

ORGANIZING YOUR PEOPLE



OBJECTIVES

- Provide an opportunity to experience democratic process and cooperation by setting up a Steering Committee
- Provide an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and decision-making



TIME

- **90-120 minutes:** Be sure to reserve no less than 60 minutes for the full “Taking the Wheel” activity.
- **Add 15-20 minutes:** If beginning or ending your engagement with a group using this training, you will need to incorporate an opening and/or a closing session similar to those in “Beginning the Work” and “Bringing It All Together,” respectively. Refer to those sections for tips on how to introduce and close workshops.



PREPARATION

SUPPLIES

- Scrap Paper
- Pens & Pencils

MATERIALS

- Character & Cooperative Creation: Steward’s Guide
- Character & Cooperative Rolling Key
- Character & Cooperative Role Sheet
- Steering Committee Agenda

POSTERS

- Key Group Process Concepts



PREPARATION (continued)

ADAPTATIONS

- ◀ **Audience:** For this role play activity, you have the option to allow for participants to randomly create identities of different employment status and income level. You may elect to pre-determine certain identity aspects, rather than have participants randomly roll for them - e.g. if working with a student group, having each participant role play a character with their same education status.
 - ◀ Be aware that, through roleplay, some issues may come up regarding the level of awareness of your participants with regards to the functioning of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, etc. While this has the potential to create space for education, it can also make the space unsafe, and can derail the ultimate objectives of the role play. Reflect on what level of engagement you feel comfortable having with the dynamics of identity and prejudice as part of this activity - and, assess how much of that is engagement is possible while meeting the workshop objectives.

THE MEETING

After exploring in the previous workshop how group process operates in our lives on a daily basis, as well as how we build and lose trust in our interpersonal relationships - this section will introduce some explicit concepts and practices that can be useful in making group process more effective. A frequently occurring form of group process that takes place in cooperative entities is the meeting.

- 1. FRAME:** Riding the bus is a great way to illustrate the regularly occurring instances of group process in our lives. In every process like riding the bus, we are either gaining or building trust with other individuals. In cooperatives organizations, a meeting is a frequently occurring form of group process. In order to make meetings go a little smoother, some guidelines and practices have been made explicit so everyone is aware of and can abide by those shared standards.
- 2. PRESENT:** Some of the many important concepts for meetings within developing cooperative organizations that are important to learn and use are:

KEY GROUP PROCESS CONCEPTS

◀ FACILITATE

Generally, an act that makes a task easier for others; in the context of a meeting, making an experience more inclusive and effective through effective facilitation of the discussion/s inherent in spontaneous communication exchanges during a scheduled group meeting.¹

◀ QUORUM

The minimum number of relevant members who must be present at a noticed meeting for those members to conduct business (i.e. make decisions) in the name of the group.

→ E.g. - a majority of voting members, a supermajority of 65% of voting members

◀ DECISION-MAKING METHOD

The process by which a group determines an opinion or course of action.

→ **Voting** – everyone provides their vote and, typically, a decision is made if a pre-determined percentage of voters agree (e.g. 51%, 85%, majority, etc.

→ **Consensus** – everyone involved must be able to live with the final outcome of the decision.

¹ Seeds for Change, "A Consensus Handbook" 2013: Leeds, UK, p 220

- A. READ OUTLOUD:** Move through each of the above concepts, reading or asking others to read them outloud.
- B. SOLICIT STORIES:** To tie the concepts to folks' experiences,

query the group for instances when they or someone they knew used any of the included concepts.

⚡ If some of the concepts are not addressed by participant experiences, you can offer up your own or the following examples to elaborate:

3. PAIR SHARE: Ask participants to turn to the person next to them and respond to the following question -

4. ASK: What is the worst group process experience - formal or informal - that you've ever had?

5. CLOSE OUT: Pull pair share responses from the group - drawing out any themes or patterns in the experiences of participants. Share that the group will be moving into using some of the concepts in the next activity.

TAKING THE WHEEL

Using a fictional scenario with assigned roles, participants will role play as a group of people interested in starting a cooperative. Their task is to build trust in their group, institute group practices for how to work successfully as a group, and form a Steering Committee that is committed and accountable to continue the work of realizing the vision for the cooperative.

- 1. FRAME:** Share that the group will role play the process of forming a Steering Committee from a diverse group of people. It is imperative that we understand how power is structured in society so we can manage it in the groups that we create. Remind people to keep in mind the role of power in their group work by calling up what was learned through the “What’s Your Analysis” activity from “Beginning the Work.”
- 2. DEFINE:** Present the following definition of a Steering Committee, so the group understands the entity they are role playing -

◀ STEERING COMMITTEE

A body within a project or enterprise that supports the guiding of its work. Its main concern is the making of strategic decisions concerning the future realization of the project or enterprise.¹

¹ Seeds for Change, “A Consensus Handbook” 2013: Leeds, UK, p 220

- 3. SHARE GOALS:** Set out the goals for the activity:
 - » Decide how to decide (i.e. pick a decision-making method)
 - » Identify the needs of the people involved
 - » Identify the capacity of the people involved
 - » Built trust within your group
- 4. SOLICIT VOLUNTEER(S):** Ask for one volunteer for every five people in the group who is willing to serve as the “Steward” and guide a small group through a dice rolling process to determine each person’s role and the type of cooperative start-up they will be role playing. If any participants have experience playing tabletop Role Playing Games (RPGs - e.g. Dungeons & Dragons), the task will be familiar to them.
 - A. REVIEW CHARACTER & COOPERATIVE: STEWARD’S GUIDE:** As the group is discussing the following question in pairs, move through the guide with the volunteers as a group, ensuring comprehension of what it asks of them.

- 5. ASK (for discussion while Steward’s are gathered):** What is the best group process experience - formal or informal - that you’ve ever had?

- 6. FORM SMALL GROUPS:** Create groups of five (or fewer).
 - A. DISTRIBUTE CHARACTER & COOPERATIVE ROLE SHEET:** Give the worksheet to all participants and ask them to read it through while the “Stewards” get set-up.
 - B. DISTRIBUTE DICE:** Give a die or set of dice to each “Stewards.”
 - C. ASSIGN “STEWARDS:”** Match up each small group with a “Steward.”
- 7. PASS LEADERSHIP:** Once the groups are coordinated, pass leadership off to the “Stewards” to walk through the Character and Cooperative creation process laid out in the Steward’s Guide.
- 8. MONITOR ACTIVITY:** As participants are creating their characters and cooperatives, move around the room to answer any questions that may arise.
- 9. BRING THE GROUP BACK:** As participants finish up the character and cooperative creation process, bring their attention back to you.
- 10. REFORM SMALL GROUPS:** Direct participants to regroup as they were before, and hand off leadership to the Facilitator in each group identified in the character and cooperative creation process.
- 11. MONITOR ACTIVITY & PROVIDE TIMECHECKS:** Listen in and provide input if requested during the activity time. Additionally, provide “time checks” - let groups know how much time has passed and how much time remains to assist folks in following their agenda in order to meet the group’s goals.
- 12. PREPARE FOR PRESENTATIONS:** Let folks know at this point that they will need to decide, using their agreed upon group process practices, how to present the following information to the larger group in 5 minutes or less:
 - Who are the people, generally, involved in your cooperative

endeavor?

- What kind of cooperative solution are you pursuing?
- Anything exciting or notable to share?

13. BRING GROUP BACK TOGETHER: Check in with groups to determine group progress. Groups that haven't finished should be encouraged to wrap up their conversation and to decide which agenda items or issues they will need to address in a future meeting

14. LEAD PRESENTATIONS: Lead the small groups through their presentations, providing time checks, as needed.

15. DISCUSS: When you call the group together after time has elapsed or all groups have completed their agenda items, guide a large group discussion using the following prompts -

DESCRIBE: *Was the process easy for you? Hard for you?*

REFLECT: *Did anything surprise you about the process?*

INTERPRET: *Did you feel you accomplished the goals?*

APPLY: *What might you have done differently? Why?*

