

HATI-SOS

HARD TIMES - SOFT SKILLS

# Organising larger grassroots events



A trainers guide

# Organising larger grassroots events A trainers guide

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This booklet was published in 2024 as a part of Hard Times – Soft Skills (HATI – SOS) international project that was funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ programme and conducted in partnership by:

**Ekumenická akademie, [ekumakad.cz](http://ekumakad.cz)**

**Fundacja EkoRozwoju, [fer.org.pl/en/](http://fer.org.pl/en/)**

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**PUBLISHER:** Ekumenická akademie, z. s., Nad Vršovskou horou 88/4, Praha 10, 101 00, Česká republika

**Published in 2024**

ISBN: 978-80-87661-60-4



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# Skills for the World Based on Solidarity and Mutual Care

## About the project Hard Times – Soft Skills

Life on our planet today faces several interrelated crises as a result of prevailing social relations. Over the last decades, despite the intensive efforts of millions of people organised in emancipatory social movements, the negative trends have not been reversed. Inequalities between people are increasing, the climate crisis is worsening, biodiversity is disappearing, and authoritarianism and militarism are on the rise. All of this is moving us away from a world in which respect for life, freedom and diversity is a central value and a society in which everyone lives well. Late capitalism can only maintain its legitimacy by gaslighting people, fear-mongering and waging war against the development of utopian thinking. The liberal imagination has been captured by the mantra “There is no alternative” and a flood of dystopian stories. The progressivist vision of universal human development has been reduced to a self-serving stream of technological innovations that poses a real threat to the preservation of organic life. However, the search for real alternatives has not disappeared and in “hard times” it is becoming a necessity.

Social Solidarity Economy places the well-being of the whole biosphere above the desire for profit or the accumulation of power and wealth.

Among the successful strategies used the emancipatory and anti-authoritarian movement since time immemorial has been prefigurative politics: the attempt to create real utopias or islands of positive deviance – as zones in which, already today, in the midst of an old, unjust and depressing world, a world of a convivial future, a world without harmful hierarchies, authoritarianism and oppression, is being created and enacted in everyday practice.

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1 Social critic Ivan Illich who coined the term of conviviality to describe the desirable human relations of the post-capitalist society, defined the concept as personal freedom realized through relationships of mutuality with other people. Convivial forms of organizing or technologies do not reduce life to production and consumption but strengthen cooperation and mutual communication.

See e.g. <https://econation.one/blog/ivan-illich-and-conviviality/>

The solidarity economy is part of this tradition. It is made up of a diverse range of organisations, initiatives and projects from all over the world working mostly from below to achieve radical democratic change (not only) of economic relations. It places the well-being of the whole biosphere above the desire for profit or the accumulation of power and wealth. The principles that guide it are derived from this goal. Among them is the struggle against all forms of oppression and fostering of racial and social justice, democratic organizing and decision-making, rejection of speciesism and respect for all life, mutual aid and care for self and others, mutual education and peer-to-peer learning, involvement in the activities of the movement, and cooperation with organizations and initiatives that are part of the movement.

Solidarity economy organizations and initiatives face a number of challenges as a result of the prevailing social relations. They work in a hostile environment shaped and regulated by the elitist ideology of (neo)liberalism and with people who have been socialized into it. The way to change the structural conditions is through organizing within the movement, and through individual organizations working together and building a supportive infrastructure. The way to break our toxic habits is through creating a new culture of cooperation, communication and mutual care within our organizations and within the movement. We wanted to use our experience to contribute to making it easier for solidarity economy actors to deal with the challenges mentioned above. Therefore, we have created sample Soft Skills Training programmes, which are essential for strengthening the whole solidarity economy movement, its individual organizations, but also the specific people involved in its development. We then tested the training in practice. We have incorporated the findings from the testing into our initial proposals and summarised them in the publication *Soft Skills for a Better World*. In addition, we created a special publication: *Organizing Larger Grassroots Events* designed for people involved in organizing larger events where they meet, network and plan joint activities or share experiences of solidarity economy initiatives. We also tested it in practice and together with the participants of this training we prepared a Central European Solidarity Economy Forum in Budapest, Hungary. We have summarised the tips and insights from this process in another publication in the form of a Handbook for organizers.

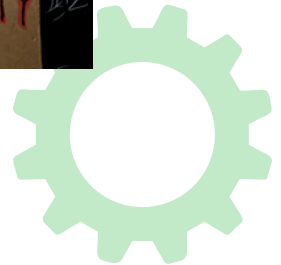
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2 A more detailed definition and description of various forms of the solidarity economy can be found in our publication [Building up Social Solidarity Economy](#).

Throughout our common work and also through cooperation with many activists, we have repeatedly realized that a cross-cutting theme and skill that we must always keep in mind is self-care within the context of collective care – caring for ourselves and for other people in the movement. It is extremely important in preventing burnout that greatly weakens our movement. But at the same time, we must always be aware that the soft skills we learn to use together should always be utilized to create a new culture and a safe environment for all, not new forms of hierarchies, exploitation and oppression. We believe that together we have succeeded in contributing to this goal.



You can download outputs from the project at the following addresses:  
[https://www.socioeco.org/bdf\\_fiche-biblio-32\\_en.html](https://www.socioeco.org/bdf_fiche-biblio-32_en.html)



The project outputs can be downloaded at:  
<https://www.socioeco.org/hati-SOS>

## Introduction of this publication

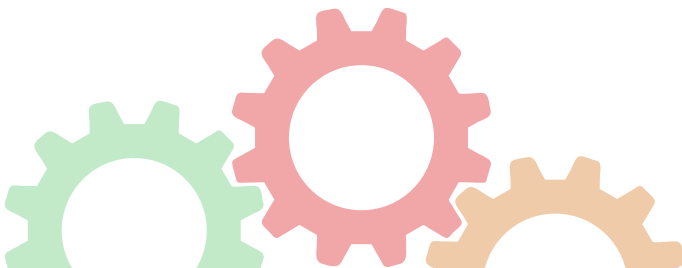
This manual is a culmination of collaborative efforts stemming from the discussions held in Prague in June 2023 in the framework of the HATI-SOS project. It serves as a guide for trainers dedicated to empower the organizing events and meetings infused with the principles of Social Solidarity Economy (SSE).

In a neoliberal society based on principles such as competitiveness among individuals and the generation of anxiety, the need for skilled facilitators who can navigate diverse perspectives, promote self-care, and facilitate shared decision-making processes is more crucial than ever. This publication is designed to help you as a trainer to equip event organisers (activists, members of organisations, NGOs, associations etc.) with much of the essential knowledge for organising event based on SSE values and become aware of the soft skills necessary to create engaging, inclusive, and impactful events and meetings.

At its core, SSE emphasizes mutualism, cooperation, and equitable distribution of power and resources. Through this lens, and with the central idea of this movement, which is to defend life, throughout this guide, we will navigate through different tips, as well as concrete methods to put into practice and finally, we will be able to situate ourselves in an example of concrete practice: the second Food Sovereignty Forum in Poland (Nyéléni).

These skills and perspectives are reflective of the diverse insights and experiences shared during the discussions in Prague, and in general, along all the phases of the project. Moreover, are essential for creating inclusive spaces where participants feel empowered to engage, collaborate, and drive meaningful change. They serve as guiding principles, adaptable to various contexts and participant dynamics, empowering trainers to tailor their approach according to the needs of their audience.

We invite you to discover in these pages the compilation of tips and methods collected. Let us together cultivate environments where solidarity thrives and collective action becomes a catalyst for social justice and sustainable development.



## Tips for trainers

If your goal is to empower a grassroots collective to take action in their own hands and organise a large-scale event, we recommend that you focus more on practical exercises than on frontal presentations full of theory. To develop the skills to organise an event, participants need more practice and real space and time to try to plan the event and reflect on their process. Even if your group of trainees is not a real collective that wants to organise an event together, but rather a random group of activists, they can still benefit a lot from an exercise in planning an event - even an imaginary one. Remember that what they actively experience will have a much greater impact on their learning process than if they are given a list of valuable information. However, if the exercise is supported by a good theoretical background, it will be much more valuable. So you are faced with the difficult task of finding the right balance between theory and practice.

### Plant the event into SSE values

It is not a good idea to start building a better world with bricks made of exploitation, competition, greed and destruction. That's why we propose to discuss with the training participants the values of the Social Solidarity Economy and how they would integrate them in the event itself and in the planning and organisation. Ignite thinking about the event as a place where utopias can be the norm, at least for a while. It is not just about being different from the conventional event. The level at which the radical and regenerative values become an inherent part of the event is what distinguishes it from the green-washed events organised by a company that just wants to make more profit. So it's not just about minimising the negative impact on the environment. It is about incorporating a degrowth mindset, building meaningful relationships and promoting regenerative socio-economic concepts.

*Ignite thinking about the event as a place where utopias can be the norm, at least for a while.*



Below is a list of tips that you can use with your learners during the discussion:

**Choose a venue that is part of the SSE movement:**

If possible, choose a venue that prioritises the rights and needs of people and nature over financial profit. If possible, choose a venue with outdoor facilities and either plan part of the programme outdoors or at least plan enough breaks and free time that can be spent outdoors.

**Create a safe space for participants:**

It is important that participants feel they are in a safe space. This means remembering and making it explicit that our space will not tolerate oppression and violence of any kind (racist, sexist, LGBTIphobic, classist, etc.). Be sure to say this, but above all equip yourself with tools or protocols of behaviour to prevent this from happening, or to be able to respond if it does. Also, have a broad vision of the different needs that participants may have, try to ask them and organise both the content of the event (accessible format) and the logistics and layout of the room (accessibility, special needs, etc.).

**The food that regenerates:**

Choose catering that follows (at least some) sustainable practices, such as promoting food sovereignty, contracting with local organic farmers, focusing on vegan meals, and using minimal or eco-friendly packaging. Sometimes the best option is to provide the catering by your own capacities. You can even involve participants in helping in the kitchen. You could also find a local Food Not Bombs collective to work with.

**Sustainable transport:**

Encourage international participants to use trains and buses to get to your event. Planes are the last option. Provide plenty of information about bike rentals and public transport. You can also offer the option of carpooling or hitchhiking and coordinate those who want to travel in the same direction and share the journey.

### **Raise psycho-social awareness:**

Large events can be an excellent place for abusive or harassing behaviour because these people may think that their behaviour will be lost in the crowd. Don't give them a chance! Organise people with psychological training, or at least a group of volunteers, who will be visible at all times and can be approached by anyone who feels unsafe. For such occasions, it is very helpful to have a safe space where people can come and discuss their situation in peace with members of the awareness group. You should also have a basic first aid kit to deal with some minor health problems, and think about how you can make it easily accessible to everyone.

### **Waste reduction and separation:**

The most important is to think first how to reduce the waste. The best waste is that which is not created in the first place. For example, minimise plastic waste by providing reusable or compostable alternatives for utensils, cups and containers. Whatever you do, give participants the opportunity to separate waste. Clear instructions can help those who are inexperienced. Don't forget about organic waste! It can make a nice compost instead of ending up in a landfill.

### **Decrease electric footprint:**

The first thing to consider is: "Do we really need the electrical appliance?" If necessary, use energy efficient appliances, LED lighting. Take every opportunity to use and promote renewable energy sources.

For other practical information for organizing a grassroots events please check also our other publication: Handbook for organizers.



## How to get organised

Organising a large event also requires careful planning and coordination. During a training, empower participants to follow as democratic processes as possible. Here is a list of good practices of planning, organisation and processes for the large-scale grassroots event of your trainees:

- **Clear vision and driver:** Define the purpose and goals of the event to guide all planning efforts.
- **Power of grassroots:** Determine your organisational structure. The flatter and less hierarchical it is, the better the relationship each person in the organising team will have with the goal and with others in the collective. Choosing horizontal decision making through consensus or consent keeps the balance of power within the group. By minimising the concentration of power, your collective also gains resilience against the departure of the leader or the co-opting of the organisation by a counter-valued group. But remember, the less hierarchical you are, the more decisions can be brought to the collective plenary. To avoid endless meetings, create autonomous working groups that focus on different topics or tasks (e.g. logistics, programme, food, fundraising). Set clear rules about who or which group is responsible for what.
- **The power of community:** Don't forget that you can share your collective's vision with others. Build mutual relationships with local communities, enterprises and organisations to gain support and participation. Accept that different people have different ways of getting involved. Try to include those who like your cause but don't have much time to be part of your team. Many people willing to help with small tasks can help you spread the workload considerably. Motivate them and make sure everyone is working towards the same goal.



4. See also chapter: How to define a driver
5. See also methods Soft Skills Training: Module 4 – Inclusive Decision Making.
6. See also One-on-one method in a chapter: Useful methods for developing organizing capacities.
7. See also chapter How to organize a good meeting and methods in Soft Skills Training: Module 3 Organizing Successful Meetings, Facilitation, Moderation
8. See also a chapter Nonviolent Communication – Keep Trying and Take Care of Yourself in our other publication: Soft Skills Training for a Better World and also methods Soft Skills Training: Module 1 – Nonviolent Communication

- **Balanced communication:** Make great communication the norm. Keep everyone informed through regular updates, meetings and clear communication channels. Be guided by your emotions and don't let them dictate your actions. When a conflict arises, look for the unmet needs (on both sides). Clarifying questions are necessary to avoid misunderstandings, and time for feedback and reflection gives you the opportunity to avoid mistakes.
- **Budgeting skills:** Create a detailed list of expenses and potential income streams to ensure financial sustainability. If money is tight, focus on strong partnerships and look for D.I.Y. solutions. When good people get together and have a great time, they don't need to have perfect and fancy details.
- **Logistics:** Coordinate venue selection, catering, lending of equipment, transportation and other logistical aspects.
- **Promotion:** Define who you're trying to attract and develop a strategy to reach them. Don't just rely on social media itself. The most important are the people. Ask friendly organisations and people in your wider community to spread the word through word-of-mouth, email and social media. Identify venues that your target audience frequents and ask the vendors about the possibility of putting up a poster about your event. If you have a generous budget, you can also use traditional advertising.
- **Be Prepared:** Identify potential risks and have a plan to deal with unpleasant challenges.
- **Self Care First:** With all the things that you plan to do it seem inevitable that you will put all your energy into planning and organising. Sometimes it may seem that without pushing hard it will all fall apart and nothing will be done. But nothing is worse than a burnout of organizers or a breakdown of the whole collective after the successful event.

9. See also a chapter Pack the house! in our other publication: [Soft Skills for a Better World](#)



To avoid this, assess your personal capabilities, focus on equipartition of work and plan a time when you and your mates can use to take care of each other and chill.

- **Looking back and forth:** The time you invest in debriefing after the event and reflecting on what happened will open you possibilities to learn from your mistakes and tune up your processes. In this case you need to focus on tuning your active listening and feedback skills. Sometimes a conflict may arise during the preparation or the event itself and if the situation does not allow you to resolve it immediately it is good to find time for it later - during the debrief.
- **Follow up:** Let's say you have succeeded to attract good group of people together and prepared a wonderful event. Surely you have ignited something in the participants. Think of a follow-up plan that will help develop the relationships and turn inspiration into good practice.

## How to define a driver

„The “Driver” is a term coming from Sociocracy 3.0 (a social technology for deepening participation and effectiveness of an organization), and it refers to the main reason, driving force for any action, activity, project, or even an organization. It is coming from sensing the difference between a desired state and the actual, experienced state of the issue, phenomena. It has a specific structure, “anatomy”:

### 1 - What is happening?

- **current situation**
- **effect on the organization**

### 2 - What is needed?

- **need of the organization**
- **impact of attending to that need**

Driver example for doing the dishes:

The kitchen is a mess: there are no clean cups, the sink is full of dishes and it's not possible to quickly grab a coffee and get right back to work. We need the kitchen in a usable state so we can stay focused on our work.

The Driver can be considered as important as the vision or mission and strategy, but it even precedes them:

- Vision and mission: **What?** (...are we aiming for, what state we want to reach?)
- Strategy: **How?** (...do we get there?)
- Driver: **Why?** (...do we want to act / implement a project / run an organization / organize a meeting or event / etc.)

When the Driver is articulated, we can find ways to respond to the Driver and organize our work and strategies around it. It helps to stay on the track, to make good decisions and to distinguish between value and waste:

- **value:** everything (actions, decisions, patterns, customs, organizational structure etc.) that helps in responding to the driver
- **waste:** anything unnecessary for — or standing in the way of — a (more) effective response to a driver

## How to organize a good meeting

Democratic and inclusive meetings are the core of the SSE. They are an important way for people to come together for a common purpose. This is where democratic decisions are made. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that each person has the same say and the same vote since people in SSE treat each other equally. Everybody must be effectively heard, have a space to ask questions and express their ideas and concerns. If only those who are used to speaking out in front of others or who have more experience in voicing their opinions raise their hands and talk there might be a deficit of democracy and participation.

*Every meeting is a chance to build a group's power and transform power dynamics.*

Hence it is necessary to learn how to organize and run a good, i.e. an inclusive and democratic meeting. Given the fact that there is no main leader or “head” of the gathering, the crucial role is played by a designated facilitator (and co-facilitators). But depending on the purpose and size of the meetings, the division of labour and other roles may be paramount (and practical) as well. The way a facilitator prepares the agenda and moderates the meeting is of great importance.



It is a role that should not be left only to experienced (and always the same) persons, everybody should learn this skill. This is also one of the means to diffuse and decentralize power relations and dynamics in the group and share the tasks and labour evenly and equally. Of course, this applies also to other roles and tasks – especially reproductive and care work should be distributed equally. Be aware of the fact, that power dynamics are always present in meetings whether we see them or not. Every meeting is a chance to build a group's power and transform power dynamics. It's important to design and facilitate meetings to create opportunities for power to be shared and openly discussed. The meeting should be a good experience for all participants. This means that the focus is on making sure that everyone affected by the issue can have their say if they want to, and be fully engaged in what is going on and be a part of decision-making. Ideally, everyone leaves a meeting feeling heard, understood and positive about the group and any plans or decisions you have made.

Also, if we want to organize our work in a different way, we should steer away from the “business as usual”, mainstream modes of acting and communicating, to avoid (even unintentionally) reproducing the oppressive and exploitative work ethics and expectations of “productivity” and “efficiency” at the expense of people's well-being and feelings of safety. People's basic emotional and physical needs must be met and taken into account when planning and running any meeting. One of the goals of meetings within the SSE environment should always be to build good relationships, strengthen ties of trust between and among people and empower the movement as a whole.

This guide offers basic tips on what to keep in mind to make your meeting a good and inclusive space. It does not have the ambition to be exhaustive, so you and your group may come up with other creative ideas to add to the list. Some of the tips may sound like commonplace. However, we believe that is useful to have them explicitly written down, especially for new and less experienced organizers.

### **Before the meeting:**

- Be clear about the purpose of the meetings and circulate its agenda beforehand to prevent misunderstandings and “false” expectations. This will also help you to invite the right people to your meeting. Circulate the meeting purpose, objectives, agenda and other materials to participants prior to the meeting.



- Think about the best timing and venue, taking into account accessibility of the place, people's work and family commitments and other needs. In general, pubs and cafe are not the most optimal meeting venues because there may be too many distractions and they may not meet the criteria of a safe space.
- Pro-actively consider how diversity and power dynamics might affect participation and their engagement.
- Try to meet people's needs beforehand. Do not just assume that you know how to address and accommodate people's needs – ask them what needs they may have and how they may be best addressed. This in turn relates to many other things: from setting up the time of the meeting to bringing food. One of the questions to ask may be whether and how children will be incorporated or whether you need a separate space for them and who will look after them.
- Decide about the division of roles and labour prior to the meeting. Think about who is going to take on the role of a facilitator (and co-facilitator/s, if needed), time-keeper, minutes-taker, who will take care of refreshments, do cleaning after the meeting and so on.



A photo from a pilot training in soft skills for self care and sustainable activism

## During the meeting

- Try to find a space layout that will be welcoming and make it easy to join in. Circles are best for seeing each others' faces and hearing each other easily. However, some people feel less exposed when the chairs are in rows, or even arranged in small groups. Consider other factors about the environment that will affect how easily people can focus (for example, lighting, background noise and acoustics, windows open or closed, temperature, etc.).
- Remind everyone of the meeting's purpose and agenda. Using an agenda to guide the meeting can help provide better focus for participants.
- Try to create a safe space for everybody, for instance by deciding collectively on the rules of discussion and conduct. Run a short round in which participants collaboratively identify and set common rules for working together as a group during the meeting. Familiarize yourself with the basic principles of non-violent communication.
- Use gender-inclusive language. During introductions, ask attendees to include their pronouns, if they feel comfortable doing so.
- Remind the decisions about the roles that you did before the meeting. Highlight and visualize reproductive tasks and encourage rotation of roles to assure that the know-how will be shared by as many group members as possible (thus avoiding a risk of misusing a role or lacking the know-how if the only person who held the role would quit).
- To avoid a situation in which some people “take control” over a discussion, encourage participation of those who finds it difficult to speak. You can also validate other ways of speaking that go beyond the norms, bearing in mind that not everyone has the same cultural capital or that there are people who are not used to attending long meetings.
- Keep in mind that good facilitation is key to having people's attention and engagement, to ensuring the all can have their say and to providing for people's well being (through making regular breaks, including energizers when needed, checking on the atmosphere of the group, addressing emotional tensions or conflicts in the group and the like).
- Before closing the meeting make sure everyone knows what is the result of the meeting - make a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting and also discuss next steps. For example, set a next meeting date. Check whether you have everyone's contacts to circulate the minutes.

## After the meeting

- Run a short evaluation to review how the meeting worked for different people. This can help a group learn together, and find a meeting style that suits everyone and give people the opportunity to provide their feedback. The evaluation could be a short chat at the end but some people may prefer to provide their feedback anonymously. If an evaluation form feels too formal, people could write comments on post-it notes which they stick on the wall.
- You may wish to follow with an informal social part. Look for an option that works for everyone who wants to take part, e.g. going to a cafe, or sharing food within the meeting venue.
- Edit the minutes from the meeting to highlight all important decisions and tasks. Circulate the minutes to all participants.

## For more information and tips see, for instance:

- Meeting different needs:  
<https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/meeting#needs>
- Spadework - forum for circulating organizing and movement-building know-how: <https://roarmag.org/author/spadework/>
- Why an inclusive meeting culture is important:  
<https://www.parabol.co/blog/inclusive-meetings-introverts/#why-inclusive-meeting-culture> <https://interactioninstitute.org/power-dynamics-the-hidden-element-to-effective-meetings/>
- Inclusive meeting guide:  
[https://edib.harvard.edu/files/dib/files/inclusive\\_meeting\\_guide\\_final\\_1.pdf?m=1617641674](https://edib.harvard.edu/files/dib/files/inclusive_meeting_guide_final_1.pdf?m=1617641674)



## Useful methods for developing organizing capacities

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During our pilot training of activists we used several methods focused on helping the participants build know-how and soft skills that would be useful for organising large-scale grassroots events. Unfortunately there is much more to know than what we could fit into our pilot training. Based on the feedback we received, we have decided to describe those that were most valued by the participants of our seminar.

### Two true one false

**Introduction:**

This method can be useful as an icebreaker especially as part of introduction of participants at the beginning of the training (or other meetings). You will find full description of the method in the Soft Skills Training Module 6 - Working with conflict.

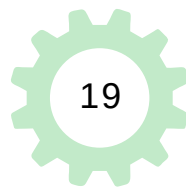
**Goal:**

To get to know each other a little, to connect to each other, to exercise active listening and paying attention deeply.  
Group size: 10-18 | Duration: 30 min. | Indoor/outdoor: both

**Short description:**

In a circle each person says three statements about himself / herself/ themselves; two of these statements are true and one is false. Participants can say something funny and make the others to guess which of the statements is the false one.

**Materials:** none



# Headstand

## Introduction:

Headstand is a variant to the classical rain of ideas (brainstorming) technique in which you reverse the meaning of the original key question to collect ideas through brainstorming. This method is a creative way to actually broaden the group view over the topic and gather actual or possible problems instead of just focusing on the solutions to the one problem. Knowledge of possible problems can later help to prevent them or prepare for their solution in advance.

**Goal:** To gather basic input from participants concerning specific question or topic. To imagine all possible problems that can occur concerning the topic (thus opening the ways to get prepared for them.)

Group size: 3 - 30 | Duration: 30 - 40min. | Indoor/outdoor: both

## Description:

Let's say that your collective want to start planning a local Social Solidarity Economy networking event. They may think of a questions: How would such perfect event look like? Or what is a best way how to prepare such event? Ask the participants to reverse the question and focus on approaching your topic from a negative angle. If they would choose to focus on the process of preparing such event you would ask your mates a question:

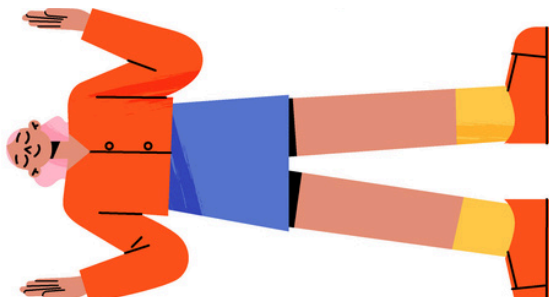
The original key question:

What would the best process of preparing SSE forum?

Reverse the question into:

What would be the worst possible process of preparing SSE forum?

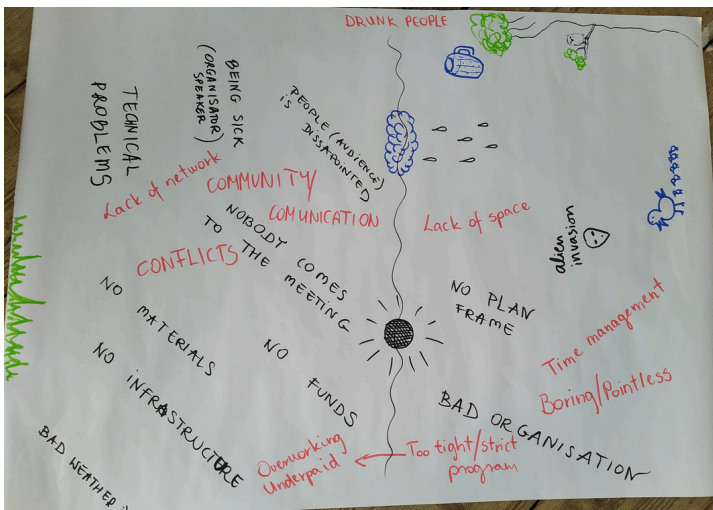
In another words, you start to gather what can possibly go wrong with preparing the event.



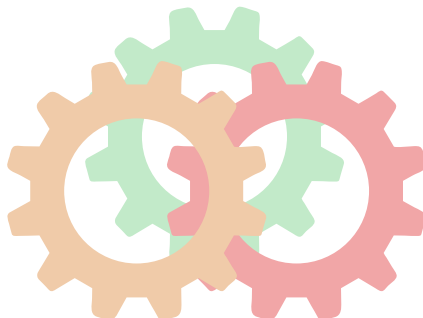
Ask participants to divide the flipchart paper in a two halves and write the answer on the negative question (what can go possibly wrong...). Later when they run out of ideas, tell them to reverse all what they thought about and fill the other half of the flipchart with the positive aspects of organizing the SSE forum - i.e. the answer to the original question.

**Materials:** Flipchart or other paper / whiteboard; writing utensils

**Source:** <https://thinkinsights.net/consulting/headstand-method/>



Headstand\_flipchart



## Self-care and sustainability activity

### **Introduction:**

It is harder and harder to keep good mental health in a system that is forcing us to exploit ourselves and each others. More and more people struggle when trying building or keeping harmony with themselves and their community.

**Goal:** The participants will talk and practice active listening, describe what brings them joy and reflect on it. This exercise gives also an opportunity to learn about new sources of joy from each other, thus helping them to focus on the things and habits that can be used to improve their live and sustain their activism.

**Group size:** 4 – 30 (preferably even number) ... | Duration:30 - 60min. | Indoor/outdoor:...

Happiness is necessary for keeping balance and good mental health. And good health is necessary for sustainable activism in this unsustainable world.

### **Description:**

If possible, choose outdoor location for this activity.

Besides the introductions for participants the activity can be divided into three parts.

### 1.part

The first part is talking in pairs. Ask participants to choose their partner or you can use some simple method to divide them into pairs. Give them the instructions and encourage all pairs to find a comfortable place.

The instructions for the first part of the discussion are:

Decide in pair, who will first talk and who will listen. Later you will switch the roles. The talking person will have 5 minutes to answer the question:

**What brings me joy?**

...and it can be anything, things, people, other beings, activities, situations...

The role of the second person is to be an active listener with full focus on the speaker (without asking any further questions or interrupting). The speaker can simply list all things, activities and situations that brings her or him joy. Measure the time and give the people a signal so everyone knows when to switch the roles.

## 2. part

In the second part the participants stay in the same pairs and shall discuss the following questions:

- 1) How did you feel when you were talking about what brings you joy?
- 2) How it was for you to listen to what brings joy to your buddy?
- 3) What did you notice on the your partner when you were the listener?

## 3. part

The final – third part is a group discussion. Ask all participants to come together and ask them to voluntarily answer the following questions:

- How do you feel after this exercise?
- Was it easy or rather hard for you?
- Were there any weird, fun or inspirational moments?
- Did you realize anything new?
- What is your take away from this activity?

Being aware of what brings us joy helps us build a connection to our self and also to each other. Therefore it is an important step towards bringing meaningful changes that can improve our daily life, activist work and solidarity.

You can get inspired by this exercise – practicing it from time to time can help you to remind you to keep on focusing on what makes you happy, what is refreshing your energy and what is giving you the power to struggle for a better future.



**Meta comment:** Can be connected to an Active listening activity (see Soft Skills Training: Module 2 – Active listening and giving and receiving feedback)

**Materials:** none



Photo from activity “What brings you joy?” At HATI-SOS pilot training, Prague, 2023

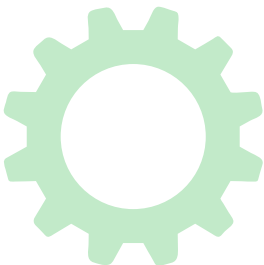
## One-on-one method

Building meaningful relationships is key to building power for any successful grassroots movement. One-on-one meetings are a great way to build your base; the first step in creating a shared vision and commitment to act. It is also an opportunity to learn about other people's experiences, networks, and skills to open up a conversation about what role might be the best fit for them in your initiative.

The one-on-one is a planned meeting between two individuals in which they establish a personal 'public' relationship. It is a strategic meeting used to shed light on the problems and issues people care about (their self-interests) and to figure out another person's ideas, motivations and visions, and identify where they intersect with yours. It is a purposeful semi-structured conversation/dialogue in which the organizer ensures the main protagonist is the other person, to gain insight into their values and priorities. It is a good way to get to know your allies, supporters and members not by "guessing" their stance, but by actively approaching them and involving them in a dialogue.

One-on-ones are a bedrock technique for bringing new people into teams, for developing leaders, and for maintaining relationships with active members. A long-term experience from using the one-on-one method in organizing for social change has shown that it helps to focus on building relationships that may be necessary for the success of any SSE initiative. It is a useful method to find out what makes people engaged in the community, what makes them "tick", where mutual interests overlap. The one-on-one is an efficient and tested method to invite someone to join your group or initiative

You will find a more detailed description of the method including tips and dos and don'ts in Soft Skills Training: **Module 2 – Active listening and giving and receiving feedback.**



# Inclusion role game

## Introduction:

This exercise shows the dynamics of relationships between the insiders/outsideers or majority/minority, as well as the challenges associated with inclusion and integration. It looks into the psychological and social mechanisms that create divisions within community.

## Goal:

The main goal is to understand what it's like to belong to both the majority and minority groups and to analyze the strategies (often unaware) used by both groups in intergroup relations. Experience also allows participants to notice their own habits, giving them a chance to avoid applying some of them in the future. Additionally, due to limited instruction, it also enables an examination of how our minds (living in certain cultures) fill in missing details to take action.

Group size: 10 - 25 | Duration: 40 min. | Indoor/outdoor: preferably indoor

## Description:

Start activity by telling participants that the exercise will be a simulation where they will talk to each other. The detailed objectives of the exercise and its structure are initially hidden. Ask 2 or 3 volunteers (depending on the group size) to leave the room (it's important that they are volunteers) and let them know that they will return later. If the workshop is led by two facilitators (which is recommended), one of them leaves the room with the volunteers.

## Procedure:

1. The remaining group sits in a closed circle with the second facilitator. While the volunteers leave, discreetly remove their chairs to the side (without commenting on it in any way), so that there are no empty chairs in the circle.
2. Explain that the task for the participants remaining in the room is to talk about alcohol, but as if they were talking about books. Try not to use words like "code," "secret language," etc. - the instructions should be kept to an absolute minimum and should not contain any clues. Give an example: "I enjoy French literature, but if I read too much in the evening, I get a headache the next day." Encourage the group to discuss: "How about you? How is your reading habit?" You can also use a different "code" (e.g., going to parties instead of going to work / school if the topic of alcohol is inappropriate due to the participants' age or cultural background).

3 Depending on the dynamics of the conversation, the facilitator who remains with the group in the room may encourage participants to discuss with additional questions, e.g. What is your favorite national literature? Where do you prefer to read? Who reads more: women or men? Does reading harm your health? What do you think about reading books to children?

4. At the same time, the facilitator who left the room with the volunteers waits for the group inside to engage in conversation (2-3 minutes should be enough). At this point, give the volunteers a brief instruction: "Join the group" (or simply: "integrate with the group"). While waiting, the facilitator can talk to the volunteers, but without giving them any information about the exercise, even if they ask. No additional information about the instructions should be provided.

5. After the volunteers join the group, the discussion continues with the newcomers participating. The facilitator who left with the volunteers can remain outside the circle as an observer.

6. The exercise ends with a signal from the facilitator (after a few minutes) or if any participant from the majority group "reveals the code" to the volunteers. After the exercise, both facilitators rejoin the circle.

**Debriefing:** Remind participants that the activity was a simulation designed to illustrate the dynamics that unfold when new individuals join an established group, such as a community, workplace, or country. Point out that two groups were involved in this exercise: those already part of the group and those joining (or insiders / outsiders, majority/minority, established community and newcomers - depending on the participants and workshop topic).

**Invite participants to the discussion, starting with giving voice to volunteers who joined. Opening questions:**

- How did you feel when entering the room?
- How can people feel in such a position? (people are different)
- What was your task, and how did you feel about it?
- What was the conversation that the group in the room was having? (if the code wasn't revealed)

Focus on the emotions expressed by outsiders and highlight their importance in understanding the processes explored in this simulation. Make sure insiders don't join in this part of the debriefing. If the outsiders couldn't guess the code or no one from the insiders revealed it, ask the insider group to explain what the conversation was truly about.

Then ask for sharing emotions and reflections from the majority group.

Opening questions:

- Did you notice the presence of new people?
- What emotions did the appearance of new people evoke in you?
- How did you feel talking and knowing that new people didn't understand what was being discussed?
- What emotions could you have if the new people were followed by some negative information and labels?

Questions for the whole group discussion:

- If the code was not revealed: why did no one from the majority group explain what the conversation was really about? (Note: the instruction should not contain any prohibition on revealing the code!) - "what is not prohibited is permitted"
- If the code was revealed: why?
- What could happen to a person from the majority group who reveals the code?
- What things might make it hard for new people to fit in or join the group?
- What could help new individuals joining the group?

It is advisable to conclude the exercise with a theoretical summary, highlighting the emotions and processes that occurred during the exercise or could occur in a real situation of contact between insiders and outsiders (it's also worth asking the participants about this). Special attention should be paid on talking about the minimal group paradigm. It shows that dividing people into groups ("us" and "they"), even if it's random, often leads to favoring our own group, stereotyping the other group and thinking they have bad intentions. It is also good to emphasize the role of language: even if outsiders use the same language as the majority group, they may not know its other "codes": inside jokes, jargon, allusions to the group's past (history), etc. Without introducing "new" individuals to such nuances, they will be lost or will need time to master the group's flow.

Later you can discuss how this dynamics can affect the collective of event organizers, for example in situations of onboarding new members, relationships of different working groups within the collective or meeting of organizers and participants.

### **Meta comment:**

This is a very emotionally engaging exercise, which can have very different outcomes. Most often, the majority group does not reveal the code or even is unwilling to interact with outsiders. Sometimes majority group joke with outsiders who don't understand what's really being discussed, leading them to make silly comments. Therefore, the exercise requires a solid and careful debriefing. During the debriefing, facilitators should ensure that participants do not judge their behaviors during the simulation. Facilitators should also ensure the comfort of all participants, with particular attention to those who volunteered (it's worth thanking them once again for their willingness to undertake such a task). The exercise can be conducted both among people who know each other well and among participants who meet for the first time (in this case, the exercise should not be done at the beginning of the workshop).

### **Materials:**

Chairs in a circle; Presentation or flipchart explaining minimal group paradigm will be helpful.

**Sources:** This activity is variation of the "Force the circle" exercise from:

[https://www.wscf-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/6.-All-Different-All-Equal\\_Education-pack.pdf](https://www.wscf-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/6.-All-Different-All-Equal_Education-pack.pdf).

About minimal group paradigm:

[https://mrsteen2016.weebly.com/uploads/2/3/6/1/23616912/tajfel\\_1970\\_.pdf](https://mrsteen2016.weebly.com/uploads/2/3/6/1/23616912/tajfel_1970_.pdf)



## Let's organize a festival or panel discussion! - Inclusive decision making exercise

**Introduction:** Inclusive and democratic decision-making is one of the cornerstones of the solidarity economy. SSE initiatives and organizations should strive to make decisions as democratically as possible, ideally by consensus. If this is not possible, for example due to lack of time, other methods such as voting or delegation of decision-making powers may be used. However, more authoritarian decision-making methods often lead to exclusion and tension, which can cause splits in the movement, burnout and the departure of active people. They also contradict the movement's fundamental goal of creating a safe, welcoming and accepting environment for collaboration. That is why we must try to avoid them – whether in the day-to-day activities of SSE initiatives and organizations or in the organization of events.

**Goal:** Participants will get the chance to empathise with the organizers of the event, which aim to promote SSE and persuade other people to become part of the movement. They will discuss any conflict between the multiple objectives of the movement, which are common in its activities. The aim of the exercise is to expose participants to the real experience of conflict resolution and consensus seeking in a non-hierarchically organized collective, and to then reflect on this experience together with others in a discussion.

**Group size:** 5 to 10 active participants. Larger groups can be divided into smaller parts.

**Duration:** 60 minutes Indoor/outdoor: Indoor

### **Description:**

The activity consists of three parts:

**1. part:** Firstly describe the situation to the participants and let them pick a role (take character cards from a hat/bowl) (10 min).

### **The situation:**

You are part of an organizing team of an event such as a festival or panel discussion consisting of various cooperating collectives. The aim of the event is to promote the social solidarity economy to the wider public. Part of the group suggests inviting a person(s)/performer(s) to the event who is popular, i.e. known to the general public and has the potential to attract an audience. On the other hand, this person(s) regularly appears on authoritarian media shows and has sexist views. However, his/their sexism is not explicit and he/they denies it when confronted. Another part of the group therefore rejects his/their invitation, but does not propose any alternative. Two goals of the movement are thus juxtaposed here: spreading awareness of the SSE and the creating of a safe environment in which all forms of authoritarianism and oppression, including sexism, have no place. The goal of the organizing team is to resolve this problem consensually, without excluding any of its members. The list of characters for participants to choose from is below.

### **2. part:**

Encourage participants to try to solve the situation in the discussion playing the roles on their character cards. Everyone is sitting in a circle and they have a flipchart papers and markers at their disposal (35 min).

### **3. part:**

Followingly, lead a debriefing and discussion session (15 min). Right after the end of the role play ask participants to “shake off” their role (e.g. saying aloud his/her real name or literally stand up and shake the body), especially if they managed to get into the role very well. Then reflect together on the activity based on the following questions:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- Was the discussion substantive and did it lead to the desired outcome?
- If so, why? If not, why?
- What can the participants do before and during the discussion to make it even better?
- How did you experience your role and how different is it from your real personality?
- 

Finally, add as trainers your insights and tips that can help in leading such discussions and which have not yet been mentioned.

**Materials:** Papers with the description of the situation, Flipchart and markers, Cards with the descriptions of roles/characters



**A list of characters that you can creatively edit/add to, according to your own real life experiences and needs:**

- A long-time facilitator who prefers substantive discussions on the subject.
- A radical feminist who is convinced that it is never appropriate to work with sexists, but who is open to discussion.
- An activist who has been in the movement for a short time and doesn't have a strong opinion on any issue, but tends to enter the discussion with comments that don't relate to the issue at hand.
- A queer activist who refuses to discuss anything with regards to the working with sexists.
- A long-time activist who has a minor problem with own narcissism and sometimes interrupts those who are talking. The invited guests are his/her/their friends and insists that they must be part of the program.
- An activist who believes that the most important thing in a given situation is to engage and reach as many people as possible and considers everything else unimportant.
- A bored and burnt out activist who would like the debate to end as soon as possible.
- An extrovert who likes everyone and doesn't want people to argue. That's why s/he always tries to defuse tensions and „smooth out the edges“ of conflicts.
- An activist who can't take a clear stand and sometimes leans towards one side of the argument, sometimes towards the other.
- A bored activist who doesn't pay attention and doesn't listen to what others are saying. She tends to repeat what has been said and to enter the debate with ideas that have already been rejected.
- A creative person who always has a lot of ideas, but some of them do not lead to resolving the situation.
- An activist who doesn't understand how anyone can regard invited guests as authority figures.



## Good practice examples

.....

We decided to provide you with examples of bottom-up organized events that were successful and were based on the Social Solidarity Economy principles. The first example the II. Food Sovereignty Forum in Poland. It took place on the brink of January and February 2020 in Warsaw and it was, in the words of its organizers:

### Interview about the 2nd Food Sovereignty Forum in Poland

We offer you an interview with Joanna Bojczewska. Her experience is particularly interesting because she was on the verge of being both an organiser and a participant. Joanna was a member of the collective Nyéléni Polska, but during the preparation of the II. Food Sovereignty Forum, she was only partially involved in the collective and concentrated on organising a parallel conference.

*"The joint action of 250 people from 150 organisations and from 9 countries found in the Służew Cultural Centre has the potential for huge change. And it is happening in many cities, many villages, at many 'ends of the earth'. It is hatching on fertile ground."*

**Hello, Joanna! You are a part of a food sovereignty movement in Poland and you were somehow involved in organizing the II. Food Sovereignty Forum in Poland. What was your role there?**

*Hi thank you for the invitation to engage with reflection of the II. Food Sovereignty Forum in Poland. Just to clarify I was not a part of the core organizing team. I was organizing a side event that happened at the Forum. It was a conference on polyculture and permaculture which was organised in partnership with the permaculture movement in Ukraine and it was a little bit more academic. Within the main program of the Forum I was organizing one of the panel discussions on education.*

Food sovereignty is a modern concept solving both global and local problems connected to the production, distribution and consumption of food. The broad scale of the problems call for complex solutions. That's why food sovereignty aims further than the concept of food security, i.e. assuring enough safe and nutritious food for everyone. The goal of food sovereignty is deeply coined with fundamental questions of power and democracy. Food sovereignty means assuring the rights for all people without exception and regenerative agricultural practices in respect of nature. If humanity establishes such conditions, no one would ever be worried about the access to food.

### **What was the motivation for preparing the forum?**

The core motivation was the success of the first Food Sovereignty forum in the fall of 2017 and the spin off of events that happened after it. That was 2017. I understand that the group was motivated to really leverage methodologically the organizing capacity so that the forum was much more representative and there were better prepared panel discussions, as well as more engagement with politicians aligned to the cause. There was also more space for creativity, more arts and more celebration. The Nyéléni forum was raising awareness about a Food Sovereignty based approach to food system transformation, land use and agriculture. But I would say that apart from this general goal there wasn't organizationally a horizon or view on what would happen after the event.

What is Nyéléni? It is the name of the International Movement for Food Sovereignty with many autonomous groups all around the world. Currently there is also an Nyéléni process organized by the IPC (The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty) which is aiming to empower Food Sovereignty principles globally. A milestone ahead is the Global Nyéléni Forum which will take place in India in 2025. The plan is to bring together hundreds of people: peasants, small-scale fishers, Indigenous Peoples, consumers, NGOs and scholars – to discuss and propose solutions and priorities for the next twenty five years of collective struggle for food sovereignty. For more details, visit the IPC website.

### **What was the goal of the forum? Was the group able to achieve it?**

I was on a leave from the Nyéléni collective so I was not part of those conversations and organizing teams. I can rather provide a participants perspective on this question. I did not find the specific goal or vision of this forum. I don't know what the goal was but I would imagine it was to advance the agenda of food sovereignty model with all its strategies and rights based discourses and narratives. However I don't think there were other different goals, as to what would happen after the event or what this was building up for. These kind of events grant the possibility for a really good onboarding of new members, of recruitment, of the making of connections, of helping people define their roles within the movement etc. but I think this didn't really happen. Nyéléni has struggled in my view (and it was the reason for my leaving) with committing to having some kind of stable rules that would ensure network based communication such as the answering of emails. We were offered funding, but there was no one to sit down and write simple proposals to manifest something interesting based on the funding. This was a result of the fact that we lacked an administrative role, or other roles. There was some kind of strange resistance of the collective to shape that which I can understand partly as a vision of a very decentralized just consensus based decision making process without any structures. The movement then is like a wave - one time it goes up, another time it subsides and dies down. But I would say that if there were any other goals they were very much about the event and about facilitating connections and meaning making and transformation that could happen for people during the event. There wasn't very much caretaking after the event. But I may be wrong as I wasn't part of the coordinating team.

### **How long did it take to prepare the forum?**

I think the preparations started around September and October 2019 and the forum was in end of January 2020.

### **What were you the most worried concerning the event?**

I was taking part in this forum as a standalone so I cannot answer for the organizers. But as an organizer of a parallel conference I don't think I had any major worries. I guess my main worry was that a lot of energy went for the preparation of the event, whilst leaving little room for strategic thinking preventing the energy of the event to fade away completely after the event.

## How was the organizing team formed? How did they work together?

The organizing team consisted mostly of the people who are in the so-called coordinating group of Nyélieni Polska. The collective was very open and gave opportunity to some people (ed. note: 30 volunteers) who really wanted to get involved by taking on responsibility for thematic or logistical aspects of the event. I was participating in the making of a promotional film for fundraising and other little things on the edges. Although I was not part of the core organizing team I can remember a very collaborative atmosphere. People were in working groups and for the most of it I think it worked really well with nice collective effort. The group had good fundraising as well as good publication efforts. The group produced an Infopack with agenda and with information on all main themes. The team established a publishing partnership with some other organizations in our ecosystem of organizations which led to the publishing of a very nice brochure called Polityka na talerzu (Politics on a Plate).



Photo from the II. Food Sovereignty Forum in Poland, 2020

**Could you describe more the organizational structure of the group from the perspective of (non)hierarchy and decision-making?**

I'm not sure but I believe that there were some people like leaders that were holding the meta picture. At the same time it was fully transparent and all other people were being updated. People had their individual strands and the group was working in a decentralized way based on high degree of trust. In any case my sense is that it was well organized in horizontal, non-hierarchical way with some leadership roles which were functional. I feel that the leadership roles were not hierarchical in terms of power structures but more in terms of levels of complexity of the event. I'm not even sure how it was with these coordinating roles but I think that these roles should be funded.

**How were the financial costs covered?**

The financial costs were covered by some foundations like the Heinrich Böll Stiftung and the Coalition for a Living Earth and other ones that are connected with more stable grounds for annual programs or funding from their European network partners. Together they supported some core organizational features and by doing so they became the key partners. There was also a fundraiser and I think it was successful in covering costs like food, costs for online calls and the publishing of materials and maybe also some travel costs for the people to join. Also to cover the coordinating of the accommodation system in Warsaw. No one was payed, but there were a few core roles that made the forum cheap and affordable for the participants.

**What would you do differently next time?**

I think it was a great event actually. I was on the way out not for any negative reasons but more for my own development. And I thought it was really beautifully done, very collaborative and warm.

There was an issue with one of our partners or a member of Nyéléni Polska who was excluded from presenting because there's been an opinion that he is participating in a supermarket advertisement. He was getting quite a lot of money from the main commercial chain marketing scheme. It was kind of a betrayal of the movement and despite it he was still there. This issue really highlighted a lack of momentary organizational capacity and methodology or skill that would assure that conflicts can be resolved easily.

The organizing team was very open, democratic and consensus-based but in the long term there was no one taking responsibility or a certain leadership role, or maybe the roles were just poorly defined. This lack of roles in a long term collaboration makes it difficult to respond to some specific situations. For example, an offer to receive a grant to collaborate with some other cool organization can be missed because no one writes a project proposal.

The cause for the lack of leadership roles was maybe a fear that if there are strong leaders the power will be misused and the movement could be hijacked. I would say maybe this is something to change for next time – to make the structure of Nyéleni Polska more visible and really prepare for the onboarding of members. Because if when onboarding one is showing new members what roles they can play and what interactions there can be between let's say the platform or the space of the network and it's value system, it's principles, it's processes and the kind of ground level of engagement, but if then in the end people in the movement who are outside the organization realize that actually there's no secretariat or no one answering the emails -that's very sad. Because you bring a lot of excitement about the model and then there's no one to reply to emails. In my opinion this is my strongest criticism – this kind of dissipation of the movement in Poland.

**What message would you give to a collective who ever wanted to organize a similar type of event?**

I would recommend organizers to consider how the momentum you want to create and that you're so excited about, can outlive the event. Make a deliberate strategy supporting an organic unfolding of that momentum after the event: Communication wise, and by care taking of relationships. Communications can be maintained up to a month after the event. Consider that your event is the highlight of exciting things happening, whilst the dialogue that happened in a very condensed time still unfolds also after the event and lives on for longer. It is a very intense to organize an event, for you as organizers and the participants, as many people will be met and it can be very transformational but it can also leave a bit of a sense of vacuum afterwards.

Another thing concerns if you are including civil society consultations like we did for the Polish declaration of agroecology. I was the initiator of that and handed that to another organization. You should reach out to people before and engage them in the reading of the document beforehand. Don't count on it that people will arrive to a working session and be able to give constructive feedback on behalf of other members, the wider community or even society. That would have to be reconsidered.

That leads me to another point. The event should be seen as having different categories of events within the event, for example some introductions, some deepenings and some innovations let's say. Like different levels of engagement.

The rest was pretty good. I think there were a good variety of workshops and there were opportunities for people to present themselves. I think these are my main comments.

**Thank you Joanna for your insights, thoughts and advice!**

I hope it will be helpful. And thanks for the opportunity to reflect. Good luck!

**Links and resources:**

**More information and articles about the Forum:**

[https://nyeleni.pl/category/ii\\_forum/](https://nyeleni.pl/category/ii_forum/)

<https://pl.boell.org/pl/2020/03/19/globalny-ruch-suverenosci-zywnosciowej-spotyka-sie-z-lokalnoscia>

International Nyéléni website: <https://nyeleni.org/en/about-the-nyeleni-forum-2023/>

**The publication Polityka na talerzu (Politics on a plate):**

<https://nyeleni.pl/polityka-na-talerzu/#more-3453>

Info about Polycultures and permaculture conference:

<https://nyeleni.pl/en/polycultures-and-permaculture-conference-at-the-2nd-food-sovereignty-forum-in-poland/>





## (Un)conference on Degrowth

Another example of a good practice that we wanted to point out to is the first conference on Degrowth and Socio-Ecological Transformation that happened in September 2022 in Brno, Czech Republic.

Its aim was to create a participatory space for presenting visions, proposed policies, existing practical examples and possible strategies for the necessary socio-ecological transformation towards a fairer and more sustainable economy and society.

More than 200 participants and nearly 50 speakers (in panel debates, workshops and experimental sessions), guided by the support of the facilitation and organizing team, were thus able to immerse themselves for four days in networking, sharing experiences, expanding their awareness of degrowth ideas as well as asking fundamental questions and seeking answers together across the spheres of academia, civic engagement, politics, trade unions, arts and education. The full programme, including annotations of each session and speakers, is available in both Czech and English - the programme itself forms a great map of the degrowth landscape and related topics in the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries. All details of the programme are also still available on the Facebook event of the (un)conference. Some parts of the programme were documented and are available on youtube channel of organisation NaZemi (some in Czech and some in English; see the links below).



A cozy atmosphere at the Conference on Degrowth and Socio-Ecological Transformation, Brno, 2022

Apart from panel lectures, discussions and experiential workshops, an integral part of the (un)conference was the "good life" in practice - good food, relaxation and a cultural and social programme. The participants were able to take away from the conference not only intellectual but also creative, personal and other experiences and insights.

**Source:** <https://nerust.cz/nerustova-konference/>

**Other links:**

- **Short aftermovie (also with EN subtitles):** <https://vimeo.com/939539202>
- **Recordings from the conference (some in English):**  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRnVWN-za2FZNUY2-pgue6xsUFO1TMJKO>
- **Programme (EN):** <https://nerust.cz/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Nerust-Konference-Program-ENG.pdf>
- **Programme (CZ):** <https://nerust.cz/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Nerust-Konference-Program-CZ.pdf>
- **FB event:** <https://www.facebook.com/events/tr%C5%BEnice-brno/nekonference-ner%C5%AFst-a-soci%C3%A1ln%C4%9B-ekologick%C3%A1-transformace/1157111528187806/>

## Conclusion

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We have decided not to list general good practices for organising a training or seminar, as we know that this knowledge is already well available. Rather, we have chosen to collect the tips, methods and reflections that will help you specifically build a training on how to organise a grassroots event.

We don't know how skilled you are as a trainer. But we hope that this publication, together with the awareness of the importance of soft skills that our project wanted to highlight, will merge with your experience and the enthusiasm of your trainees. We hope that they - whether activists and NGO members or others - will incorporate as many SSE practices as possible into their events.

The result may be a big event or a small one. What we hope for is that these events will have a deep meaning for the participants as well as for the organisers, and that these events will not only capture people's imagination, but become the basis for the socio-economic transformation towards a regenerative future that humanity needs right now more than ever.

Pass on the knowledge, let it multiply, let it flourish!

# PROJECT PARTNERS

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## EKUMENICKÁ AKADEMIE (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Ecumenical Academy (EA) is an NGO established in 1996 in the Czech Republic with the vision of a socially just, sustainable and tolerant society. EA works on human rights and finding solutions for economic, social, gender and ethnic inequalities. EA supports alternative forms of economic democracy, such as the social solidarity economy (SSE), fair trade, and co-operatives. EA has more than 25 years of experience in non-formal education, cooperation with universities, campaigning on responsible consumption and alternative economic models and creating good practice examples of the SSE. EA was one of the initiators of the Fair Trade movement in the Czech Republic, has run a fair trade shop for almost 15 years and in 2013 co-established Fair & Bio Coffee Roasters – a cooperative social enterprise that employs the disadvantaged and roasts fair trade organic coffee. More information: [ekumakad.cz](http://ekumakad.cz)



## RIPESS Europe

RIPESS Europe, is the European network of the Social Solidarity Economy (part of the RIPESS Intercontinental network), bringing together over 40 national, sectoral and inter-sectoral networks in more than 20 countries. It aims to share practices, inter-cooperate and engage in joint actions that can promote and enhance the visibility of the Solidarity Economy movement and contribute to legal frameworks and public policies. RIPESS Europe is a non-profit organisation legally registered in Luxembourg, but working across the entire continent.

More information: <https://ripests.eu/>



## UTOPIA (SLOVAKIA)

Utopia is a civic association founded in 2010 to support deepening of democratic processes in society, building citizens' participation and promoting socially inclusive and environmentally friendly policies. The main mission of Utopia is to advance, create and implement social innovations leading to alleviation of poverty and social exclusion, and to foster of democratic co-operation, community development and environmental sustainability. The organization supports grassroots activities aimed at fighting poverty and social exclusion in people's daily lives.

More information: [nova.utopia.sk](http://nova.utopia.sk)



## FUNDACJA EKOROZWOJU (POLAND)

The Foundation for Sustainable Development (the Polish abbreviation: FER) is a non-governmental organization based in Wrocław, Poland that has been working for the benefit of people and nature since 1991. A key tool in realizing our goals is cross-cutting education, bringing together various disciplines: from nature and environmental education, through global and civic education, to anti-discrimination and intercultural education. These areas are united by the desire to involve citizens in caring for the common good and the urgent need for peaceful inter-group cooperation. The core of our educational activities is the EcoCentre Wrocław, a model hub for environmental education and the current headquarters of FER opened in 2013.

We focus our work on Poland, where we live, but we draw our strength and efficiency from cooperation with many partners and networks across Europe.

More about FER and our current works: [fer.org.pl/en/](http://fer.org.pl/en/)



## **PROFILANTROP (HUNGARY)**

Profilantrop is an organization committed to raising environmental awareness, strengthening the independence and self-esteem of local communities, and promoting responsible, sustainable, and regenerative lifestyles. Since 2012, our organization has been implementing regenerative, community, and solidarity projects on local and international scales. We recognize that our mission is best achieved by supporting the formation of resilient local communities capable of providing adequate responses to the challenges posed by the climate crisis. In 2015, we established the Filantrópia Charity Shop, a social enterprise located in Budapest.

The organization has been offering classes on regenerative development, fostering a bridge between theory and practice by collaborating with institutions such as the Corvinus University. We are members of the Hungarian Association for NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid (HAND) and the Hungarian Solidarity Economy Network (SzGH). Profilantrop is committed to educational projects that empower individuals with knowledge and skills to enhance their livelihoods. Through workshops and educational events, we equip people with valuable tools to navigate the challenges of life, promoting self-sufficiency and personal growth. A vital part of our mission is to catalyze changes in the Hungarian society by empowering other NGOs through improving their soft skills, and knowledge in organizing.

More information: [profilantrop.org/en/home/](https://profilantrop.org/en/home/)



HATI-SOS

HARD TIMES - SOFT SKILLS