

Technical booklet

SHARPEN UP

TRAINING COURSE
From 10 to 22 April 2025
Saint Lizier, FR

Tools for collective decision-making and
facilitation



For youth workers, facilitators, trainers and
anyone interested in the topic



Funded by
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Solafrika is a non-profit organization based in Ariège (France) that is working on Erasmus+ projects since 2010. The aim of our projects is to create bonds between the European youth and youth workers in order to share, better understand each other and to create solidarity in an intercultural environment. We use several non-formal tools for our environmental, social and cultural projects.

This booklet was written and the photos taken by the participants of the training course with some help of Solafrika's team.

For further information, please contact asso.solafrika@gmail.com

Intro of the project

by Evelina

Bonjour! From **April 10th to 22nd, 2025**, I had the opportunity to participate in the **Erasmus+ training course Sharpen Up** in the picturesque town of **Saint-Lizier**, nestled in the French Pyrenees. Although the course lasted just under two weeks, it gave me more than I ever expected — friendships, inspiration, knowledge, and a deep sense of connection.

Participants came from all corners of the world — **Jordan, Armenia, North Macedonia, Italy, Germany, Poland, Turkey and France**— and in just a few days, we became more than just a group. We became a family.

The training focused on **sociocracy, coordination, team dynamics, and collective organization**. These themes were explored through a rich program of workshops, games, discussions, and activities we co-created together.

Life at the venue was based on mutual support and shared responsibility. We cooked together, washed dishes, cleaned our shared spaces, and ate only vegetarian meals, always knowing exactly where our food came from. It was a hands-on way of living the values we were learning about.

We began by forming our own group culture and setting ground rules to ensure a safe space for learning. One highlight was our visit to Zero Neuf, a local recycling shop that operates without a boss and uses sociocratic principles to run its collective. There, we saw what it looks like to truly live and work by the values of inclusion, equality, and sustainability.

The evenings brought a celebration of our diverse cultures through intercultural nights — each country prepared a traditional meal and introduced others to their customs, music, and stories. These nights were full of laughter, warmth, and connection.

The second phase of the program deepened our understanding of sociocracy with several days of workshops led by the incredibly experienced Rakesh Rootsman Rak. We learned about proposal making, role rotation, planning effective meetings, and decision-making processes. Rakesh even surprised us with a reggae DJ set one evening — a perfect reminder that learning can be joyful and creative.

In the final part of the course, we put our new skills into action. We assigned roles such as facilitator, meeting organizer, and logbook keeper, and designed two days of activities entirely on our own. Some of us planned a trip to Toulouse, Carcassonne, or the local market in Foix; others chose to hike to the beautiful La Cascade d'Ars.

The following day was devoted to peer-led workshops. We had the chance to participate in workshops like drawing, consent, self-defense, play fight, active listening, the climate fresk, and calisthenics. It was amazing to see everyone contribute their unique perspective and knowledge.

We closed the project by presenting short videos we had created on the theme of “collective”, reflecting on all the moments we shared and the memories we created together. It was a touching end to an unforgettable journey.



Collective life and intercultural learning

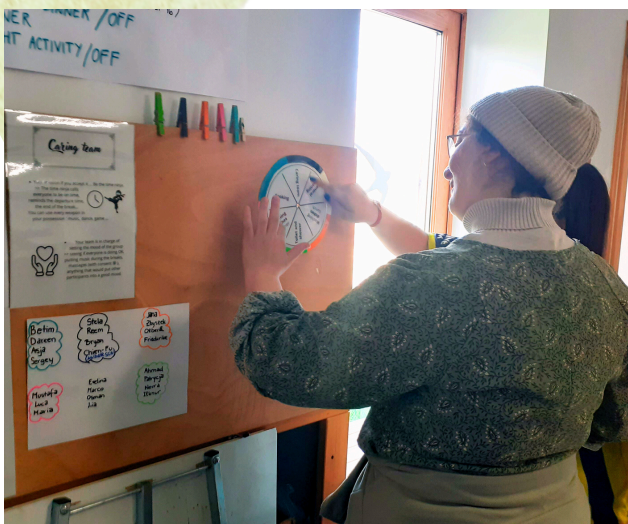
by Freddy & Tim

In the context of intercultural learning we watched a Ted talk from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: the danger of a single story. This Ted talk opened up a conversation about being seen in the world. We spoke about our own experiences and how we think...

In a group project, establishing collective rules is essential for promoting cooperation, mutual respect, and shared responsibility among all members. These rules help create a structured and supportive environment where everyone understands their roles, deadlines, and expectations.



By following common guidelines, the group learns how to work together efficiently, manage conflicts constructively, and value each person's contribution. The objective of this activity is not only to build something tangible as a team, but also to develop key collaboration skills, such as communication, decision-making, and accountability—skills that are vital for both academic and real-world success.



Intercultural learning

We were learning to keep our minds open minded and to not narrow our minds and knowledge down to the information of a one sided story. It is important to

Debriefing allows the group to reflect on how they worked together, what went well, and what challenges they faced. It helps reinforce lessons about teamwork, communication, and following shared rules, while giving everyone a chance to share their experience and learn from it.

Overall the group liked the video. There were some voices who thought it was a bit boring. But overall it opened up the topic of intercultural learning and how important it is to not only listen to the stories of the privileged. To keep and mind that there are many stories to tell and to listen to to!



This activity can be easily **adapted** for home or other settings. Families can use it to plan a shared project, like organizing a party or redecorating a room, while practicing teamwork and rule-setting. In schools or clubs, it can be reused with different themes—like environmental awareness or cultural exchange—by changing the project topic but keeping the same collaborative structure.

This activity had a strong **impact** on me by showing how powerful teamwork can be when everyone feels included and heard. It was inspiring to see how setting simple, shared rules helped the group stay focused, respectful, and creative. I was impressed by the way participants supported each other, solved problems together, and took pride in what they built. It reminded me how much we can achieve when we truly cooperate.

One of the main **difficulties** in the activity was making sure everyone had a voice and stayed involved. At times, some participants struggled to agree on ideas or divide tasks fairly, which led to small conflicts or delays. It was also



challenging for some groups to stick to their collective rules throughout the process. However, these obstacles became learning moments, helping the group improve communication and problem-solving skills.

The activity resulted in creative group projects and stronger teamwork skills. Participants learned to cooperate, follow shared rules, and communicate effectively. More than just completing a task, they gained valuable experience in working together and supporting one another.



Energizer catalogue

By Luca

Energizers of the participants:

Secret conductor (music)

- people in circle, one person goes behind the door and the rest choose a secret conductor
- The secret conductor makes moves and everyone needs to make the same
- The person who was behind the door comes back to the circle and needs to guess who is leading the moves

legs, hands.... On the ground

- prepare cards with numbers of hands, feet and head
- Create groups of 4-6
- And then you have to collectively try to only have the numbers of hands, feet etc on the floor

I call ... smash

- People in circle sitting in chairs
- One person says: I call (name)
- The person who was called puts hands up to the ear to answer
- People on left and right to the called person have to place the hands next to the person on their ear
- If someone does it wrong or forget anyone can punch them (gentle) on their knee

Soft ball throwing up to 5 balls

- create a circle and get 5 balls
- Start with one ball and the people throw and catch the ball once, no one is allowed to get the ball twice
- You have to remember who you received and who you throw the ball too
- After a while you introduce more balls
- Balls always go the same direction
- Try to play as quickly as you can

Other propositions:

- Chasing the pear
- Chair walking
- poking Kangaroo
- Counting to 10
- Counting to 10 and changing every 7
- Ha Hi Ho
- clap the hands circle
- catch pointed finger
- story



Sculpting bodies: divide groups in 4 or 6 people, half of the group are sculptures with closed eyes, the other half moves their body to create something. When sculptures are ready they open their eyes and understand what they are and then imitate the movements and sounds of what they are too many mirrors: one person leads, all the other follow everything he does; both movements and sounds. Who doesn't do it's out.



Find the original dancer: one person is turned and is the observer, the rest of the group stands and follows one person who leads the dance and keeps changing it every 15 seconds. Then the observer turns and try to spot who leads the dance. If after 3 guesses they loose, then they switch and become part of the bigger group.

Ce l'hai: touch another person and say ce l'hai. Now that person who has been touched has to touch another person and say ce l'hai. Everyone has to run from the person who has ce l'hai.

Jungle of exercises: each stretch/ exercise / movement you make an animal sound; as loud as you want.



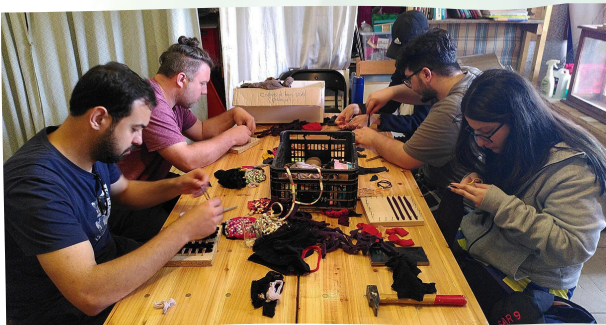
Second hand shop visit

By Stela & Marco

We visited a second hand and recycling store Ressourcerie Zéro Neuf to take a look at a sociocratic system applied and working in real life. Additionally, it created a bridge to and connect with the environmental values of Solafrika.

This activity allowed us to witness how decision-making, organizational structure, and inclusive governance can function in a real life example of a sociocratic system. We gained insight into shared decision-making, role clarity, and circle structures leading to creating our idea of how to imply knowledge gained in the following sessions

We arrived at the place of the workshop, Ressourcerie Zéro Neuf, and started with short energizers to strengthen the group dynamics (for example challenging our active listening skills), after we divided into two groups to take turns in two parts of the workshop.



One part consisted of upcycling old textile, specifically clothes and tights, to create sponges and carpets with the technique of weaving. This allowed us to experience one of the many upcycling tasks performed at the Ressourcerie. In the second part we were introduced to the structure of the establishment, their structure and organization (the number of volunteers and employees), task division and their system of conflict resolution. Afterwards, we had time to explore the shop.

The participants could visit other similar real life examples in their own countries and further verify and learn from active examples of projects using sociocracy.



The participants were able to visit a local attraction to expand their perspective of the hosting country; plus we were able to visit in person a real case study of a project successfully using sociocracy.

Intercultural evenings

By Ilknur & Evelina

Join us for a wonderful journey around the world during our International Nights! Each evening was dedicated to celebrating the culture, traditions, and flavors of a different countries.

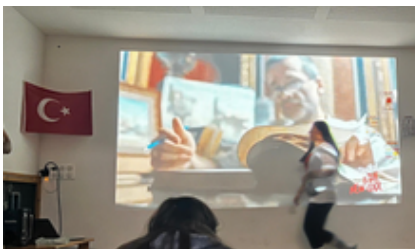
Armenia, Türkiye, Poland

During our first evening, we had a wonderful opportunity to explore the diverse cuisines of Armenia, Turkey, and Poland. **Armenian** specialties included dishes like Tolma, as well as omelets with Basturma. A particularly interesting dish was Suzuki. This is a sweet treat made from walnuts, cinnamon, other spices, and grape syrup. After an exciting quiz game, we were introduced to an Armenian national dance called Edjmiatsin and even danced it ourselves.



On this international evening, there was also **Türkiye** represented, giving us a vibrant taste of Turkish culture. We were introduced to a variety of delicious dishes, starting with Tantun. The bold flavors of Çiğköfte, a traditional spicy dish had everyone talking. Of course, we couldn't miss the iconic Türk Kahvesi—rich, thick, and full of flavor, it was the perfect way to unwind. For dessert, we indulged in Lokum, the sweet, chewy Turkish delight, and sipped on some refreshing Çay (Turkish tea). As we relaxed, we snacked on Cekirdek, roasted sunflower seeds, adding a crunchy touch to the evening.

But the evening wasn't just about food; we also got to learn the lively Damat Halayı dance, a joyful tradition that brought everyone together.



The third country of the day was **Poland**. Polish culture brought some contrast to this interesting evening. We tasted their typical dishes like Żurek, a traditional sour rye soup with spices, and kasza gryczana z jajkami w sosie chrzanowym, buckwheat with eggs in a creamy horseradish sauce, served with pickled beetroot and both sour and sweet pickled cucumbers. It was a really nice experience to see all those three countries present together in one evening and to realize how varied and interesting our cultures are.



Tchechia & Germany

On the third evening we also had the pleasure of exploring Germany's and Czech flavors. We tasted a delicious Potato Apple Salad, a special recipe passed down from one of the representative's grandmother—rich, tangy, and full of heart. Alongside it, we enjoyed a juicy vegan apple cake made in the traditional German style, perfectly sweet and moist, with a hint of cinnamon that added a warm, comforting touch. That all was made by the **German team**.



Czech team prepared their traditional dish from semolina. Most of Czech children loves this dish served with cocoa and sugar. They also prepared a typical Czech drink made from egg yolks, whip cream, milk, vanilla and rum.



After savoring these dishes, we got to know Germany a little better through a interactive quiz game, where we learned more about the country's history, culture, and traditions. With Czech team we learned about Czech culture through a short presentation. After we sang a Czech song named Kozel which everyone managed very well. For the last activity we danced polka on a typical Czech song. After first moments of confusion many people were able to dance like a real Czech.



Jordan & Italy

On the second international evening, we were also treated to the vibrant culture of **Jordan**, with one of the representatives dressed in the traditional Jordanian Deheyeh—the beautiful, intricate attire that truly captures the essence of the country. The outfit included a Deshdash (a long robe) for men, along with the Shmaakh, a traditional head scarf, which added a sense of authenticity and connection to Jordan's rich cultural history.

The evening was filled with mouthwatering dishes. We were introduced to Mansaf and Maqloubah, a savory upside-down dish made with rice, vegetables added a comforting element to the meal. The Qalayāt Bandora (tomato salad) gave a refreshing, zesty touch, while Manaqish Zaatar was the perfect snack to enjoy with Arabic coffee.



To top it all off, we learned the lively Dabkeh and Deheyeh dances! The Dabkeh, with its stomping and rhythmic movements, brought everyone together in a fun, energetic way, while the more graceful Deheyeh dance showcased the elegance of Jordanian tradition.



Second country of the day was **Italy** which presented their delicious food like Parmigiana, Spaghetti al Sugo with tomato sauce and Risoto e Radicchio. When eating we listened to Italian songs which brought our minds to a lovely village in the South of Italy from where one of the participants brought family recipe for Parmigiana.



After eating all those delicious meals we explored a bit of nature and cities of Italy from and learned where the Italian team came from.



North Macedonia

The last country to present was North Macedonia. Our only participant from North Macedonia brought us some typical sweets and food from his country. After tasting Pastete Argeta which is a bread spread, Halva, Krem Banana and some bread sticks, we learned a bit through Kahoot about the culture.



Sociocracy 1st session

By Zbyszek & Chien Fu

Sociocracy workshops were an important part of the project, people wanted to learn about the sociocracy, introduction led by external expert Rakesh



The main **objectives** were to:

- learn how to facilitate
- learn about sociocracy and practice, take into action
- introduce a framework of different sociocracy models

Privilege game - stand in line, different questions asked, those who feel privileged make one step forward, those who feel marginalized make one step backward.

Interactive discussion by Rakesh, about his personal experience with sociocracy and community projects, the education system and the need to unlearn negative behavioral patterns, about social and economic inequalities.



Following was the recollection of topics from the day before - every participant said what they remember and feel important from the previous day setting up a social contract from the upcoming week:

vision, mission and objectives. Each part was discussed in the three levels:

- **proposal**
- **clarification**
- **consent** - spoken consent from each participant



Debriefing and **evaluation** was carried out with the method of measuring the social temperature: every participant had to say up to 3 words describing their attitude and satisfaction.

Possible **alternatives** to the activity:

- family decisions (where to travel, what to buy for the house)
- education (academic level - giving roles to the students during the sessions)
- school organization - ask children for opinion or even consent
- on youth exchanges and European projects



Impact and impression of the activity:

- include opinions of others, don't do decisions by yourself
- sometimes it is worth to spend more time on group process in order to make people more engaged in it.

Difficulties

- not everyone could understand the discussion (due to lower language skills and low focus - it was long time of talking, many people didn't follow the long speaking hours)
- we were speaking that practice and doing is more important than theory and talking, but somehow the sessions turned out in a way that it was only talking and theory with little practice and doing.



Outcome

- after this session we know our mission on the whole training, now we know what to do and feel ready to start doing
- a written set of goals which were created in front of everybody's eyes and then consented verbally by everyone.

Sociocracy 2nd session

By Lia & Ahmad

Sociocracy is rooted in values like equality, transparency and efficiency instead of being a top-down hierarchy.

Main **objectives**:

- Promoting equality
- Clarity in Roles
- Decentralization
- Continuous Feedback
- Inclusiveness
- Consent-Based Decision Making

1-Define Clear Purpose: Establish a clear mission and purpose

2-Organize in Circles: Structure the organization into semi-autonomous circles (teams) that have their own functions

3-Role Definition: Clearly define roles within each circle to establish accountability

4-Consensus Decision Making: Employ a consent-based decision-making process, where proposals are made and discussed until there is no objection

5-Double-Linking: Implement double-linking between circles, meaning that each circle has at least one representative (link) to the next higher circle, facilitating communication and coherence across the organization.

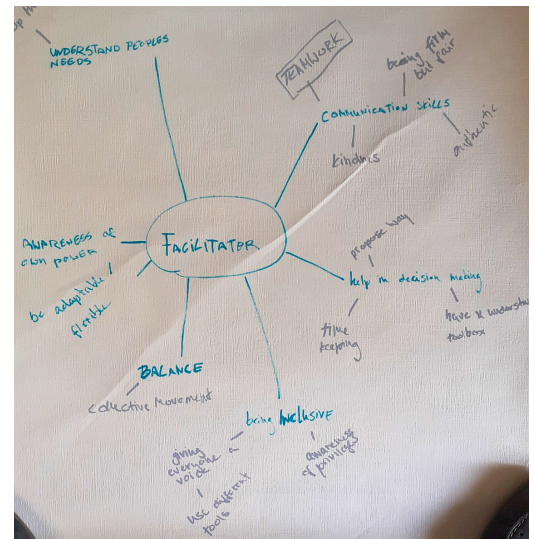
6-Regular Meetings: Hold regular meetings within each circle to discuss progress, evaluate decisions, and adapt processes as necessary

7-Feedback Loops: Incorporate mechanisms for continuous feedback to assess the effectiveness of decisions and processes and to make necessary adjustments.

8-Evaluate and Adapt: Periodically review the governance structure and processes to identify areas for improvement

Debriefing:

Good feedback in return as the group was able to apply such a concept where they facilitate and organize using the above steps.

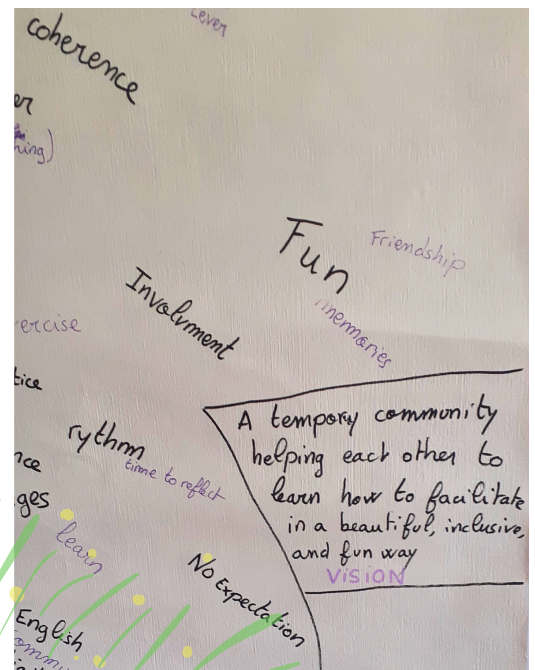


Alternatives:

All family members share the same steps and try to apply them in real life.

Impression:

It's important to know such a concept, and even more important to apply it in the real life.



Outcomes:

Active listening of all the ideas from different groups and taking the most suitable decisions together.

Difficulties :

I think all of us need to practice this so it doesn't take so much time and that everything is at the same line and consent to what is the decision without any objection.

Sociocracy 3rd session

By Marco; Mari & Luca

The third day was part of the 3-day training led by our sociocracy teacher Rakesh Rootsman, and named by him "Sociocrazy". It is his personal way to apply sociocracy and very related with permaculture.

The third day was dedicated to real case studies, questions and meeting types. It took over the morning and the afternoon.

- Sociocracy in personal relationships: applying sociocracy principles to a romantic relationship
- Ecovillages, building community project: how the sociocratic method can enhance effectiveness in establishing a common vision
- Associations

Debriefing

The third day was a key step necessary to conclude the first two days of teaching. Particular attention was dedicated to meeting types (10+ types), real life use cases (relationships, small projects, companies) and questions from the participants.

Impressions

We believe the third day was an essential step in the workshops created by Rakesh for our group. The focus was given to examples and questions - this was essential in order to provide proofs of utility and clearing any doubts.

Difficulties

Timing. Ideally this session could have been extended with more time.

Outcomes:

Clarity was the outcome of the third day. As written before, the teacher dedicated time and energy to sediment knowledge that was spread the days before.

Invitation to "play" and experiment with the role of facilitator in one's own circumstances.

If you are interested in learning more about Sociocracy you can follow the [LINK TO RAKESH'S WEBSITE](#)

Digital storytelling

By Mostafa, Maria, Özberk

Digital storytelling activities were born from the idea of using technology to convey personal or shared narratives. In this case, the theme of collectiveness was chosen, which emphasizes the importance of working together, respecting one another, and building a sense of community. Initially, participants were invited to work individually, but as the activity evolved, people formed smaller groups of two or three participants. The aim was to create short videos that reflected this collective spirit.

Learning Objectives

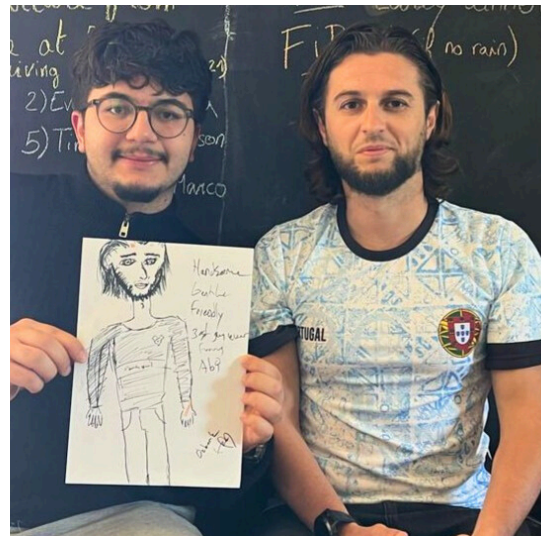
The goal was to understand the power of collective creation. By combining different individual perspectives, participants learned how to collaborate and create a cohesive narrative using digital media tools.

Cooperation

This activity focused on collaboration, where participants had to work in pairs or small groups to achieve a common goal—creating a digital story.

Creative Expression

Participants were encouraged to express their own interpretation of the theme, which led to a wide variety of video styles (funny, emotional, or entertaining).



Preparation:

The theme "**Collectiveness**" was introduced to the participants.

Groups were given guidelines to create a video with a duration of 2 to 5 minutes. They were encouraged to think about the theme and how it could be represented creatively.

Each group discussed how they would interpret collectiveness in their videos. They planned their storyline, created a script, and decided on roles within the group (e.g., writing, filming, editing).

Planning and Scripting:

Filming

Participants used available tools (smartphones, cameras, etc.) to shoot their footage. The videos could incorporate various elements such as acting, narration, music, and visuals to convey the collective theme.

Editing

After filming, participants edited their videos, adding any necessary audio, visual effects, and transitions. They focused on ensuring the message of collectiveness was clear and well-represented.



Viewing

On the designated viewing day, all the groups gathered to watch each other's videos. The videos presented a mix of different tones—some were funny, others emotional, and some were simply entertaining. Despite the different styles, the common thread running through all the videos was the core theme of respect, love, and working together.



Group Reflection

After watching the videos, the group discussed the experience of working together and how the theme of collectiveness was interpreted in each video.

Evaluation

The success of the activity was measured by the creativity of the videos and how effectively the theme was conveyed. The collaborative process itself was also evaluated, focusing on teamwork, communication, and how participants worked together.

Alternatives

The digital storytelling process can be adapted for school projects, team-building exercises, or even community-building activities. It can be used to address different themes related to collaboration, culture, or personal experiences.

Impressions

The Digital Storytelling activity had a significant impact on participants. By collaborating on a shared theme, everyone felt connected and appreciated the power of teamwork. It was inspiring to see how different creative approaches came together, yet all focused on the same fundamental values of respect, love, and collectiveness.

Collaboration Challenges: Some groups faced difficulties in coordinating schedules and ideas, especially when combining different creative approaches.

Technical Issues: Some participants experienced challenges with editing software or filming techniques, which slowed down the process.



All the videos with the participant's permission are available on our YouTube channel, Instagram and Facebook page

The **outcome** of the activity was a collection of videos that successfully conveyed the theme of collectiveness. Each video told a unique story, showcasing how people can work together while respecting individual contributions. The group's creativity and effort were evident in the final videos, and the viewing day highlighted how well they had embraced the theme.

Self-governance preparation

By Jana & Asja

The self-governance preparation was born in the context of the Sharpen up project in which we experimented with sociocracy and its tools. This activity happened after the nomination of the main roles that would take care of organizing the meeting, facilitating and reporting them. It was the first time we as a group put into practice the tools learned from the sociocracy sessions with Rakesh.

Objectives

The first day of self-governance preparation had the aim of organizing the upcoming free day and the day of self-governance activities, with the purpose of doing it through the process we learned. We took our decision in a collective way, guided by the sociocratic approach. Another objective was to use our skills and challenge ourselves into roles and dynamics, that were new or developing. Throughout the activity, we had the chance to see how applying sociocracy can lead to an equal, horizontal and participatory decision-making process.

On the first day of self-governance preparation the meeting organizers started with organizing the meeting, collecting all the proposals to draw up the agenda that was then handed in to the facilitators, nominated by the group. Before starting, they had a meeting all together to share information and the timing plan.

To begin, the four facilitators alternatively exposed each proposal to the group, including travel details such as transportation, hours of departure and return, and information about the places. We started with three main proposals: Toulouse/Carcassonne, Solafrika with picnic and walk, Foix market and castle, to which was added another one after the request of Luca: full hiking day. After he shared the details about his idea with the rest of the group, the facilitators guided the group to the questions and answer moment in order to answer any request, better understand the participants' needs and adding the last details about every option.



The next step was the first round of consent, which ended with three consents with concern, analyzed afterward one by one and solved. The main concern was about transportation management, which could only be solved at the end of the decisional process.



Once the concerns were addressed, the facilitators proposed to divide in four groups, one per proposal so that those who were interested could discuss it. The groups ended up being very useful, and every person could have an idea on how to spend their free day. All together we decided to write our names on the blackboard under the proposal we wanted to choose before 7:00 PM. Once this step was done, we could manage to organize three cars and prepare to leave the next day for the hiking day, to Carcassonne and to Foix. Unfortunately, there was no time left to discuss Sunday's activities so we rescheduled the decision process to Saturday afternoon.

On the second day of self-governance preparation we gathered, and the facilitators proposed their ideas for the workshops and asked the whole group for their proposals. The proposals were being written down as they were said. Every participant was asked to vote for the workshops they would like to attend so that the proposals with no or very few participants would be eliminated. Then, each proposal was assigned a time frame. After it became obvious that they could both fit in the time available, the workshop facilitators were asked if they could (and were willing to) cut the time of the activity. It was also briefly consulted with the potential participants of each workshop. Later, the facilitators alone arranged a possible time schedule including the breaks. Some additional concerns about the times were expressed and solved. The group was asked for consent and concerns were addressed.

Debriefing

Overall, our first experience in putting into practice the sociocratic method was positive and productive. As participants, we felt the pressure and the stress that our facilitators were holding, but they worked together for the group and the result was excellent.

Alternatives

This kind of method can be used in daily life for group decisions and can be applied at any context that involves collectiveness.

Impression

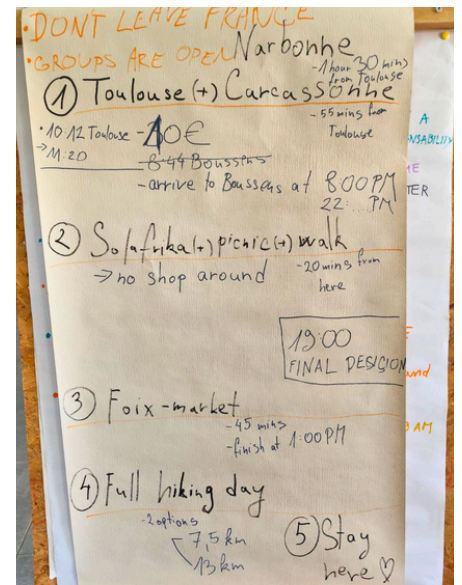
We alone managed to facilitate this activity. All concerns were addressed until there was unanimous consent. We realised that is a way of making every person feel heard and that they have equal power inside the group.

Difficulties

*It was a problem to fit the workshops into the time frame. Also, it was important to arrange enough breaks.

The outcome of the first self-governance preparation day was that with help from facilitators we were able to plan our free day - multiple trips to various destinations with different activities. Some were physically more demanding (like hiking) while some were suitable even for the less physically capable.

The outcome of the second one was that we planned 7 different workshops across our self-governance day. While everyone had to attend every workshop, active participation was voluntary.



Self-governance free day

By Ozberk, Mostafa & Marie

The Free Day activity was designed to give participants the opportunity to explore different locations, engage in unique experiences, and bond with their peers. It typically encourages participants to step out of their comfort zones, whether by exploring a new city, enjoying nature, or discovering local culture.

The context of this activity arose from the idea of offering freedom of choice while still being part of a group. This activity encouraged exploration, relaxation, physical challenges, and cultural immersion.

Learning Objectives: The primary goal was to engage in different types of activities (exploration, nature, culture) and reflect on how different environments shape one's experience.

Cooperation: In some cases, participants worked together in teams, which helped build stronger group dynamics and cooperation.

Personal Growth: By exploring new places and trying new activities (like hiking or exploring markets), participants challenged themselves and grew in different ways—physically, mentally, and emotionally.



Preparation

Participants are divided into groups, each assigned a different route or activity.

Groups were given brief itineraries, based on their preferences (culture, nature, relaxation, etc.).

Group Activities

Carcassonne Group: The group starts by traveling to Toulouse, and from there, they head to Carcassonne, spending significant time on the road.

Foix Group: This group explores Foix, visiting the local market, enjoying a relaxed picnic by the river, and visiting a nearby castle.



Hiking Group: The hiking group embarks on a physically challenging 10-kilometer hiking route.

Exploration

Each group experiences their chosen activity or location. The Carcassonne team explores the city, the Foix group enjoys a laid-back day surrounded by nature and local culture, and the hiking team connects with nature through physical exertion.

Reflection and Enjoyment

During the day, groups may reflect on their experiences, share thoughts, and enjoy the moments in the environment they are exploring.

Return and **Evaluation**

At the end of the day, groups return, share their experiences, and reflect on how the activities impacted them.

Group **Reflection**

Once everyone has returned, the participants gathered to discuss their activities. What did they enjoy most? What surprised them? How did the activities differ from their expectations?

Evaluation

Assess whether the goals of each group's activity were achieved, focusing on the experiences they had (physical, mental, and emotional).

At Home:

You can replicate parts of the Free Day experience by exploring nearby nature trails, visiting local markets, or taking a day trip to a neighboring town.

Other **Contexts**:

This format can be used for team-building in corporate settings, family outings, or group educational trips, where individuals get to choose how they engage with a place or activity.

The Free Day activity is a refreshing experience that gives participants a break from the structured activities. It allowed personal discovery and growth in different environments, whether through physical activity, cultural immersion, or simply enjoying nature.

Difficulties

Time Constraints: For the Carcassonne group, long travel time might have taken away from the exploration time, making the journey less enjoyable.

Physical Challenge

The hiking group may have found the physical exertion challenging, especially if they weren't accustomed to long hikes.

Coordination: In the Foix group, coordinating a picnic and visiting multiple sites (market, castle, river) in a relaxed day could be tricky if not properly planned.



Each group returned with a unique set of experiences. The Carcassonne group had a long but rewarding journey. The Foix group enjoyed a relaxed, culturally rich day. The hiking group completed a physically demanding challenge. The overall outcome was that participants had the freedom to choose their own paths, while still being part of a shared event, offering both personal and collective growth.

Self-governance workshops day

By Bryan & Nevra

On the second-to-last day of activities, we had a self-managed day, consisting of workshops that had been sociocratically chosen by all participants the day before and coordinated by the facilitators.



The day was preceded by Tim's workshop on **self-defense**, which took place the previous evening. During the session, various techniques from boxing, judo, and self-defense were demonstrated.



The actual day began with a play fight session facilitated by Luca, where some participants voluntarily engaged in friendly combat on mats in the activity room. Before each match, the participants agreed on mutual rules—such as no hitting the neck, etc. A match was won either by knocking the opponent down or by removing their sock within three minutes. At the end of each fight, participants shared their feelings and impressions from the encounter.



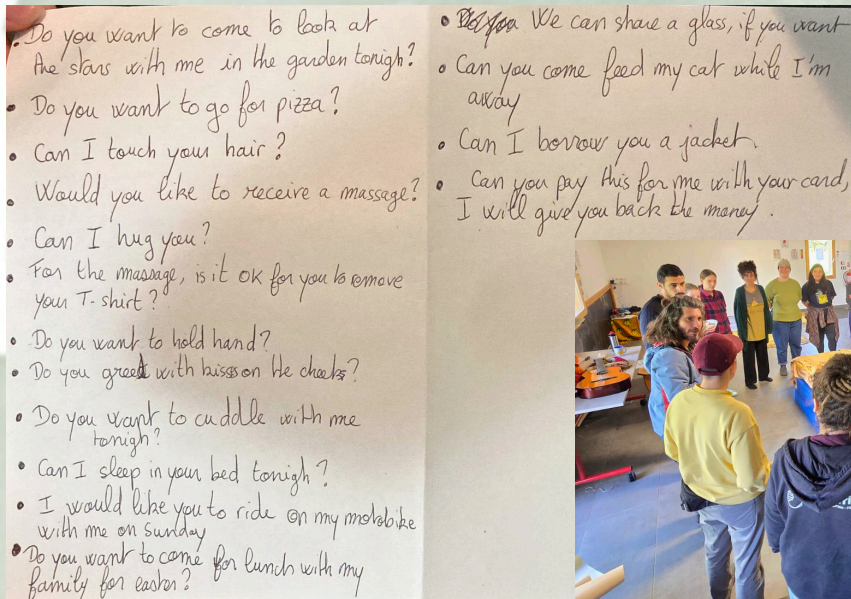
In the following hour, the **Climate Fresk** activity took place. It was a collective game in which we were split into two groups and asked to connect playing cards representing causes and effects of climate change through several increasingly challenging rounds. At the end, facilitator Marco revealed the solution to the game, leading to a broader group reflection on the topic.



After a short break, it was time for the **sketching** workshop led by Stela. She introduced the group to freehand drawing techniques for creating faces and bodies, including the use of a live model-in this case Bryan, who posed for the participants.



After lunch, the day continued with another workshop by Luca, along with Adelè and Freddy, focusing on **interpersonal consent** in relationships and physical contact. Through role-playing exercises and a sharing circle, the group explored this important theme, which sparked deep personal reflection among participants.



Next came the **calisthenics** session facilitated by Mostafa, who did an excellent job involving a large group in focused exercises such as push-ups, planks, body weight training, and balance work. By the end of the session, everyone was visibly tired but overall very happy.





The day concluded with Sergo's workshop on **active listening**. He showed a video and selected three volunteers to explain the content of what they had heard, highlighting how information can vary greatly from person to person. This led to a reflection on the role of media, the manipulation of information, and the importance of communication.



To wrap things up, all facilitators gathered in a final circle to share their feelings and reflections about the workshops and activities offered throughout the day.



Participants impression

This project was like a bright light in the dark that brought me back to myself. It was aligned to my self and the new knowledge that I could earn were enriching to the point that they'll affect my future and choices. Vesna and Adelè are the two people who made everything perfect! The activities of the first days have been the foundation to create the beautiful atmosphere and group dynamic that was formed and included each participant. During the whole course they've made us feel heard and cared of, making a big positive impact on everybody and keeping the balance when there were difficulties.

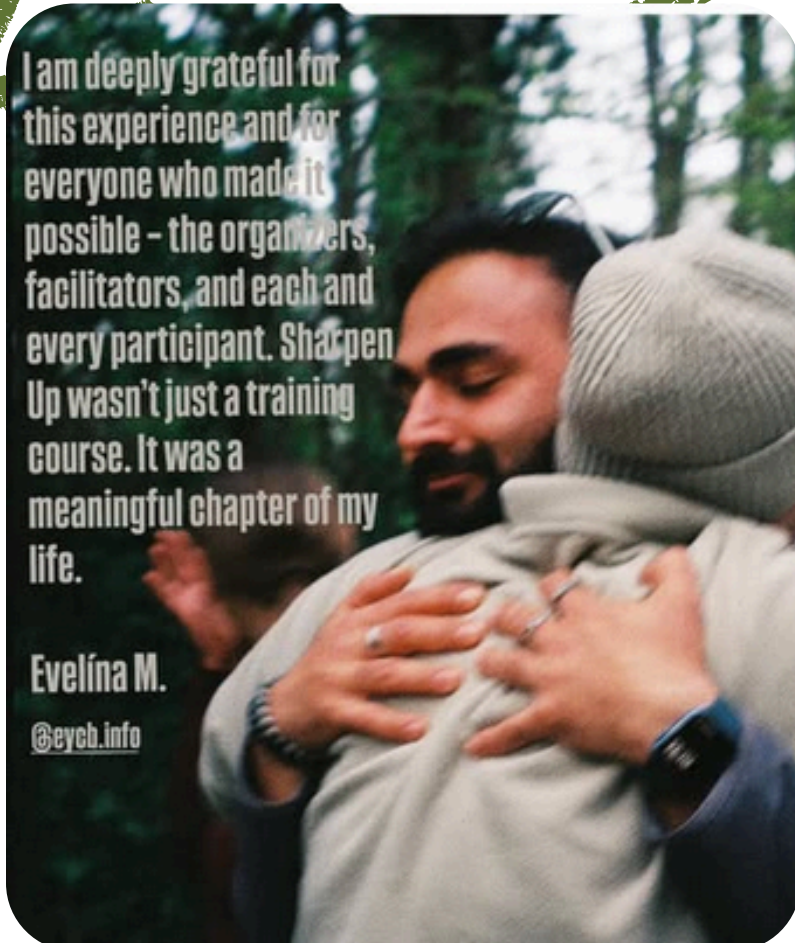
Overall, the project has been was of the most interesting experience that I had and showed me that a way to the collectiveness that I always wished for is possible! Rakesh sessions have been fundamental for this. I'm extremely grateful for this opportunity.

One of the best projects I have ever been to, although I say it each time, This environment and facilitation allowed me to be here my true self and learn a completely different skill in a safe environment without the fear of making mistakes.

The project was very professional, well designed and inspiring!

It was an unforgettable experience and one of my favorite.

The SHARPEN UP training course enhanced my confidence in public speaking, teamwork, and strategic thinking. It also inspired me to take more initiative in leading youth-centered projects and expanded my perspective on creative problem-solving.



I am deeply grateful for this experience and for everyone who made it possible - the organizers, facilitators, and each and every participant. Sharpen Up wasn't just a training course. It was a meaningful chapter of my life.

Evelina M.

@eyeb.info

SPECIAL THANKS TO

The participants

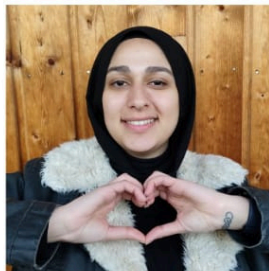
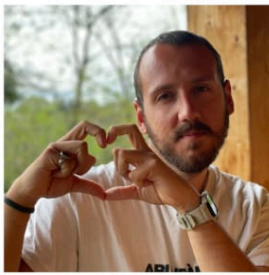


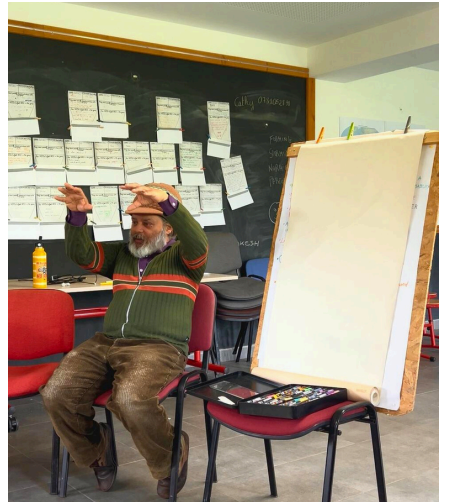
Nevra	Jana	Marco	Luca	Lia
Osman	Bryan	Ilknur	Dareen	Mustafa
Ahmad	Evelina	Stela	Friederike	Chien - Fu
Reem	Zbyszek	Maria	Asja	Ozberk
Jana	Patrycja	Betim	Sergey	+ Ronja ❤️

The facilitators



Rakesh
Adèl
Vesna
Djull





Sample Role Description for a Facilitator

Facilitator Role Description

Serves the group by putting their needs as the highest priority

Understands the needs of the group

Understands the purpose of each meeting

Upholds the groups working culture

Makes sure everyone's voice is heard

Sticks to the agenda points

Keeps the meeting on time

Facilitator skills

Sensitive and observant

Be timely (efficient)

Diplomatic

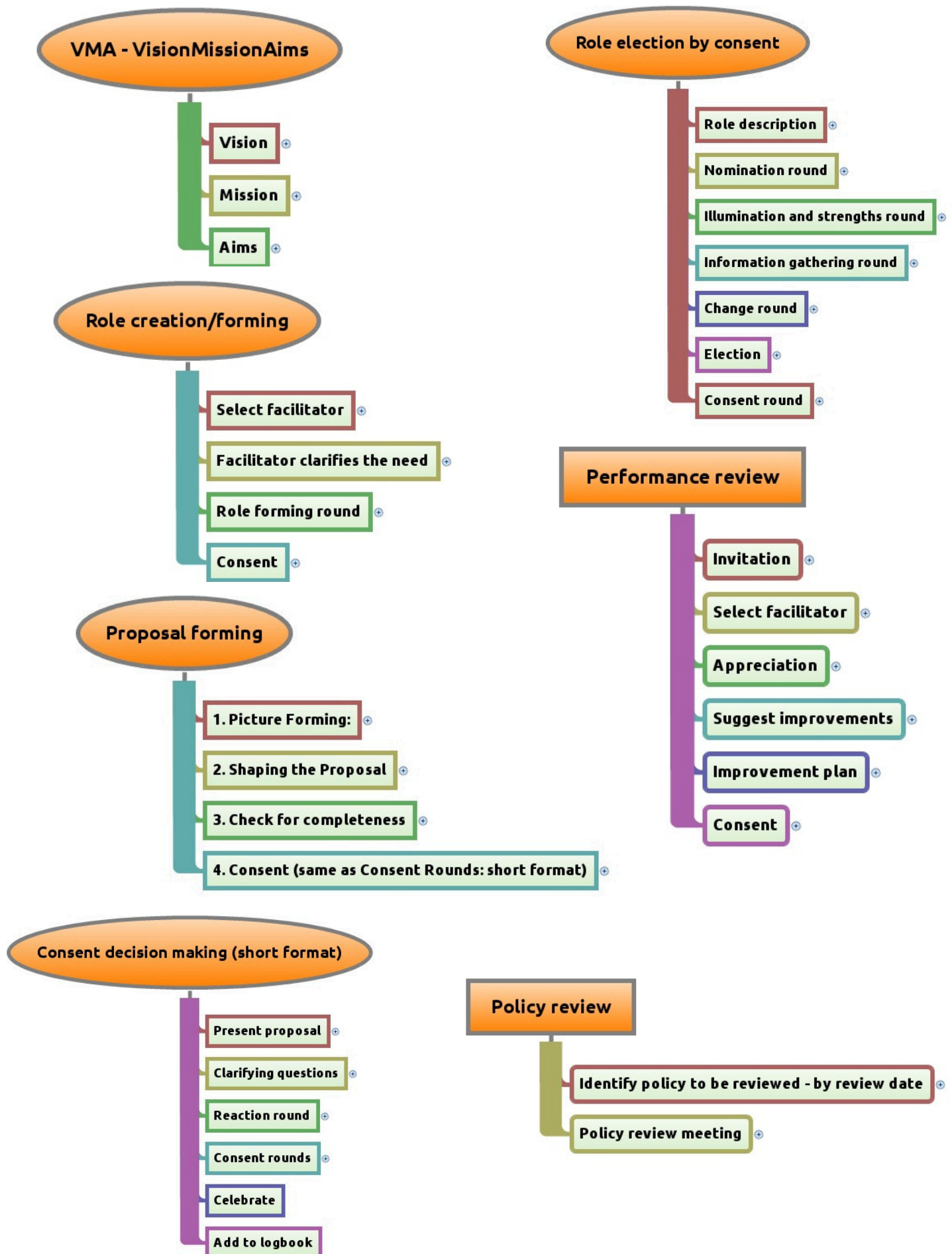
Good communicator

Good at summarizing

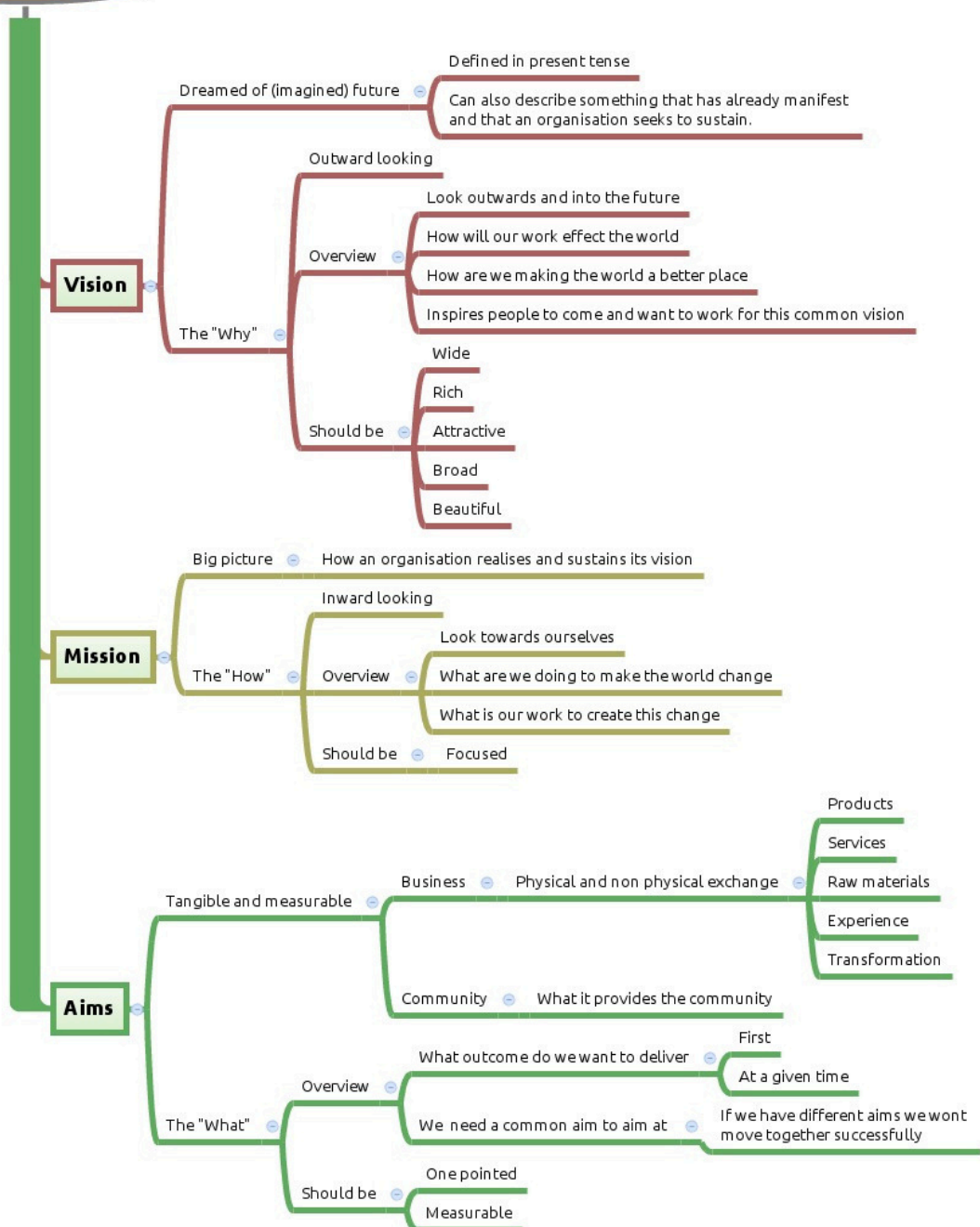
Be present

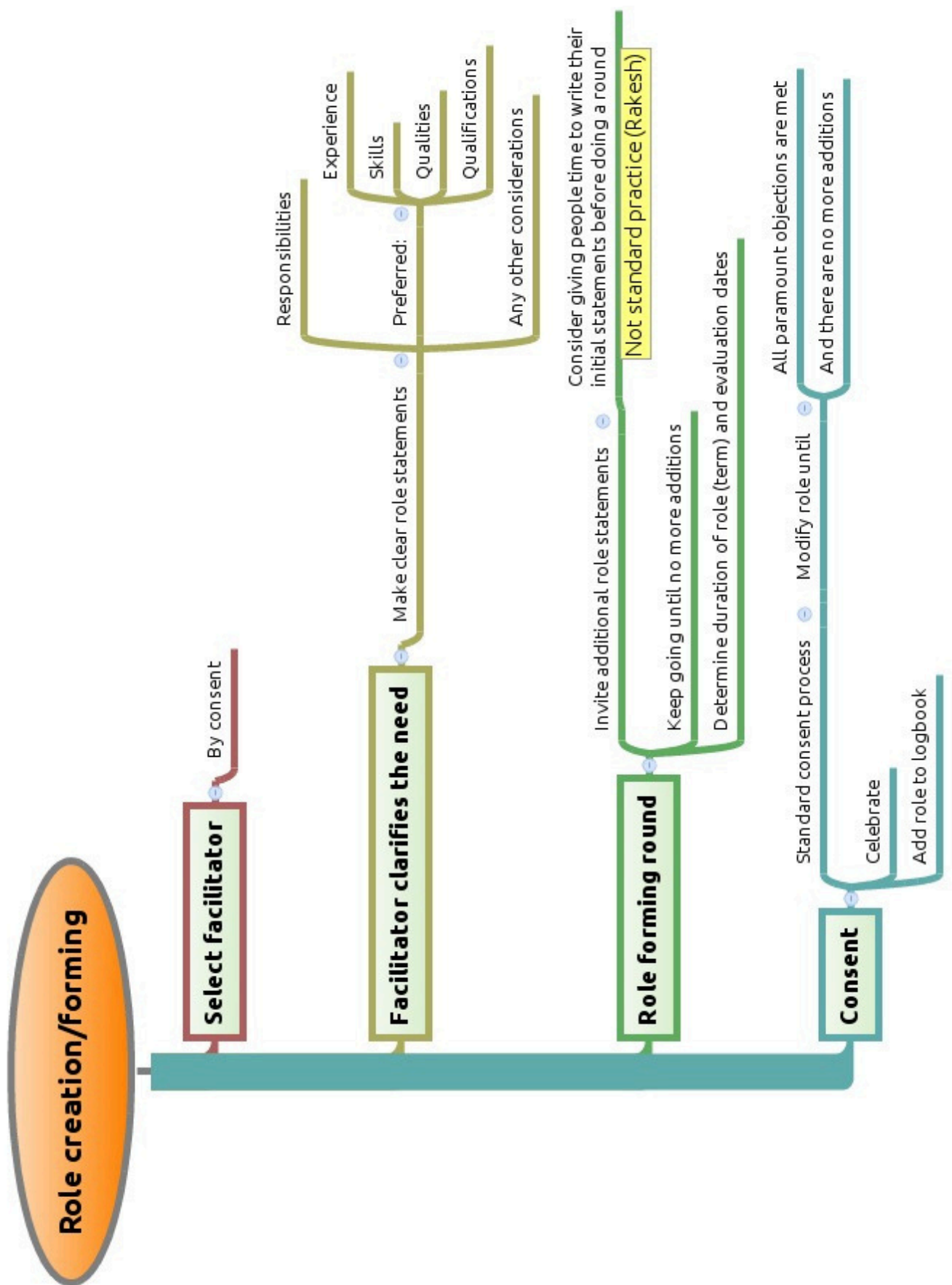
Firm but fair

Good set of facilitation tools



VMA - VisionMissionAims





Role election by consent

Role description

Present the role description

Responsibilities

Term (duration)

Desired

Experience

Skills

Qualities

Qualifications

Evaluation

Criteria

Procedure (How to evaluate)

Duration (How often to evaluate)

Nomination round

Nominate person for role

Secretly on paper

As this

Prevents people changing mind in the first round

So people get to hear all the strengths before changing mind

Can self nominate

Facilitator collects nominations or asks people to hold up their paper to indicate they have made a selection

Illumination and strengths round

Each person explains their nomination

Highlighting the strengths

Information gathering round

Info that is useful to make a decision

Person may be away for the duration of this role

A person may have a pertinent qualification

Consider

Allowing a nominee to say they do not want to be nominated

Not standard practice (Rakesh)

Comments

Questions

Change round

Ask if anyone wants to change nomination (based on insights gleaned from the first round)

Election

Facilitator proposes electee

Based on reason

i.e.

Ability to do job

Enthusiasm to do job

Availability

Not necessarily on number of votes

Though this could be a consideration

Could decide to elect more than one person

Could decide to create a new role

i.e.

A support role

A trainee role

Consent round

Ask if anyone objects

Ask the person being nominated last

Only note down if have a paramount or reasoned objection

Ask one by one what objection was

Ask how to modify the proposal

After each modification

Do another round asking for objections or concerns

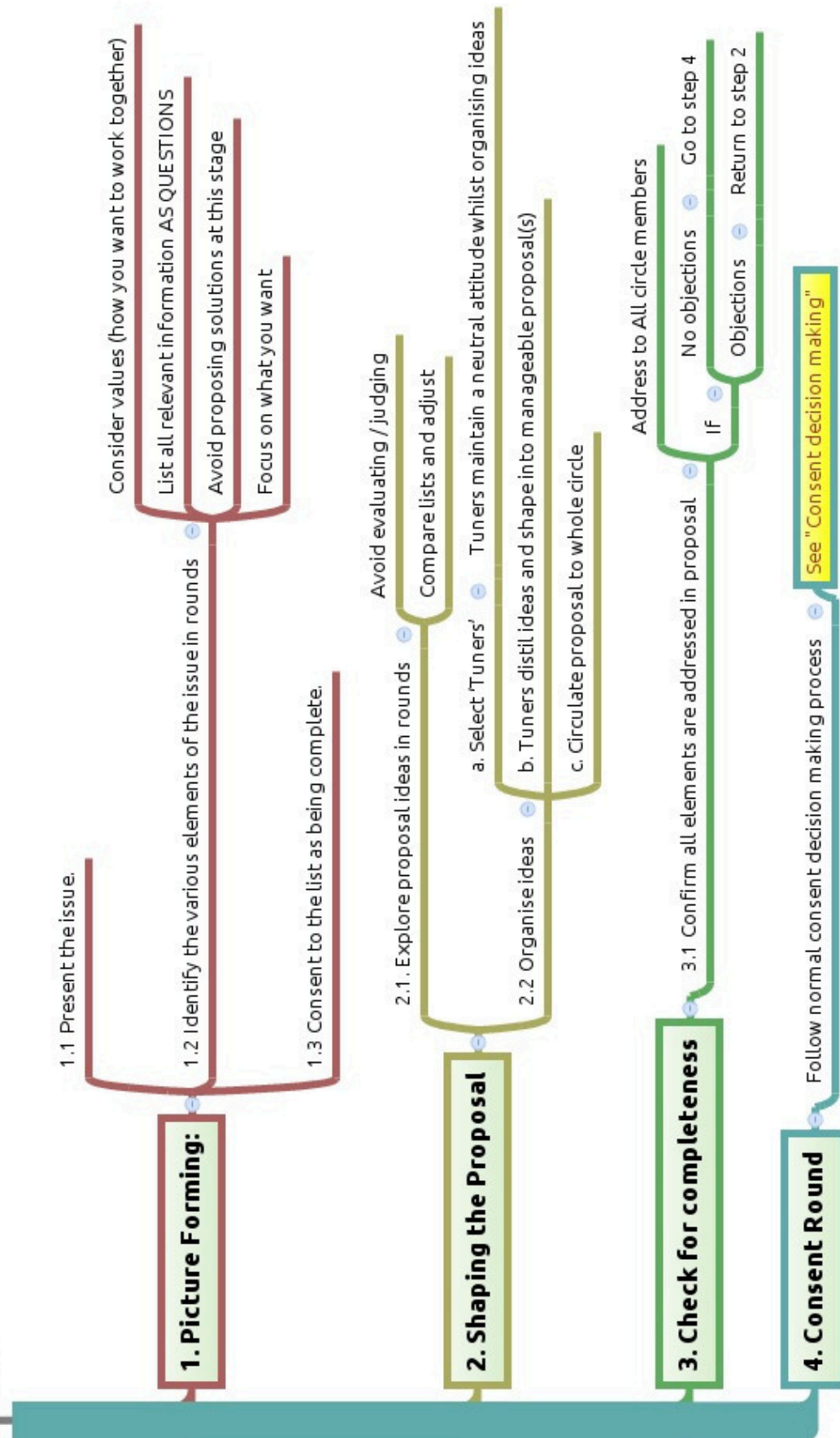
When no one has an objection

Celebrate

Add to logbook



Proposal forming



Consent decision making

Present proposal

See "Proposal forming" for more details on creating the proposal

Facilitator invites the proposer to clearly present their proposal

Clarifying questions

Invitation to ask questions to clarify anything you do not understand about the proposal

Proposer clarifies

Proposer may invite someone with greater wisdom to contribute

Not standard practice (Rakesh)

Integrate emergent wisdom at the end of the round

Not standard practice (Rakesh)

If proposal is modified

Proposer clearly restates new proposal at the end

Not standard practice (Rakesh)

Reaction round

Proposer/facilitator clearly restates the proposal

All circle members who are present give a very brief reaction to the proposal

Typically can be

1 to 5 words

or a sound

or an action

Possibly frame the question by asking "How does this proposal make you feel?"

Not standard practice (Rakesh)

Consent rounds

Proposer/facilitator clearly states the proposal

Facilitator asks each person for consent

No Objection (or consent)

Objection

Note down who objected

Consent with concerns

Note down who had concerns

If no objections

Announce Decision & Celebrate

Add to logbook

Ask those who objected to state the reason for their objection

Valid reasons to object

If the proposal conflicts with circle's aim.

If there is an obvious flaw

If an important aspect is missing

If there is a potential unexpected consequence of implementing the proposal

If the proposal impedes your ability to carry out your task

The facilitator amends proposal

How would you solve this

Brief Dialogue

2 or 3 people

Re-work

Send back to higher / lower circle

Offer back to proposee to review and revise

Form a temporary circle to

review,

research

revise

Free form dialogue

Objections are gift

Consider it an emergent wisdom that is seeking expression into consciousness

Maybe only one person realises a potential issue

Don't miss this wisdom

We need to capture this to make sure the system has the best chance of working

Integrate wisdom

Formulate amended proposal

Seek consent

If concerns

Facilitator decides if the concerns need to be heard or not

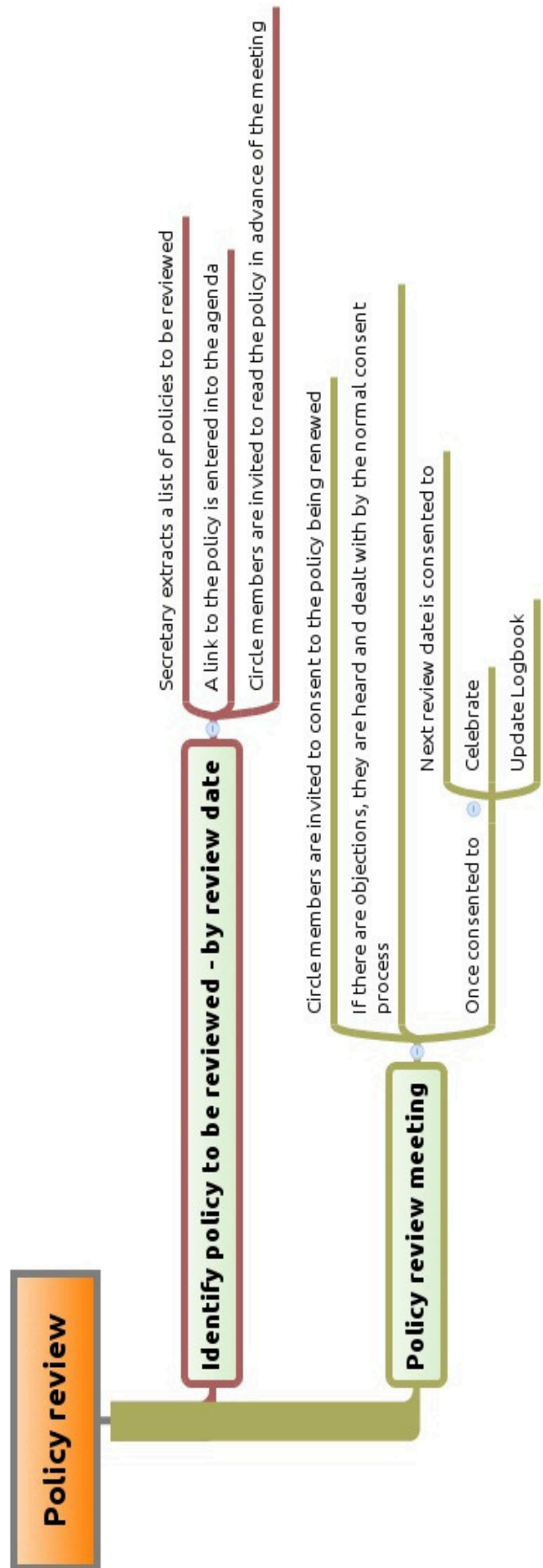
Often they are heard

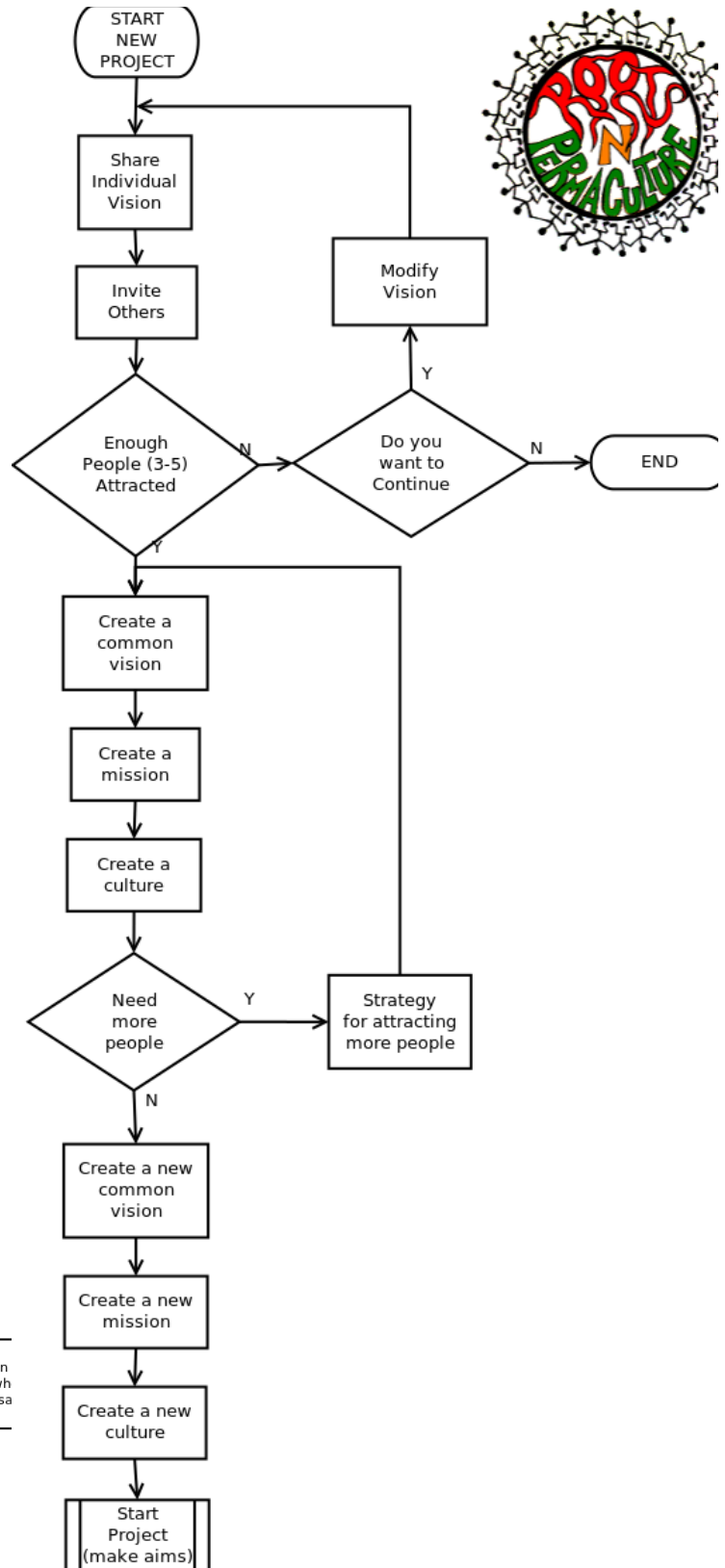
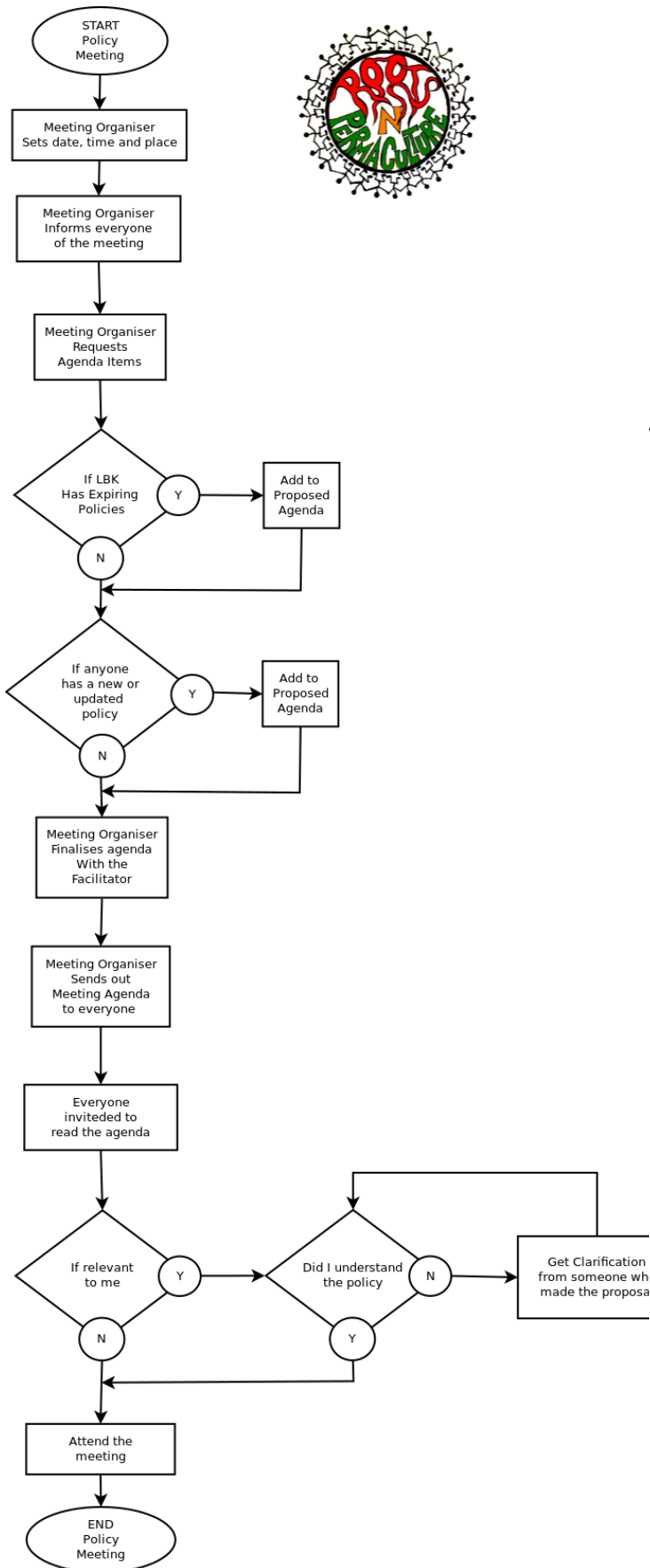
May not be heard if there is time pressure

Celebrate

Add to logbook







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[LINK TO RAKESH'S SOCIOCRACY WEBSITE](http://www.ecologicaldesigns.co.uk)