

## Soft Skills Training Event

### **We can repeat the theory many times, but experiencing it at least once is the most valuable thing!**

That was the starting point for us to shape a series of training events for - in total - 7 modules. Each module reflected an area that should be covered while we were working in a Social Solidarity Economy milieu. These 7 modules are appropriate no matter where you are working or with whom, but especially for the communities where the model of organization is more horizontal than vertical, where all members of the community regardless of the task performed should be seen and heard. Such conditions are demanding and competence in how to listen, receive, and give feedback is key to preventing misunderstandings, resolving difficult situations peacefully, and ultimately growing in the community instead of descending into chaos. Such a cherry on the cake was the module on taking care of yourself. We came out of observing how the activist community is fragile and prone to burnout, so taking care of yourself is the first and necessary step to taking care of the whole team. We ended the training series with this module although you might as well take it as the first.

We wish you to set up your combinations in implementing the pieces of training. We have shared our comments at the end of this collection, hope you can find there some inspiration and worthwhile reflections.

Modules are as follows:

1. Nonviolent communication model
2. Active listening& giving and receiving a feedback
3. Organizing a successful meetings: facilitation & moderation
4. Inclusive decision making
5. Distributed leadership
6. Working with conflict
7. Self-care

## Module 7b. Sustainable activism

Duration	What	Content	Materials
20 min	<b>7b.01 - Naming the elephant</b>	Define and understand what is sustainable activism	Computer(s)
30 min	<b>7b.02 - Creating a clothesline of emotions</b>	Why did I become an activist/worker in an organization that advocates for human rights and change towards a better alternative?	Rope clothes pin, leaves and pencils
1 hour	<b>7b.03 - Identifying security and threats</b>	What are my fears? How do I show them with my body?	Colour papers
2 hours	<b>7b.04 - Mental health and political activism</b>	Our work is to create societies that are just, in which people can live well, healthy and balanced lives, as well as without fear of violence. Being emotionally well is essential to being able to participate fully and actively in society. All this has been ignored for a long time.  WorldCafé dynamic about 4 different questions.	flip chart, markers and some coffee or tea, cookies etc.
45 min	<b>7b.05 - From self-care to mutual support</b>	New forms of activism and advocacy are emerging. The political movement is stronger as we develop confidence in each other, build networks of support. Addressing mutual care or support leads us to make a common agreement, to talk to each other. Although each of us obviously has our own self-care techniques, if we work together we have to establish a common line.  The participants in the assembly have to develop different techniques of mutual care for the collective.	flipchart, markers.
45 min	<b>7b.06 (Re)conceptualizing Trauma</b>	creates space for new dialogues and knowledge exchange around trauma and distress	Heart cards (colour papers)
20-45 min	<b>7b.07 Appreciation Round</b>	Creates space for empowerment and appreciation for team members.	Word cards (colour papers)

## **7b.01 Naming the elephant**

**Goal:** Understanding sustainable activism

**Group size:** 4-30

**Duration:** 20 min.

**Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** Computer(s)

**Description:**

Read together (or each participant can read previously at home) the text proposed in Annex 1 - 5 minutes-, and then comment together on the concept of sustainable activism and arrive at a collective definition that the trainer can write down on a blackboard.

## **7b.02: Creating a clothesline of emotions**

**Goal:** Get to know each other better as a group and understand why we work or are activists in our organizations.

**Group size:** 4-30

**Duration:** 30 min.

**Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** Rope, clothes pin, leaves and pencils

**Description:**

A string is hung up with clothespins and the participants are allowed to answer the question anonymously on a piece of paper, then people are given a few minutes to read what they have written and choose the phrases they liked best.

The idea is to answer the following question: Why did I become an activist/worker in an organization that advocates for human rights and change towards a better alternative?

## **7b.03: Identifying security and threats**

**Goal:** What are my fears? How do I show them with my body?

**Group size:** 4-30

**Duration:** 1 hour.

**Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** Colour papers

**Description:**

Participants are divided into groups of 3 /4 people. Each group has 3 different colored cards with the following questions.

Each group member randomly takes a card and answers the corresponding question.

Card 1. What factors make you feel safe personally, what factors make your organization/collective feel safe?

Card 2. What makes you feel unsafe? What makes your organization/collective feel insecure?

Card 3. Can you identify incidents of insecurity, threats or even aggression towards you or your organization/collective?

The answers are shared in the little group and that need to choose one. A theatrical representation of it is made for the whole group.

## **7b.04: Mental health and activism**

**Goal:**To have a first approach to how we deal with mental health in our activism.

**Group size:** 15-30

**Duration:** 2 hours.

**Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** Flipchart, markers, some coffee or tea.

**Description:**

Four groups are formed and four discussion tables are created with a facilitator at each one (who will always remain in the same square). At the tables there can be food, coffee or tea. At each table one of the following questions is addressed, each group stays for 20 minutes and then changes tables. Finally, we share what we have learned in each group.

WorldCafé

-Why is it important to talk about mental health in political movements?

-What prevents social movements from seriously considering self-care and wellness and giving it some time? How it relates to the capitalism system?

- How do gender roles operate in caregiving, mental health etc?

-Who has the ability to heal mental and emotional wounds? Is it only psychologists? Who does healing 'belong' to?

## **7b.5: From self-care to mutual support**

**Goal:** New forms of activism and advocacy are emerging. The political movement is stronger as we develop confidence in each other, build networks of support. Addressing mutual care or support leads us to make a common agreement, to talk to each other. Although each of us obviously has our own self-care techniques, if we work together we have to establish a common line.

**Group size:** 4-30

**Duration:** 45 mins.

**Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** Flipchart, markers

### **Description:**

Simulation game. An assumption is made: the whole group is part of the political movement CooperAction for the defense of human rights, facing serious problems: strong police repression, colleagues who do a lot of work and have no time for themselves, economic problems, unresolved conflicts between colleagues, etc.

The participants in the assembly have to develop different techniques of mutual care for the collective.

## **7b.06: (Re)conceptualizing Trauma**

**Goal:** Creates space for new dialogues and knowledge exchange around trauma and distress

**Group size:** 4-30

**Duration:** 40 mins (depends on the participants)

**Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** Heart Cards

### **Description:**

7.4.1: In pairs: Think about a problem you experienced recently, it doesn't have to have been a big one.

What did you learn from the situation? Has it changed how you approach things now? How did you solve it?

7.4.2: Game: Heart cards.

- Participants sit in a circle and one person picks up a Heart Card (see Annex 2).
- The person talks about the feelings and reflections that the word on the card in his, her, them hand elicits for him or her. This helps to open up the conversation in the room about where people are in their lives, including, but also beyond, the work environment.
- Once she is finished, the participant passes the card to another colleague, who may decide to talk about the same thing or take another card.
- We can have all participants speak or not. If we're a lot, we can also divide into several circles.

## **7b.07: Appreciation Round**

**Goal:** Creates space for empowerment and appreciation for team members.

**Group size:** 3-8

**Duration:** approx 20-45 min. depending on the amount of participants

**Indoor/outdoor:** both

**Materials:** Colour cards with the following words written on them: ANIMAL, VEHICLE, PLANT, VEGETABLE, RIVER, BOOK, FILM (you can make up more categories!)

**Description:** In this exercise each of the participants gets to hear positive things about them from all the other people sitting in the circle. The round is structured in such way that everyone (apart from the chosen person) picks a word card from the centre (words should be hidden) and then has to describe the person in question (in positive terms!) as if they would be an ANIMAL, VEHICLE, PLANT, etc... E.g. based on the card ANIMAL: "You are so lively, energetic and intuitive!". Once the round is finished it's time for another person to hear the others' appraisal. The rounds continue until everyone has been empowered.

**Meta comment:** This exercise is directed at team members that work closely together so in a workshop environment it should be done with people who already know each-other a little bit at least. [I haven't tried it. This is an experiment. If you have doubts contact me - Wojtek]

## ANNEXES

### **ANNEX 1:**

Read together (or each participant at home), the following text: PAGES 3,4 and 5.

“Naming the elephant” and “Putting the soul back”. Acces here:

[https://fondoaccionurgente.org.co/site/assets/files/1350/que\\_sentido\\_tiene.pdf](https://fondoaccionurgente.org.co/site/assets/files/1350/que_sentido_tiene.pdf)

### **ANNEX 2:**

These are posible words for the Heart Cards. You can imagine others. You can write them on small papers:

Threat

Insecurity

Rejection

Shame

Guilt

Resentment

Grief

Anger

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## **Hard Times – Soft Skills**

This module is part of the Soft Skills Training for the social solidarity economy initiatives and organisations developed within the project Hard Times – Soft Skills. All other related materials can be found at the address: <https://www.socioeco.org/hati-SOS>

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