoting small group engagements and where possible, have these learnings take place in person.

It's a smaller group of people you're interacting with, you get to ask more questions, you get to really engage more deeply on a particular topic (unlike in a webinar, for example, where there's a lot of people and there really isn't that much time for deeper engagement),... Like, how do I do this when I go back to my own country...

Implementer, KII

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