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# GENERALITY UDN

# THE BASIS OF OUR ACTION AND OUR PURPOSE

Among hundreds of other cooperative organisations emerging today, Transition Network meets the challenge of an efficient and harmonious 'working together'. It is based on listening and self-helping skills of each individual in an environment where competition is quite significant.

On the way, questions emerge: how to thoroughly understand each other and decide together for the benefit of all concerned? How to trust each other, share our enthusiasm? How to stay in touch in difficult circumstances? These questions highlight genuine obstacles and inner limits within each individual part of an organisation.

Our experience over the past 6 years leads us to consider new governance models and their associated tools. These new models invite us to look into what happens between 'I' and 'We', so as to make progress on the way towards cooperation.

Even more important than full comprehension, the inner feeling is the key. There is a link between personal and organisational transformation - one mirroring the other.

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them".

This Einstein quote is very inspiring to us. The heart of the proposal offered by UdN to us is a way of thinking 'outside the box'. We reinvent what is at the center of organisations and the source of many problems : the governance model and the interactions of individuals who make up the organisation.

## OUR PURPOSE

Université du Nous (UdN) was created in 2010 to support societal transformation by promoting the emergence of new organisational models. It provides to individuals, organisations and groups, space for experimentation and learning, and support to explore and implement other ways of 'working together'

Today, UdN is composed of an association that :

- brings seminar experience to individuals
- provides space for cooperation practices
- capitalises on 'working together' for the common good

UdN is also composed of a cooperative that accompanies 'We' groups (various organisations, diverse in nature), in their 'working together'.

Both the association and the cooperative are constantly interacting and gaining from each other's experiences.

We are functioning in an ever-evolving governance model. This model originates from sociocratic and holacratic processes. We have been trained with these key processes and regularly use them. Today, we are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of shared governance and our experience gives us the knowledge to implement it.

Since 2010, we have facilitated some 50 seminars 'Ateliers du Nous - Together Workshops' and about 80 accompaniments for organisations (such as companies, associations, NGOs, cohousing communities). Feedback demonstrates that UdN brings hope and inspires by its way of being and by its way of working.

Today, we are delighted about the possibility of transmitting to and continuing our apprenticeship along with an internationally influential organisation, which has built an organic identity just like us. In this partnership opening to us, we can see a mutual expansion for both structures, and we really look forward to it.

As a team to respond to your request we are 6 people including 3 from TN Belgium, in addition to Guillaume who was involved in Transition France. We believe that we have considerable resources to understand TN issues and challenges. Moreover, UdN accompanies several Transition Structures (Colibris, Transition Belgium, Collectif pour un Transition Citoyenne) and key stakeholders of the Reconomy and from NGO's in France (Enercoop, Emmaüs, Make Sense, Disco Soup). We are used to working with virtual tools such as teleconferencing and shared documents.

# OUR ACCOMPANIMENT

« To accompany, it is to trust the other in his capacity to find his own way. It is to accept his rhythm as the right one for him at a particular point in time. It is to give up any prior conceptions about him. To accompany, it is to open up to his world. It is to acknowledge there are as many different ways as there are individuals. It is to take the risk of facing the ways of others. It is to be alongside and not in front of, to be with and not over. To accompany is a commitment and a responsibility, a position and a journey. »

The purposes of the proposed accompaniment model are:

- Create neutral and friendly spaces for exploration;
- Highlight invisible processes that govern our interactions;
- Capitalize on diversity of experiences and on existing tools;
- Allow surprises, think outside the box, explore new ways, via experimentation of shared governance.

## SPECIFICS OF OUR ACCOMPANIMENT

### An Interactive Guidance

In accompanying an organisation in its 'working together', we let it go its own way and facilitate the emergence of its need, while providing it with advice and sustaining it with feedback and best practice.



In this way, the accompaniment that we offer evolves with each step within the established framework. In contrast to a turnkey methodology, we develop the TN structuring progression along with you as an interactive process. Naturally, we provide advice and feedback for you to test and implement by using various tools (from sociocracy, holacracy or other disciplines such as theatre, martial arts, story-telling, dance...) so you can find solutions in-house to solve emerging problems. In cooperation with individuals of the organisation, interventions are adapted in real time as required.

### Making the Most of the Learning Experience



The accompaniment emphasizes real-time experimentation of actual organisational issues, explored during workshops. These workshops typically last between one and three days. They highlight the principals of cooperation and shared governance. They also highlight the areas of competition or conflict which are inherent within any organisation, and employ methods to replace this competition with cooperation.

The combination of experimentation, learning and relying on experience is balanced out during the Workshops.

For us, the journey is just as important as the result : there are processes or interventions we use can highlight the position of each individual, but also what may hinder or what may drive cooperation. These processes or interventions can help to make decisions and to develop the structure.

### Heart, Body and Mind

We consider each individual person within his different complementary dimensions :



The Heart : the openness of the heart is experienced through thoughtful communication and genuine interaction.

The Body : various sensorial activities using the body serve to support and enhance the 'working together' learning process by the body.

The Mind : the mind is filled with experience analysis and learning material about cooperation mechanisms.

Our accompanying model intends to explore multiple forms of interactions with our senses and emotions through artistic disciplines (play, dance, music...).

### Hum Hum Hum



This is one of the pillars of the frame of mind we intend to embody at every moment on the journey. We try to maintain a friendly atmosphere while carrying out this important work. 3 words with the same first letters guide us:

- Humour ... to bring lightness
- Humility ... to remain modest
- Humanity ... to accept our strengths and weaknesses

# KEY ELEMENTS OF ACCOMPANIMENT

## A SAFETY AGREEMENT

An agreed relations framework is put forth at the beginning of the accompaniment by UdN and TN. Its function is to be a common pedestal of values which facilitate working through any adverse situation arising at the time of the accompaniment, including potential tensions between individuals or groups.

The framework advances 3 basic notions:

- Respect – No one person is always right and each is entitled to a point of view
- Responsibility – Each person is to be accountable for his or her actions
- Confidentiality – Everyone is entitled to their personal affairs being maintained private

Each person involved in the Accompaniment is to support the framework.

The framework itself may evolve or be modified with agreement throughout the course of the Accompaniment.

## A CIRCLE OF GOVERNANCE OF THE ACCOMPANIMENT

A Circle of Governance is open between the UdN and TN at the beginning of the Accompaniment. It is made up of 1 to 4 persons of the TN team, and 1 or 2 persons of the UdN team. In this circle, we can:

- Open and close the different accompanying phases;
- Evaluate the work done so far, adjust and built the next steps;
- Decide upon wealth exchange between parties (see “Conscience Contract”)
- Regulate potential tensions between partners.

The governance circle is therefore a confidential place to share information about the partnership and to take care of the common work quality. It meets at the end of each phase or alternatively can be convened upon request.

## THE COMMON GOOD: OPEN SOURCE

UdN has chosen Creative Commons Licence for all its material since 2013.

We chose  universite-du-nous

- To share knowledge freely and wisely
- To allow business development
- To benefit from improvements introduced by others and to encourage the sharing of tools

# THE AWARENESS CONTRACT

The awareness contract is our way of exchanging wealth within the framework of a sharing that is seen like a real partnership. It's part of the UdN's experience in contributing to the emergence of new, life related management models.

## INTENTIONS

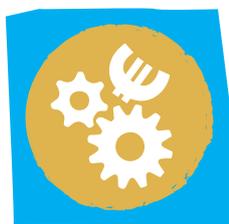
At the heart of UDN's triple intention

- Offer the most favourable conditions for accompanying organisations,
- Offer a path of individual and collective transformation,
- Look to its operational and development needs,

The awareness Contract activates questions regarding our relationship to money and the way we accompany people in their learning process.

Concretely, the accompanied organization recognizes the richness of the sharing process and contributes to UdN's sustainability with awareness, evaluating each phase of accompaniment according to its value in euros.

## METHOD



According to the awareness contract, the value of the contribution is decided at the end of each phase on the basis of a statement provided by the UdN enumerating the number of hours that have been worked. This is met with a proposal from the organisation that has received the service, followed by consideration and approval (0 objections) by the governance circle, which includes 2 UdN members.

Logistical costs (travel, food, training equipment and accommodation where applicable) are invoiced prior to this service appraisal. These costs are detailed by the UdN as soon as the complete timetable has been established after the initial phase of correspondence.

## THE MANAGEMENT OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

In order to oversee the optimal sharing of skills and knowledge, a special body is created for the two structures straight from the start of the process. This body is made up of 2 to 4 persons from the receiving structure and 2 UdN members.

This circle subsequently becomes the governing body that oversees the partnership of "giver" and "receiver". Its role is to:

- Co-evaluate the work carried out and to adjust and co-build a step-by-step accompaniment accordingly.
- Agree on the activity agenda.
- To consult regarding the exchange of wealth between the two organizations (the awareness contract)
- To regulate any potential tensions between the partners.

In this way, this body allows for a sharing and exchange that will ensure the quality of the shared work and the overall quality of the partner relationship. Members agree that the process for speaking and decision-making is one of management by consent.

The circle is governed by a security framework that is validated by consent management for both parties.

If one of the two organizations wishes to put an end to the collective work in progress, the shared governance meets to hear the reasons for the breach of contract from the concerned party as well as the reflections and/or feelings experienced by the other members. The decision concerning the course of action in such circumstances remains subject to a decision obtained through the consent management process.

This framework will be the subject of a precise explanation from the UDN to all of the participants and validation by the circle through a consent management process.

The governing body meets at the opening and closing of the activity and can be called upon by one of the two structures once the activity is in progress if necessary.

FROM I TO US

## WHAT EXACTLY IS AN «US»?

- It is a set of «I»s gathered around a common goal.
- They share common values, culture and tools.
- Together they maintain meaningful links and relationships.
- An «Us» is a set of individuals, each autonomous, independent and different.



## NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF AN «US»

- Elements of the system do not exercise control over one another;
- The system requires an external source of energy to set it in motion (project, cause, vision, meaning...)

## LIFE OF «US»: GROUP STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

### 1 A PSEUDO-«US»

Newly constituted group (set of people who do not know each other)



#### \*Group dynamics

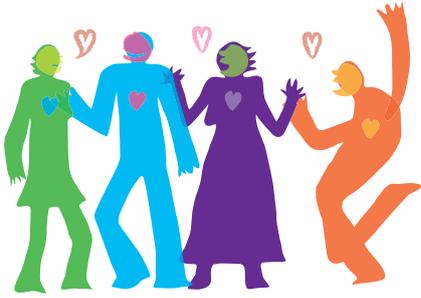
- Individual and collective anxiety
- Withdrawal, silence, abundant and untimely speech
- Attempt to create an organisation

#### \*Effects on accountabilities and risks

- Group has no other purpose but itself
- Phase of uncertainty about our place within the group, about the other members' identity, about the reasons and objectives behind all this: each person positions him/herself.
- Action inhibition.
- Energy mobilised to set up an agreement (anxiety decreases).

## 2 A SYMBIOTIC «US»

There is a strong need for compliance and equality. Everyone strives for acceptance.



### \*Group dynamics

- Consensus
- Unanimity
- Differences are denied
- Collective attempt to avoid the perceived risk of having to change oneself

### \*Effects on accountabilities and risks

- After anxiety, relief prevails.
- No real interest for the task.
- Energy is mobilised for the group's development.
- Group is poorly productive and poorly creative (group delusion).
- Departure, absence, delay of those who have trouble integrating.

## 3 A CONFLICTING «US»

There is a need to be different, to stand out, and an attempt to be identified by contrast.



### \*Group dynamics

- Need for internal structuring and organisation.
- Rivalries, competing for power and leadership.
- Leaders protect their borders.

### \*Effects on accountabilities and risks

- Arguments and confrontations can slow down the task.
- Clans are formed.
- On the other hand, original ideas come to life.
- The energy comes back when it is mobilised towards a task

## 4 A MATURE «US»

Participants are reassured and recognised, acting and relying on themselves.



### \*Group dynamics

- Expressions of feeling, opinion and belief.
- Awareness of different frameworks.
- Group dynamics analysis, meta-level-communication.
- No threat (non-judgement).

### \*Effects on accountabilities and risks

- Giving attention to the group's operating mode.
- Improvement of balance that allows the emergence of team spirit and solidarity.
- Action, shared values.
- Energy mobilised over task and objectives.

## 5 THE TEAM

«A space where people are in direct relationship, where tasks and roles are distributed by consent and where all members work together towards a common and clear goal.»



### • Characteristics

At the intersection of a desire for proximity (attachment, empathy, communication, identification) and a desire for efficiency: need to act, to be effective.

### • Direct communication

- No manipulation, no psychological games.
- Self-awareness and awareness of others.
- Ability to regulate oneself (meta communication \*)

### • Solidarity

- Mutual trust.
- Differences are seen as team's wealth.
- Open to criticism.

### • Individual commitments

- Satisfying one's individual interests in pursuit of a collective goal.

### • Focusing on the task

- Cooperative atmosphere.
- Organisation.
- Choosing an appropriate structure.
- Distributing accountabilities.
- Assigning roles.

\* Meta Communication: Communicating about the way we communicate

## ORGANISATIONS LIVE AT TWO LEVELS

### ■ Formal structure: result oriented

- Governance
- Agreements and rules
- Technical resources
- Financial resources

### ■ Informal process: process oriented

- Group phenomena (group dynamics)
- Interconnections
- Personal projects
- Conflicts



A working group is constantly tackling these two interrelated aspects. Being aware of these two levels (task and human-oriented) enables developing synergy, and actual group performance.

# CIRCLE PRACTICE

## WHY WORK IN A CIRCLE?

### A CIRCLE ALLOWS US

- To develop cooperative and collaborative spaces rather than competitive ones.
- To promote listening, dialogue and creativity.
- To co-create decisions and projects through a process that is conducive to the development of collective intelligence.

### WORKING IN A CIRCLE

- Focuses attention on co-production and co-creation, fosters conditions for the involvement of every person.
- Encourages free movement of ideas, facilitates knowledge sharing, boosts experience, improves involvement and strongly reinforces links between co-players.
- Opens up a space for personal transformation based, among others, upon the development of trust in self, others, and process. Every ego present in a Circle is faced with limits and challenges, whilst having the opportunity to be in the ideal situation to directly experience the change we wish to see in the world. Each individual, recognised as similar and different, singular and plural, is invited to put energy into serving the organisation with which he/she shares mutual values. Individual contributions are then valued as serving the common good.

## CIRCLE OPERATING PRINCIPLES

### AGREEMENTS

Circle agreements constitute a structured and safe environment in which everyone can freely express him or herself. The agreement isn't rigid. It is validated and opposable by everyone. It may evolve and change as needs emerge from Circle reflection and experience.

### SPACE

Meeting in a circle allows each participant to occupy a similar position (non-hierarchical) and to share the initiative. Participants sit around a centre. Tables are only useful if you need to write. A candle, or any other element, can be put in the centre, symbolising a workspace where particular listening and communication attitudes are required.



### A RITUAL

At the Université du Nous we use several chosen rituals to symbolise particular meanings. Putting a candle in the centre of a circle is a good example. This candle is a reminder, an invitation for everyone to connect with his or her higher self in order to cooperate with the group, to support the facilitator and to serve the purpose. This candle reminds us, as we put it, that «we have no other opponent but ourselves» and that «our ego hides where we least expect to find it.» It invites us to connect ourselves with the best part of ourselves. Above all, our rituals aren't meant to be dogmatic. Each group is encouraged to create its own rituals, thereby giving a structure to its "doing" by symbolising shared values.

# CIRCLE MEMBERS

To ensure an efficient work space, it is essential that a Circle adopts a facilitator and a secretary for its meetings.



## A FACILITATOR

Is elected through the consent process

**Ensures that the circle complies with the governance rules and the operational process that have been adopted by the organisation.**

- Prepares the meeting with the secretary; opens and closes the meeting.
- Helps meetings to move forwards by ensuring compliance with the process
- Provides a rhythm for the meeting, helps keep exchanges fluid and ensures that everyone is given the chance to speak.
- Refocuses the dialogue.
- Reassesses the way in which we come back to the base line energy of the proceedings, aware of the purpose and the here and now.
- Avoids «out-of-process» discussions and comments.
- Guarantees a neutral and diplomatic attitude.



## A SECRETARY

Is elected through the consent process

**Strengthens the Circle's internal governance by ensuring compliance with record keeping maintenance.**

- Ensures the good organisation of the Circle meetings. The date, timetable and location of the meeting is communicated to the Circle members in advance of the meeting.
- Prepares meetings with the Facilitator.
- Enforces the Circle rule and is the record keeper.
- Is the Time keeper.
- Drafts a record of all decisions taken in the circle meetings.
- Drafts reports, archives them and sends them to members.
- Updates circle governance using the appropriate tools.
- Is an Arbitrator in the case of disputes regarding differing interpretations of governance.
- Supports facilitation when the facilitator is either unable to do so (e.g. an illness) or has taken on a member role.



## MEMBERS OF THE CIRCLE

- Serve the shared activity.
- They try to respect the circle rules and maintain a cooperative attitude with the facilitator and the secretary by participating in the most appropriate way to ensure the success of the meeting.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD POSTURE

We often expect or at least hope that our work tools will provide the miraculous problem solving solutions that we're looking for. Our practice and experience has led us to observe that the work tools can't provide all the answers to our problems, but they do provide indicators concerning the latent difficulties that lie within our groups or organisations.

The decision-making process and the collective intelligence methods that we are trying out have helped bring to light some observations that aren't usually expressed within organisations. It is therefore not only important to focus on the technical mastery of the processes but also the attitudes of the people that use them.

An attitude of cooperation and a good posture calls for an optimal contribution from each one of us, while openly raising questions such as : What's the best that I can give of myself? In pursuit of our common mission, for this subject, for this meeting...?

An invitation to each one of us to do our best to improve our individual attitudes is, according to our experience, one of the key elements of a group's ability to grow, strengthen, and ensure its sustainability. Voluntary individual efforts in this direction take a group to higher grounds, just as collective awareness-raising is a catalyst that invites individuals to engage in personal enquiry.



## Elements that will help us get there during circle practice

- Focus on the subject matter,
- Speak clearly and simply,
- Express the most useful information for the group,
- Favour the most authentic communication possible,
- Take personal responsibility for what is expressed during rounds where we are invited to share our opinions or comments.

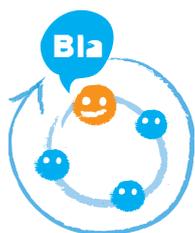
## We can embody this attitude:

- As members of the circle
- As a facilitator / secretary

Throughout our documents you will find suggestions on how to foster a cooperative attitude and communication style within the various proposed processes.

# ASSIGNING ONE'S TURN TO SPEAK

The facilitator assigns the order in which people take turns to speak. The turns can flow around the circle or be "open" for a spontaneous taking of one's turn ("popcorn").



## DURING A TURN OF SPEECH AROUND THE CIRCLE

- Speech turns in a clockwise direction.
- Each participant speaks in turn.
- If a participant has nothing to say or isn't ready to speak, he/she may pass his/her turn. An opportunity to speak will be given to him/her at the end of the round.



## DURING AN OPEN TURN ("POPCORN")

- The opportunity to speak is given to everyone whenever he/she desires to do it.
- When a participant speaks, he/she addresses his words to the centre of the circle.
- The participant will let the others know he/she has finished by saying something like «I'm done» or «I've finished saying what I wanted to say,» etc.
- Another participant can then take their turn to speak if they so desire.



## POINTING OUT THE END OF ONE'S SPEECH

Finishing one's speech with a phrase such as «I'm done» lets everyone know that the opportunity to speak is placed back in the centre so it's available for the following person. This can also punctuate the end of a given idea, helping to avoid an un-ending "adding on" of other needless arguments that support that idea.

# COMMUNICATION IN A CIRCLE



## LISTENING

In a circle, participants often spend more time listening than talking. During the exchanges, each person strives to practice active listening, through questioning and reformulation, either to better understand the other participants or to help them deepen their thinking. In this way we avoid a more inductive way of asking questions.



## SPEAKING OUT

### SPEAK FROM ONESELF AND OF ONESELF

-The YOU kills! Each participant in the circle talks about him/herself and how he/she feels about things and about others. Each person expresses their feelings or reactions with no or as little judgment as possible.

-Each person talks about their direct experience, feelings, emotions and reactions, avoiding any projections or interpretations. When I am overtaken by a strong emotion, I can say so and then take the time to consider my response rather than express a knee-jerk reaction.

### SPEAKING TO THE GROUP AND NOT TO SOMEONE IN PARTICULAR

When we speak out in a circle, we give our words to the group to enrich discussion and its' reflection. This means we put this speech into the centre of the circle without giving it to any particular participant.

By not answering to anyone in particular, we avoid endless debates and sterile oppositions.

## SPEAKING WITH CLARITY AND AWARENESS

- Everyone tries to be clear and to speak in the simplest possible way.
  - Speech should be concise and to the point, so it doesn't monopolise the work space.
  - Participants avoid talking too much, talking out of turn, and repetition.
  - The purpose is rooted in personal reality. What is said is recognised as being one perspective and not the absolute truth. Each person gives their points of view, beliefs and doubts. This enables the others to understand and integrate him/her into the group, enriching the circle with their vision or their singular contribution.
  - Sometimes, It may be necessary to take the time to breathe, to feel and to step back before speaking.
- Circle participants won't hesitate to allow a moment of silence in support of one's expression. Everyone takes care to stay centred, and as detached as possible from their emotions and ego.



## ATTITUDES AND SKILLS THAT CAN BE DEVELOPED

### BEING ACTIVE RATHER THAN REACTIVE

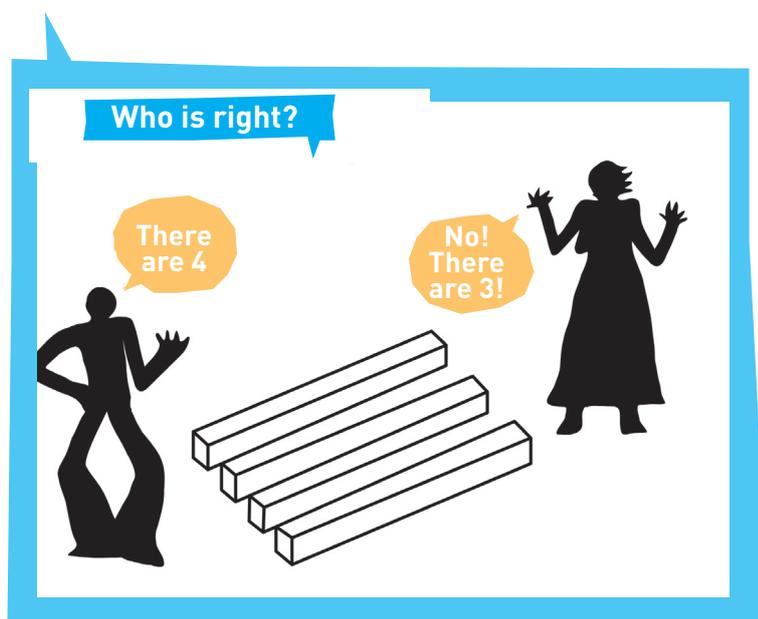
- An active participant takes the necessary time to feel through and identify his/her point of view and then articulate it thoughtfully, offering it to the circle without its' positive or negative emotional aspects.
- In contrast, A reactive participant, reacts spontaneously to an emotional impulse when he/she feels touched in his convictions, beliefs and values.

### LISTENING TO THE CENTRE

Listening to the centre means listening carefully to what emerges from the group beyond the individual expression of each of its members. If we consider that each person holds his/her own truth and that no one holds THE truth, we see how the circle is enriched by everyone holding a facet of the solution to the problem that is placed in the centre.

Listening to the centre invites everyone to listen to what others have to offer in a cooperative attitude. That means letting go of his/her own personal view (possibly diverging) on the issue and trying to glimpse how different ideas can serve the common goal.

Listening to the centre is based on the premise that all of us are called upon to feed the centre, by remaining open to the expression of "what feels right" during someone's turn to speak, participating actively, accurately and articulately and by clarifying and feeding materials into the co-creation.



# STAGES TOWARDS CONVERGENCE



## 1 Getting grounded

This is a concentration and relaxation stage that can be as long or as short as feels appropriate. Empty one-self of one's thoughts, breathe calmly, focus inwardly. The facilitator taps a gong as a starting signal and manages the time before the opening of the "weather forecast". He/she gauges how much time is required for everyone to get grounded.

If he/she feels the group is unfocused or distracted, he/she may choose to allocate more time at this stage. If there is a feeling of anxiety or stress related to the urgency of the matters that are going to be discussed, he/she may say so prior to the grounding stage so that every one is aware of the importance of getting themselves focused.



## 2 Weather forecast

This is the initial group "check-in". It provides a buffer between the previous activity, which each participant is still carrying inside, and the meeting space that is about to begin. The weather forecast is based on my inner state of being. It is an opportunity to put words to my present state of being and say how I feel emotionally, physically and mentally. It allows the group to hear and welcome the inner state of others. It is a way to "getting tuned in to each other" before we start our «concert».

It isn't a space for emotional exploration, nor for regulating feelings. The weather forecast is generally short and concise.



## 3 Decision by consent

The time devoted to listening to the centre with regard to a topic or project and the decisions it requires, moving through the process using management by consent.



## 4 Restitution

This is an important moment where we can feel how everyone feels before they leave. It is also an opportunity to evaluate the meeting. It is important to listen to each "I" but also to the "Us". It is a powerful indicator that allows the facilitator to evaluate his/her own work, the energy of the circle and the trend for the next meetings. Restitution is sometimes used by members to drop «bombs». Although instructions remind us not to re-open a debate, what often comes out in this space is that which couldn't be said, either for lack of time or for fear of

Saying it. We need to learn not to leave the expression of feelings hidden during the meeting to the very end because we're afraid that they may generate anger, frustration or anxiety from participants who no longer have the right to reply. The facilitator may observe that some people are struggling to say or express hidden feelings and take this into account for the following meetings, by inviting some people in particular to speak for example. The next meeting can also be opened by picking up a «bomb» restitution and bringing it out into open discussion. In any case, as in the Tao game, it is preferable that the facilitator concludes the proceedings so that he/she can regulate the circle using his/her own words to signify the end of the meeting.

# THE KARPMAN TRIANGLE

In 1968 Stephen Karpman made this contribution to the Transactional Analysis that was being developed by Eric Berne (1950 – 1970).

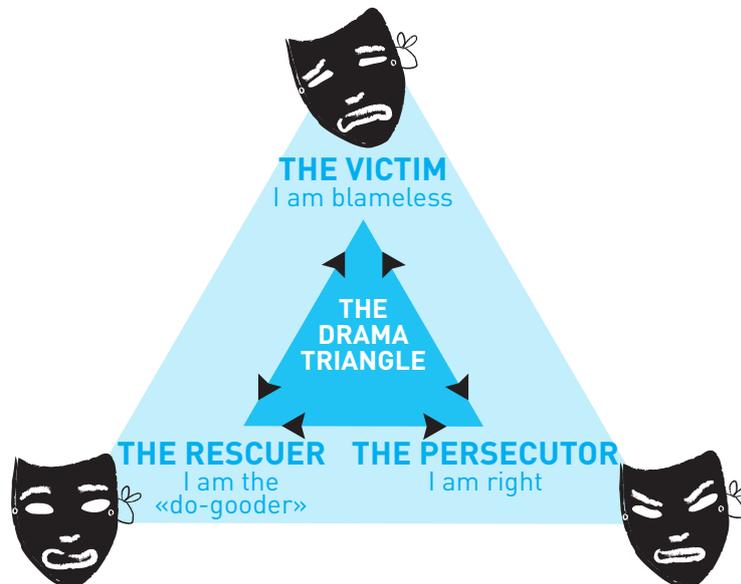
When a situation concerning personal relationships arises and I am insufficiently aware of my intentions, sometimes we become a part of the Karpman Triangle, also called the “conflict triangle” or the “drama triangle”.

## WHAT IS THE KARPMAN TRIANGLE?

It is a relational gameplay that is both unhappy and inefficient where I strive to play a role from each point on the triangle: Victim, Persecutor, Rescuer. I identify with one of these roles before jumping over to a role at one of the other points whilst my partner also changes his/her role.

The Bermuda Triangle of efficient and happy relationships!

When I participate in a group – or I take on the position of coordinator – and I take on one of these roles, I do a disservice to my own autonomy as much as to that of the others in the group. I lose touch with my kindness and my real responsibilities. I weaken the group and its cooperative capacities. Within a group circle, the exercise of individual self-determination relies on the observation of this relational game and attempts to cope with it by turning the roles into those of a “Winner’s triangle” or the “Principled/Worthy triangle”.

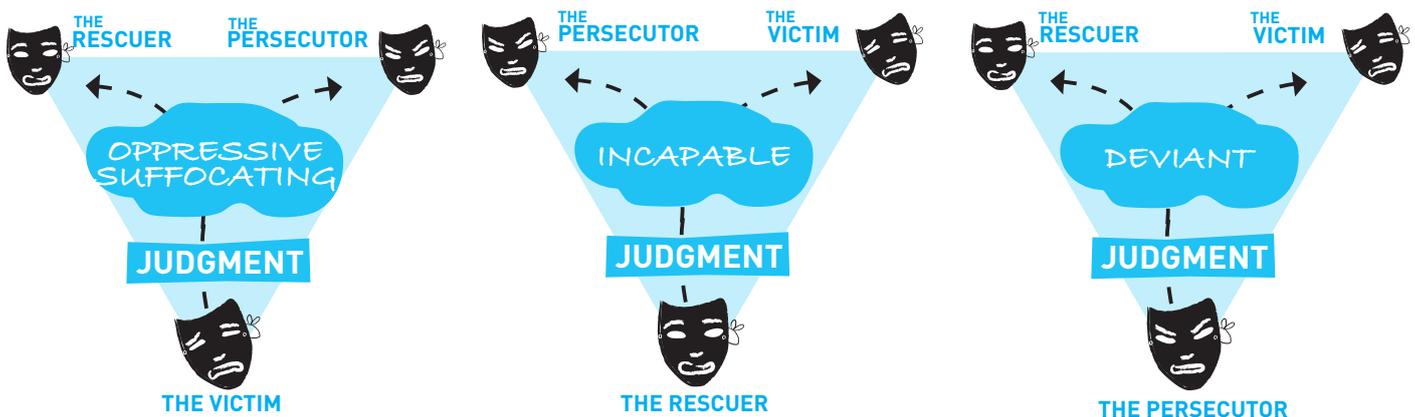


## WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH OF THESE ROLES?

The first characteristic is common to all three roles : The responsibility for one’s situation is placed on the Other. The Persecutor, Victim and Rescuer judge the Other’s behaviour.

- The Persecutor thinks the other deviant.
- The Victim thinks the other is oppressive or suffocating.
- The Saviour thinks the other is incapable.

By attributing the “fault” to the other I avoid taking responsibility for change by changing myself. There are three protective behaviours that feed my fear of change.



## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ME-PERSECUTOR

### ■ When I play The Me-Persecutor

- I rely on rules, norms, commitments, rights.

### ■ Description

- I consider myself right
- I feel angry

### ■ Actions

- I act in a proud, authoritarian, dominating and frustrated manner. I consider myself right, I impose myself, I believe I am superior.
  - I talk to the You-Victim of the Other saying “you don’t respect ..., you betray ..., you’re guilty ...”.
  - I talk to the You-Rescuer of the Other saying “it’s not up to you to do that ..., you’re too nice ...”.
- I learnt as a child that making a bad move gained attention.

### ■ Ways of handling conflict

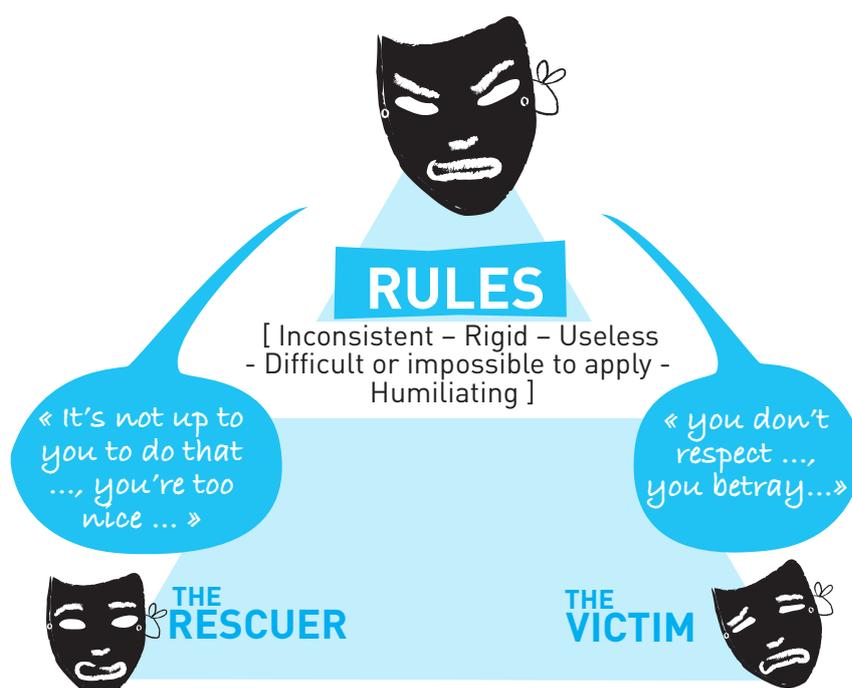
- I dominate, I am right.
- I make the other feel guilty.

### ■ To ensure my power over the Other

The rules I use are:

- Inconsistent
- Rigid
- Useless
- Difficult or impossible to apply
- Humiliating

## THE ME-PERSECUTOR



## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ME-VICTIM

### ■ There are two types of the Me-Victim

- The Me-Victim eager to express his inability to satisfy his own needs. He calls for a Rescuer.
- The repressed Me-Victim or rebel Me-Victim who suffers from injustice. He calls for a Persecutor.

### ■ When I play Me-Victim

- I deny all personal responsibility and minimise my abilities.

### ■ Description

- I consider myself blameless.
- I feel powerless and shameful, I have a tendency to depression.

### ■ Actions

- I act in a pessimist, unhappy, masochistic and passive manner.
  - I am not responsible. I always put the blame on others.
- As a child I learnt that to be loved and gain attention I needed to inspire pity, be powerless.

### ■ Ways of handling conflict

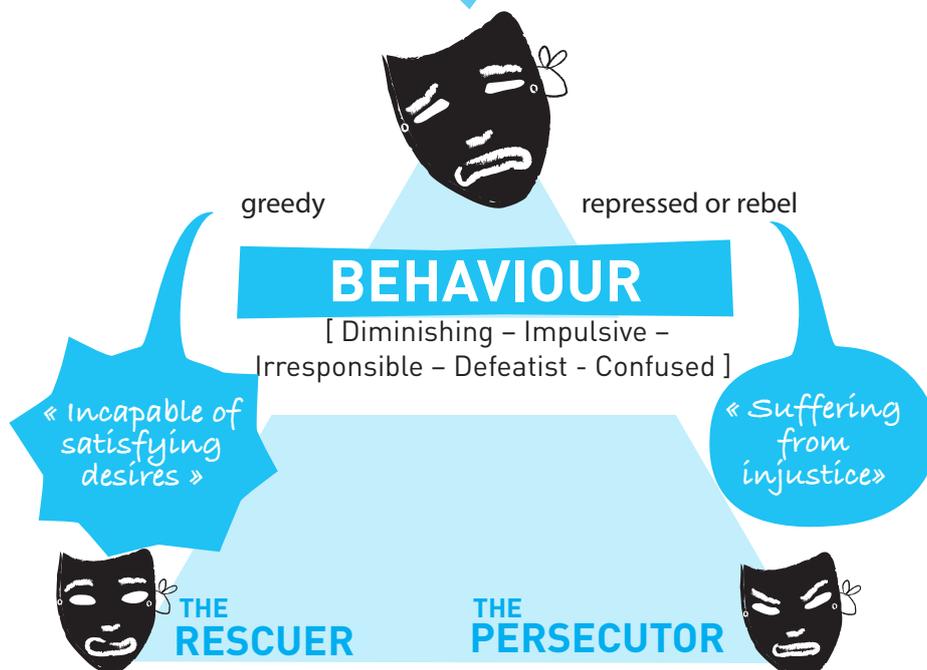
- With unpredictability.
- Depending on my mood.
- "Nothing I do will make it right!"
- "Time will solve everything".

### ■ To ensure my power over the Other

My Me-Victim uses behaviour that is:

- Diminishing (I suppress or use badly my capacities).
- Impulsive (my emotions swamp all)
- Irresponsible
- Defeatist
- Confused

## THE ME-VICTIM



## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ME-RESCUER

The Me-Rescuer is the easiest to play. It is the role that is the most socially acceptable.

### ■ When I play the Me-Rescuer

I deny the reality of the rules and deny the rules of the others so as to have the feelings of existing, being acknowledged and being loved.

### ■ Description

- I consider myself good.
- I am guilty.

### ■ Actions

- Acts in a dependant, repressed, subdued and long-suffering manner. I deny all conflicts and search for a solution that will please all.
- I behave as though I am more responsible than the other. I take on too many responsibilities.
- I help without having been asked to.
  
- As a child I learnt that to be loved I should do lots of things for others.

### ■ Ways of handling conflict

- I absolutely must sort it all out so as to please everyone.
- I feel responsible for that which has nothing to do with me.

### ■ To ensure my power over the Other

My Me-Rescuer imposes help that is :

- Not my role.
- Outside of my abilities
- A sacrifice for me
- Not asked for
- Doing the maximum.

## THE ME-RESCUER



### IMPOSES HELP

- [ Not my role  
- Outside of my abilities  
- A sacrifice to me  
- Not asked for  
- Doing the maximum ]

« Denies the reality of the others' rules »

« I exist?  
You know me?  
You love me? »



THE PERSECUTOR

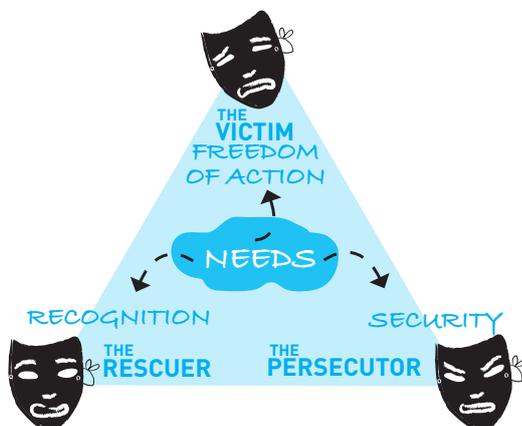
THE VICTIM



# TRANSFORMING THE “CONFLICT TRIANGLE” INTO THE “WINNERS’ TRIANGLE”

## ■ 1st level

When I see the reaction of the others (who are playing one of the complementary roles) to one of the behaviours that I have put into play, the first thing I must do is to accept it : a part of me feels scared, powerless or abandoned because it needs security, freedom of action or love. This is very natural. To accept is to be aware. To be aware is to be able to change.



## ■ 2nd level

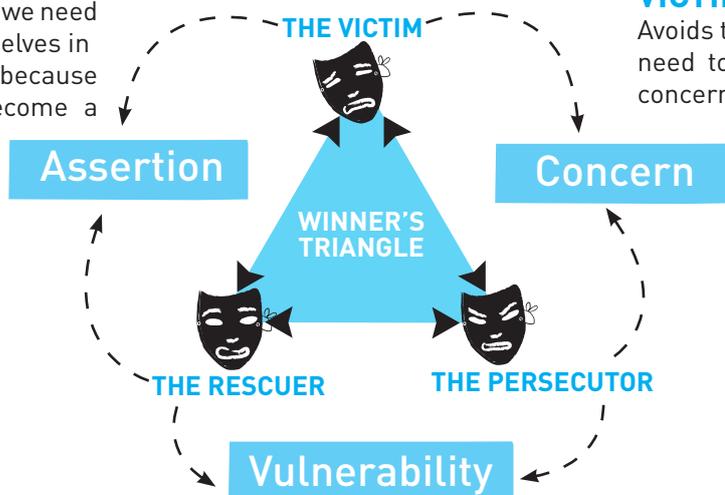
To move towards the Winners’ Triangle, I should open myself to feelings of vulnerability, concern and assertion. I need to identify within which partnership I tend to play and detect which role I avoid in order to find the positive attitudes to take on so as to move on.

### PARTNERSHIP RESCUER/VICTIM

Avoids the role of the Persecutor. In order to develop our autonomy we need to learn to assert ourselves in a healthy manner because we don’t want to become a Persecutor.

### PARTNERSHIP VICTIM/PERSECUTOR

Avoids the role of Rescuer. So we need to develop our feelings of concern.



### PARTNERSHIP RESCUER/PERSECUTOR

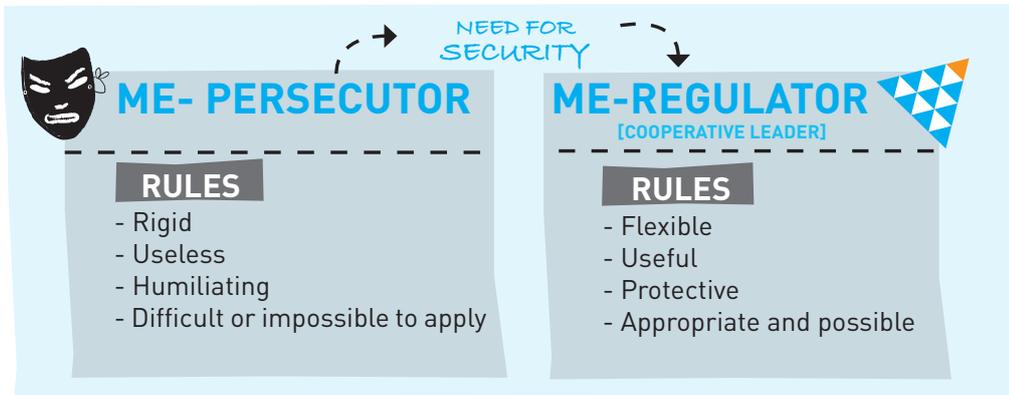
Avoids the role of Victim. We need to learn to connect with our vulnerability.

### ■ 3rd level

To transform the “Conflict triangle” into the “Winners’ triangle” I need to employ other behaviour to satisfy my needs. Behaviour that is appropriate, efficient and happy – for myself, and for the group.

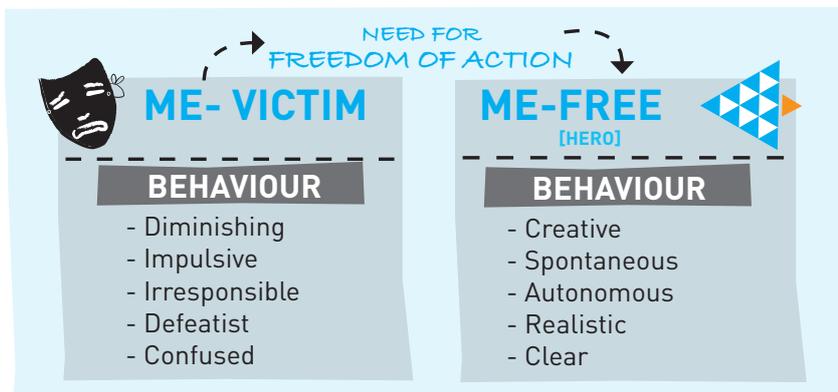
**If I have been playing the Me-PERSECUTOR I will become the Me-REGULATOR (COOPERATIVE LEADER)**

I will always base myself on the rules (I need security).



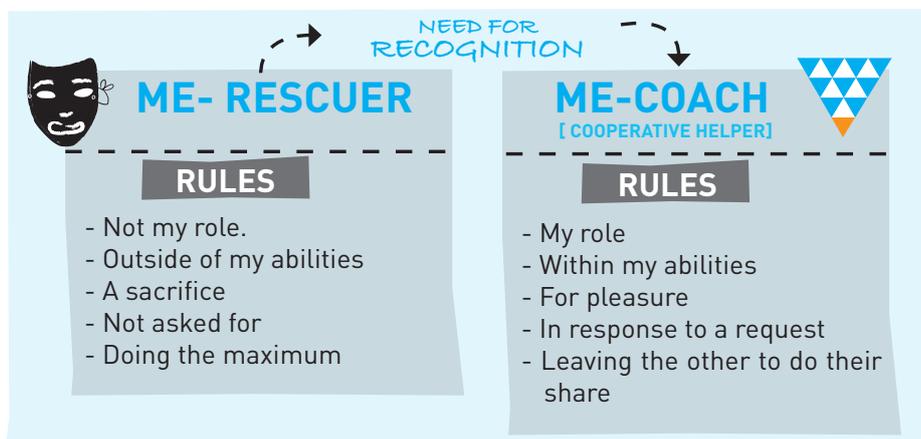
**If I have been playing the Me-VICTIM I will become the Me-FREE (HERO)**

I will always use my abilities (I need freedom of action).



**If I have been playing the Me-RESCUER I will become the Me-COACH (COOPERATIVE HELPER)**

I will always use my abilities (I need recognition).

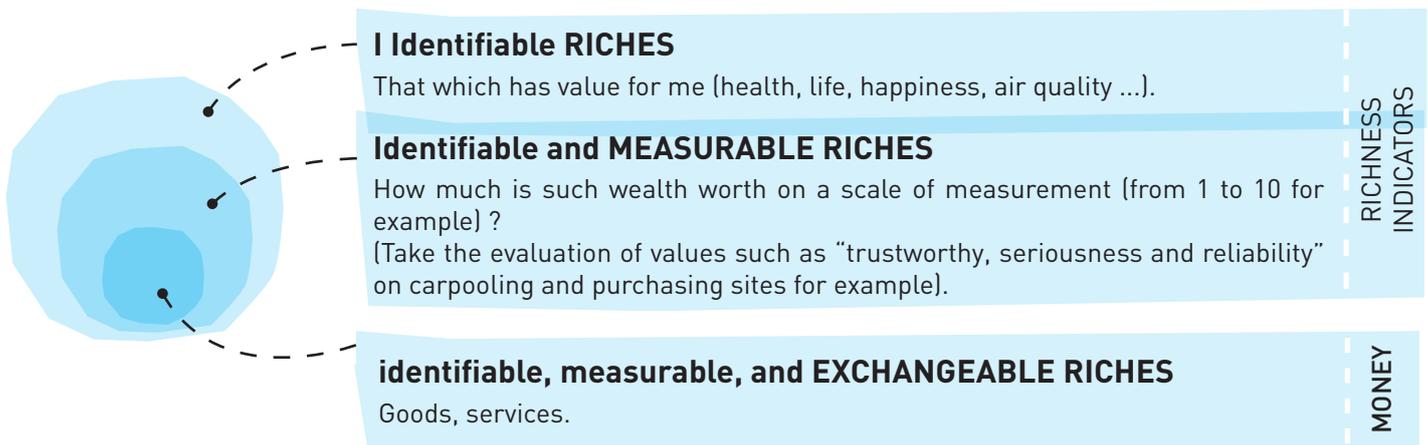


# TOOLS

# INDICATORS OF WEALTH

## GROW YOUR RICHES!

In our society, the concept of wealth is very often confined to an economic concept related to the exchange of goods and services. The field of this wealth exchange is materialized through the use of money. This understanding can't fully embrace the enormous wealth of qualities, resources and skills that are provided by any given human being. Indeed, these individual riches can be expressed, sometimes even measured, but they can't be exchanged. That's why we've created indicators to try and capture, measure and express what these "added values" are.



Every organization should try to cultivate the inherent wealth that helps serve its very reason for existing. Whether this means developing skills or recognizing and giving value to behaviour, indicators of wealth are «trace elements» that allow us to shed light on the riches that are worth cultivating so that everyone can help energise the organization to the upmost.

We're not talking about «good achievement points» awarded by a third party. We're talking about actual, formulated «feedback» between the members of a group that operates based on equivalent relationships that contribute to the essential wealth, life and development of the group.

Such practice reinforces everyone's cohesion and commitment to the same, shared cause. It nourishes an individual transformation that serves the collective action. Over time, a common organization culture emerges through regular exchanges about what motivates the team, subsequently leading to the identification and valorisation of certain kinds of behaviour.

It can be useful for such exchanges to be published and added to using virtual work tools that allow multiple access and updating. When these exchanges remain continually visible for all concerned, everyone can see who is providing and who is responding, how often, with what issues and what concerns etcetera. In this way, everyone can observe where the various skills and resources lie with regard to a given indicator. Moreover, they allow everyone to develop a global and enlightened vision of the group, subsequently adapting their behaviour according to their perception of these exchanges, the perception that others have of him/her and their own evolving vision of themselves and the others.

The UdN is testing a large range of wealth indicators, developed using various architectural models and inspired by contributions from Jean Francois Noubel concerning collective intelligence and free currencies. We are also supported in this approach by Etienne Hayem.

Many tried and tested applications are emerging on the social networks. The best known examples are the reputation systems that one finds on sites such as Ebay or various carpooling sites that have developed rating levels using stars to help one evaluate the merits of one user compared with another.

You can create your own indicators according to the specific needs of your projects by identifying the kind of wealth that is essential for its success. The UdN also proposes the free use of its broad range of wealth indicators in order to help people learn about circle practice and decision-making processes.

These indicators are available for printing on our website!

# A CONSTELLATION OF WEALTH INDICATORS

Used in the UdN Workshops

## GRATITUDE INDICATOR

As soon as we start constructing a group.



**SOU-RIRE**

[www.universite-du-nous.org](http://www.universite-du-nous.org)

### TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE

→ To say thank you, to emphasize the Good times shared.

## RECOGNITION INDICATOR

As soon as we start constructing a group.



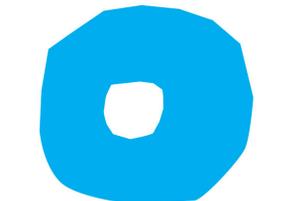
[www.universite-du-nous.org](http://www.universite-du-nous.org)

### THE ME TO YOU (ME 2 U / I2U)

→ "What I recognize in you" is written on the coupon.  
→ I attach all these indicators to the «I am» page at the back of my WORKBOOK.

## RECOGNITION INDICATOR

When the group starts working in a circle.



**JdN Je Dans Nous**

[www.universite-du-nous.org](http://www.universite-du-nous.org)

**Me in Us / Me in We**

### THAT WHICH ENHANCES OUR CAPACITY OF SERVING THE "WE"

- Listening to the Center
- Letting go
- Cooperation
- Stepping out of the box

When the group deepens its work posture in a circle.

**JdN Ecoute du centre**  
**Je Dans Nous**



[www.universite-du-nous.org](http://www.universite-du-nous.org)

### HEARING FROM THE CENTER FOR

- Proposals
- Amendments
- Added value

**JdN Lâcher prise**  
**Je Dans Nous**



[www.universite-du-nous.org](http://www.universite-du-nous.org)

### LETTING GO OF YOUR «I WANT» IN FAVOUR OF «WHAT I CAN DO»

**JdN D'boi-T**  
**Je Dans Nous**



[www.universite-du-nous.org](http://www.universite-du-nous.org)

### GOING BEYOND TRADITIONAL WAYS OF THINKING

**JdN Coopération**  
**Je Dans Nous**



[www.universite-du-nous.org](http://www.universite-du-nous.org)

### ONE'S COMMITMENT TO COOPERATION WITH THE FACILITATOR

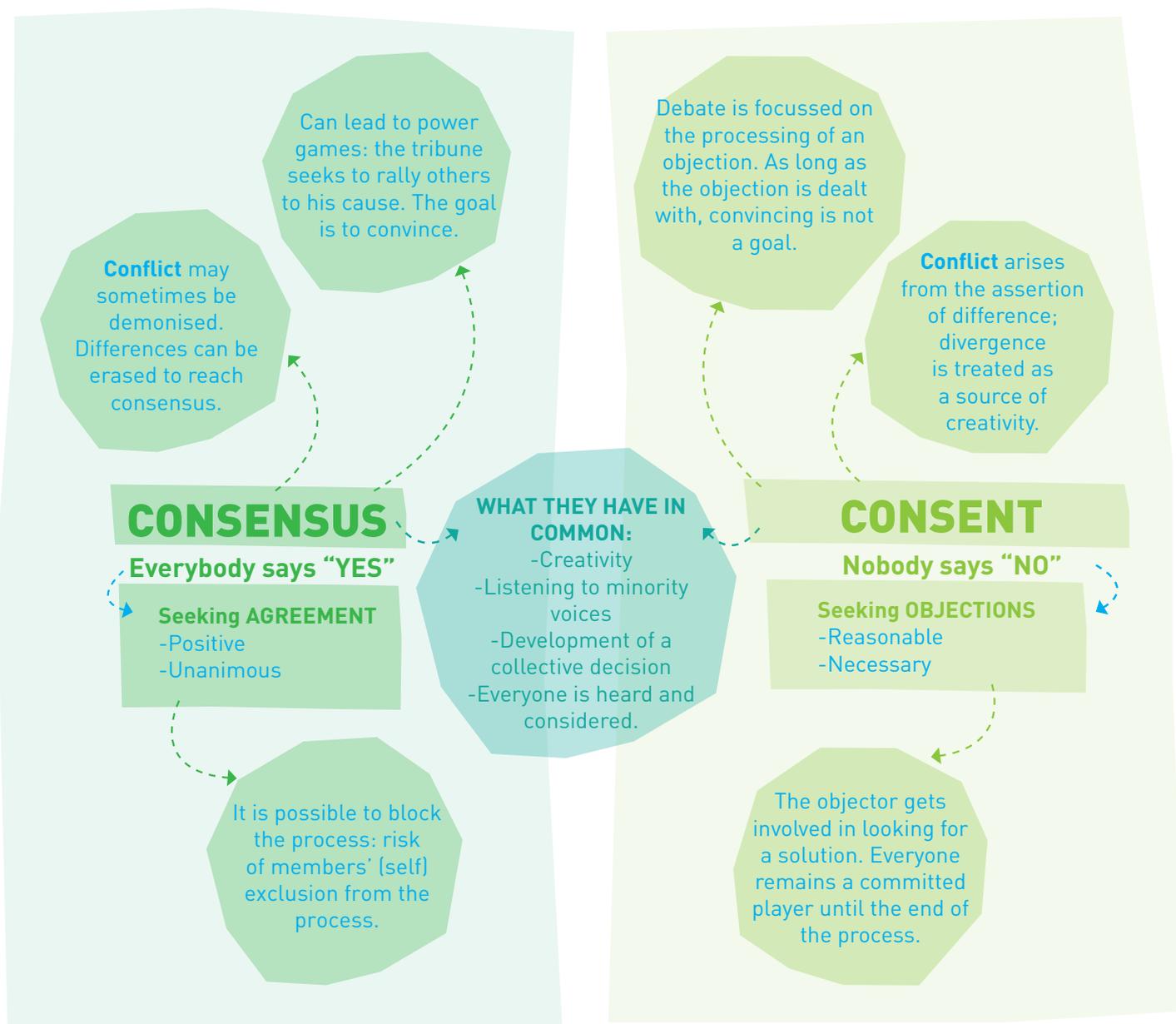
- Highlighting the outputs of the process.
- Offering feelings that nourish the centre and the proposer.
- an ability to synthesise and be concise when speaking.
- Preparation of the sessions.

# COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

Making decisions together, having everyone recognise him/herself in the decision, feeling heard and taking an active part in the decision, feeling responsible for it and supporting it in its implementation: is a game-changer, and one of the cornerstones of an organisation whose members wish to operate in shared governance, collegially, horizontally, ...

There are several methods which help in implementing collective decision-making. The most common are consensus and consent. At the Université du Nous we have developed management by consent practice.

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CONSENSUS AND CONSENT





### THE CONCERNS OF CONSENT DECISION [CD]

« A good decision is a decision that respects the limits of those who have to live with the decision.

Ultimately, there is no such thing as a 100% “right” decision. A good decision is one that which respects the limits of those who will have to live with the consequences of that decision. In a circle, no decision should be taken as long as one of the members still has a reasonable objection. The rule of consent allows us to explore the limits and tolerance of those persons it may affect.

The members of the circle are invited to explore their boundaries with relation to those of the organization, its mission and the project that is being carried out.

Decision by consent is designed to remove all of the circle members’ objections one by one so that, at the end, there are «0 objections».

### OBJECTIONS

Faced with a given proposal, the reasonable objections put forward by members of the circle help delineate the area of freedom that is at the circle’s disposition in order to achieve its purpose. Our own freedom stops where the freedom of others begins. The environment is also called upon to give its consent or even the organization itself when it’s considered like a living organism.

- All objections are objections.
- All are valid.
- Not all objections are «reasonable» in CD.

[What does “reasonable” mean? This question can itself be argued and reasoned.]

### WHAT IS A REASONABLE OBJECTION?



In Consent Decision, only the objections that are considered reasonable are processed. The facilitator’s job is to assist the person making the objection in determining whether the objection is reasonable or not by testing the objection. Only the person who puts forward the objection is able to determine this.

#### An objection is said to be reasonable:

- If it is well argued: it is accompanied by convincing arguments that give it weight.
- If it says that the proposal could affect the fulfilment of the circle’s mission.
- If it is saying that the proposal doesn’t respect the limits of those who’ll have to live with it.

#### Result :

- Either it eliminates the proposition, making the proposition quite simply impossible,
- or else it enhances the proposal: by calling upon the creativity of the group to improve the initial proposal.

Therefore, a so-called “reasonable” objection is actually a gift.

#### An objection is considered unreasonable:

- If it’s based on preference: a way of expressing a preference, choice or option.
- If it’s made against the person.
- If it’s a personal opinion.
- If it’s another proposal.

## STATE OF MIND

When we make a decision we try to consider the situation in the here and now as far as possible. We live decision-making as a step in a sometimes-bigger process. The idea is to take the next small step, to decide to go forwards a notch.

In our view, it is important that the decision be subsequently applied. In agile piloting logic, after testing out the decision and getting feedback on its effects, we can see if the decision is harmful to the organization and whether we should revise it, based on that experience, in the new “here and now”.

## THE FACILITATOR POSTURE

- The “Tao” animator posture: «Love your players».
- You’re not responsible for the content.
- Rely on the group.
- Practice active listening.
- Be responsive to needs.
- Be able to change registers:
- Types of question? Deep searching questions? A time for silence?
- Rephrase or ask a person in the group to rephrase the question.
- Give value to everything that is shared.
- Stay in touch with the content in order to connect with what lies beyond it.
- Adopt a “with, within and without” posture for yourself and with regard to the group.
- If I go into an animator posture, I tell the group that I am doing so.

## THE QUESTION BANK «TESTING OBJECTIONS»

- Where does the problem lie? (It may require a few steps to get to the heart of the problem and find where the objection really lies)
- Is this a problem for you or for the group?
- How would that prevent us from doing what we want to do?
- Ask the question to the group: Does anyone have the same objection? (just to find out).
- Do you have concrete examples that illustrate how this is a problem?
- If this proposal didn’t exist, would you still have the same objection? (Example: «work overload») Such a question is designed to clarify whether the objection is actually related to the proposal or whether it exists outside of it.
- Concretely, how would I express it if I were to write it down?
- Forget about your original thought and idea; now just look at what’s there before you: what’s the real problem?
- Active listening: And ...? Errrrr ...?
- “Joker” Question: Who can offer any help with this? Who has another idea that might help?



### 0 OBJECTIONS IN NATURE

The balance of ecosystems in nature is based on the principle of consent.

Life has to adjust to and cope with the limitations, conditions and objections that are imposed upon it by its living environment. The right decision takes the tolerance of the environment and its constituent parts into account.

Having no objections in a system that is made up of interdependent parts can be called “ecological” in the sense that it is a basis for taking all living creatures into consideration, and moreover, because it is a way of working towards increased mutual cooperation.

# DECISION by CONSENT



## 0. LISTENING TO THE CENTER



Methods:  
-6 hats, consultations, discussions, open forum, Disney method, ...  
I nourish the center by affirming my:  
- preferences, limits, concrete ideas.

## 0. DEVELOPMENT OF ARGUED PROPOSALS



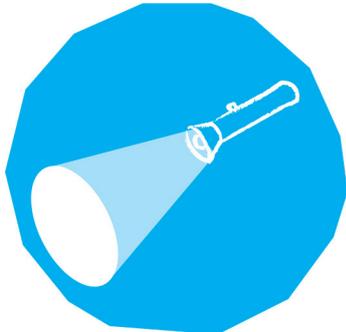
- By an improvement group.  
- By a call for proposals.

## 0. PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL



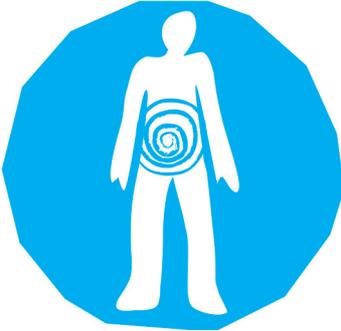
- Simple, precise, reasoned.  
- Determined:  
THE SUBJECT OF THE PROBLEM, PROPOSITION AND ARGUMENTS, PRESENTATION OF A WRITTEN PROPOSAL

## 1. CLARIFICATION



- Ask the centre.  
- The proposer replies.

## 2. FEEDBACK



- I nourish the proposition.  
- Opinions, reactions to the proposal: Added value, resistance, other ideas, intuitions, fears, ...

## 3. a- CLARIFICATIONS b- AMENDMENTS c- WITHDRAWAL



a- Explain, argue.  
b- Modify: add, remove.  
c- Removal: if the proposal is outside of the debate.  
I don't know: «unspecified»

## 4. OBJECTIONS



Test the objection:  
- Concrete, precise, argued.  
- without preference.  
- Not a different proposal.

## 5. IMPROVEMENTS



Deal with objections 1 by 1:  
- Keep the discussion open.  
- Encourage Collective Intelligence and Creativity.  
- If the person who has the objection has a bonus point, accept it as OK !

## CELEBRATION



- When there are no more objections  
- When more there are no more objections after the bonus ideas phase.  
- Bravo!

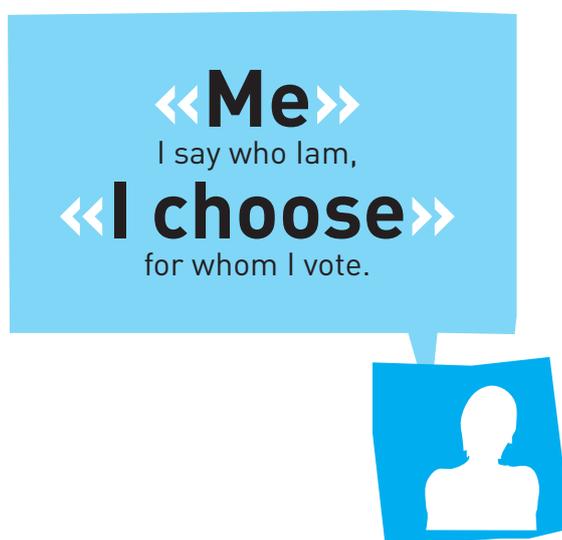


## THE CHALLENGES OF AN ELECTION BY CONSENT [EBC]

This is one of the shining pearls of this method! This process allows for a consented decision to be made for conferring responsibility for a role, position or function. This method also allows for choices to be made between several possible options for the same proposal.

Like the decision-making process, it's a rigorous process divided into several stages. An Election without Candidates is also a way of bringing people together, uncovering hidden conflicts, supporting and encouraging a participant to take his rightful place in the circle as well as a way of nurturing our need for recognition.

Mutual trust is the key to the success of this process. It is preferable that the group has some previous practice in such methods in order to carry through this process with serenity. In an election without candidates we vote «With» rather than «For or Against». In this kind of an election, the mission of the group remains the central concern.



## Paradigm shift

The practice of an election without a candidate is an invitation to revisit and go beyond the well-established paradigms that we forget to question such as the search for the «better» or the «best».

The person elected just needs to be able to fulfil the mission with which he/she is entrusted. It doesn't matter if he/she isn't the best in the field. The idea is to go one step further towards what needs to be done.

## The mandate

In our practice the mandate is valid until a request for re-election is made by any person at any time (In the appropriate environment). This can come from the person who holds the position or any other person from the circle who is concerned by it.

this allows us to :

- to stay on our toes
- Avoid lassitude and demotivation
- re-validate that a person is still competent and motivated for a given post
- change someone who, after trying it out, actually doesn't have the required skills
- to try out the function on various people (apprenticeship / experience / a rise in collective power)



**0. TO DEFINE THE ROLE**



**Determine:**  
The post, the missions, the perimeters of action, responsibilities, tasks.

**0. DEFINE THE MANDATE**



- For how long?
- Conditions: financial, timetable, ...

**0. DEFINE THE CRITERIA FOR CHOICE**



The criteria for fulfilling the function.

- They may be contradictory.
- They can be used for argumentation.

**1. VOTE**



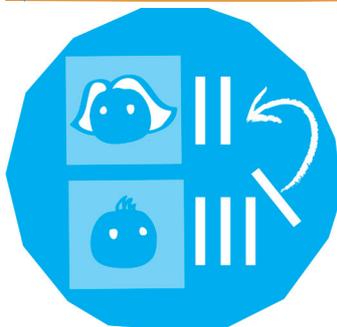
- «ME: ... I VOTE for: ...»
- No secret ballot.
- «I think about my arguments.
- I can vote for myself.

**2. COUNTING**



- Argue his / her choice to the group.
- Highlight the qualities and reasons for which the chosen person could fulfil the mission.

**3. SWITCH VOTES**



- After hearing the various arguments, one can switch one's vote to another person.
- Explain your reason for switching.

**4. PROPOSAL**



- Call for a spontaneous proposal amongst the eligible participants.
- The first proposal is subjected to the consent process. No more objections: the person is Elected.

**5. OBJECTIONS**



**Test the objection:**

- Concrete, precise, factual, reasoned.
- Not against the person.
- Not a preference.
- Not another proposal.

**6. IMPROVEMENTS**



**Treat objections 1 by 1:**

- Open discussion.
- Collective Intelligence, Creativity.

Check with the nominated person that he/she had no objection to his/her election.

**CELEBRATION**



- When there are no more objections
- When there are no more objections after the bonuses.
- Bravo!

# 6-THINKING HATS METHOD

**Parallel thinking with the 6-hat method was invented by Dr Edward De Bono in 1987 to optimise our individual and collective thinking process.**

Simple to implement, it can apply to a wide range of issues (conflict regulation, benchmarking, innovation ...), group type (children, activists, business leaders) or working situations (individual, meetings, workshops, conferences, remote working ...).

It concerns structuring our way of thinking about a topic through a step by step adoption of different and complementary ways of thinking, each one symbolised by a coloured hat.

## WHY USE THIS METHOD?

De Bono noted that our thinking habits tend towards what he calls «spaghetti thinking»: different ways of thinking mixed up together, each person embodying a polarity in every argument, sometimes in a pattern based on personal history, skills, position in the group and other polarities that each of us carries within.

All these energies are useful for reflection, but because they interfere with each other, they are underused and generate tensions, and a loss of time and energy.

In the long term, these habits can gradually imprison individuals in archetypes (Mr Creative, Mr Optimistic, Mr Devil's advocate), and groups in limiting ways of thinking.

This 6-hat method encourages awareness and optimisation of the value embedded in each of these ways of thinking, by practicing individual and collective parallel thought. The more it is used, the easier and productive the change of hat becomes.

## How to use this method?

- According to the problem, define a logical concatenation of hat sequences, and, for each sequence, the duration and key issues.
- Begin and end with a blue hat:
  - At the opening, to lay out the framework, objectives and explain the process.
  - For closure, to synthesise and clarify next steps.
- Avoid any debate: if I do not agree with the previous contribution, I bring another.
- This is not a decision method. However, this can help before decision-making, to bring listening to the centre, to build a proposal and present its advantages and disadvantages.

## Tips & Tricks

- The method is intense, avoid exceeding 45 minutes.
- Organise logistics to capture ideas on-the-fly without slowing the flow and keep previous contributions visible.
- Filter inputs: only write down ideas related to the current hat.
- A two-facilitator space: one for collecting and filtering, the other to question and regulate speech.
- Prefer short and timed sequences. The goal is not to be exhaustive but to have a 360 ° view of the problem (five minutes per hat can be sufficient to achieve a good result).
- Be creative to accompany transition of one energy to another: specific musical interval, visualising a character, a metaphor, sensory exercise, bring in actual hats of different colours...
- Converge with the blue hat referring to the results of the previous hats.
- Repeat, adapt or change sequences to save preparation time and improve practice.

## Variants for experienced groups

- **During a classic meeting:** an unexpected call for the use of a hat by a participant helps to open other reflection paths. For example, «What if we all put on our yellow hats right now and see what happens?».
- **Collaborative remote work:** expressing one's view on a project by going through one hat at a time facilitates summarising.
- ...

## Example of a possible proceeding

### Subject: Improve an existing project

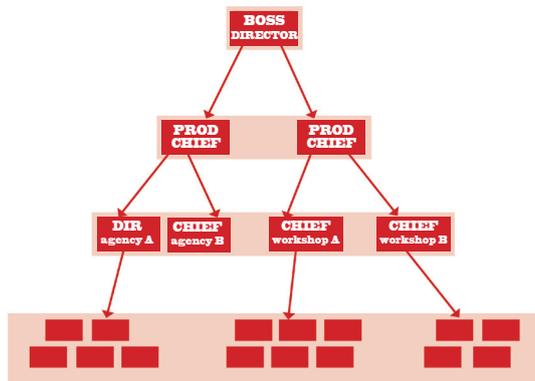
-  [5 min] Success indicators, quantitative survey about the users.
-  [5 min] Gaps, what doesn't work well in this project?
-  [5 min] Advantages, what works well?
-  [2 min] What does our intuition tell us?
-  [5 min] Find new ways of doing things.
-  [3 min] Based on the results of the black, yellow and red hats, choose the green hat idea that seems the most promising.
-  [5 min] Action Plan for going forwards and the next steps.

## Other sequence examples

- **Initial ideas:**    
- **Choose between alternatives:**       
- **Identify solutions:**     
- **Quick Comments:**    
- **Strategic planning:**       
- **Process Improvement:**       
- **Problems solving:**      
- **Performance review:**        

# GOVERNANCE

# GOVERNANCE MODELS



PYRAMID MODEL

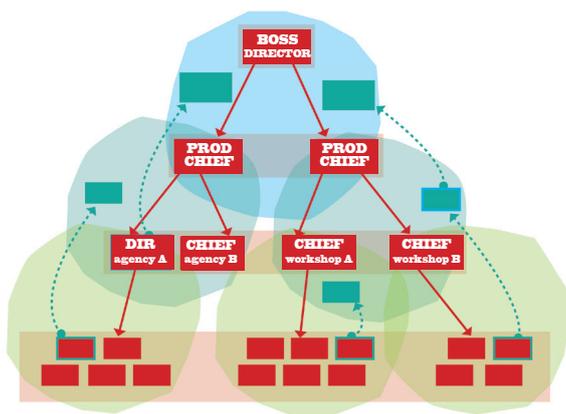
The pyramidal and technocratic management model is based on the centralization of structures.

This implies an extensive codification of the relationships within a company and the establishment of a rigid and compartmentalized hierarchy.

The decision-making process uses a top-down style that follows the model theorized by Taylor that was applied to companies after the industrial revolution ... at the end of the 19th century! That's why some authors, such as Patrick Lemattre, called this a «mechanical” view of management. This mode of management mode is considered to be authoritarian and, according to Robert Papin also has the disadvantage that some «subordinates» react to it «by adopting a submissive attitude or by distorting the managers' guidelines».

The pyramid company: the autopsy of a modele  
JeanLucRayne

<http://lecercle.lesechos.fr/entreprises-marches/management/organisation/221136844/entreprise-pyramidale-autopsie-modele>



SOCIOCRATIC MODEL

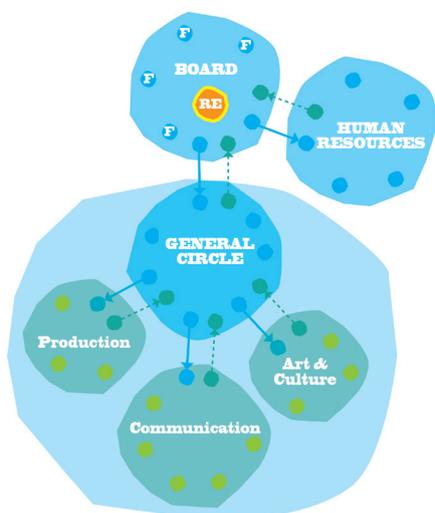
Sociocracy is a mode of governance that allows for an organization, irrespective of its size - from family to country - to behave like a living organism and self-organize itself.

Its modern foundation stems from systemic theories.

The primary objective is to develop partner co-responsibility and to use the power of collective intelligence as means towards the organization's success.

It was created by Gerard Endenburg (nl) (1933-) a Dutch Electro-technical engineer who replaced his father as manager of the Endenburg Elektrotechniek company in 1968. In 1970, overwhelmed by the ongoing conflicts in the works council, he decided to change his company focus from economic development to the improvement of its organization. He Invented the sociocratic method on the basis of the concept «No more reasoned objections from any of the employees».

<http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociocratie>



HOLACRATIC™ MODEL

Holacracy is an organizational system of governance that allows an organization to disseminate the mechanisms of decision-making through a fractal organization of self-organized teams

The holacratic system was developed in 2001 by Brian Robertson in his software company (Ternary Software) as a means of developing a more agile governance.

The basis of holacratic theory is based on the reason for existence at the root of any human organization. Holacracy identifies the (superordinate) reasons for existence of the people who are making the contributions through their expertise, skills and potential so that they can help fulfil the organisation's reason for existence. To meet the requirements dictated by an organism's raison d'être this structure is made up of circles.

<http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocratie>

## DISCLAIMER

Governance is a large and complex subject which, from our point of view doesn't provide any miracle solutions that come down to a specific model or tool. That's why we don't think we can provide any absolute truths or recipes that can be applied to any situation. Instead, we'd just like to explore a common ground upon which everyone can think and walk.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY «GOVERNANCE»?

In any project involving several people, governance is a key element in providing the means for achieving a common goal. Long-term projects require us to pay extra attention to the way that we organise what we do together.

Many wonderful projects fail because internal structures have not been central to the project from the start. We tend to rush into the implementation, going straight to the goal, without giving time, energy and resources to the path that will lead us there.

We often forget that our personal issues, fears, desire to control, certainties, need for security and recognition, will sooner or later compete in the arena of our "doing things together" and seriously threaten our initial project.

«The way is as important as the destination»

If we can imagine our project like a big cooperative team game. Just like for any game, for it to work, we need rules. These will be all the relational and organisational rules that will allow us to answer the questions that arise in any group project:



## TRUST: THE CORNERSTONE OF "DOING THINGS TOGETHER"

Shared governance is primarily a matter of trust: «Letting go-Holding»

### ■ Trust in others

By letting go of my desire for others to act as I would like them to, and trusting that they will do their best in their own way.

### ■ Trust in life

By letting go of the resistance that makes me want to take control of situations and moving towards the acceptance of what simply is, in order to let collective solutions emerge.

### ■ Trust in myself

By staying focused on my feelings and remaining calm and determined in what feels right, not letting go of my "I" when my intuition points me in a direction.

## INDIVIDUAL POSTURE

Besides the tools and models that make up the technical aspects of governance, the personal posture that this type of mechanism invites me to develop is a real key for me to transcend my conditioning and move towards new, innovative and co-created paradigms.

Find a way around the multiple parts of myself so that my ego, in all its facets, controlling, fearful, timid or manipulator can't seize power over the others and the project.

### The questions that should be considered before declaring that we will definitely share power:

Am I willing to give up what «I want» in favour of the emergence of another vision?

Am I ready to give up fighting to go where I think we should go and take another road instead that wasn't the one I had originally wanted to take?

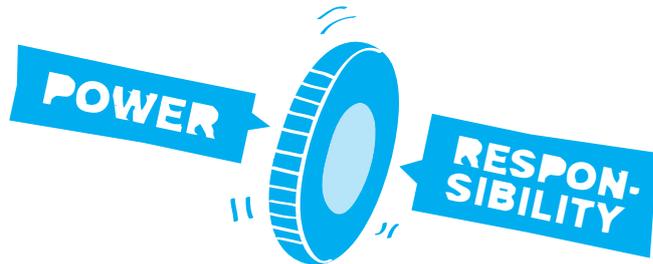
Am I mainly working to build my own project or am I working to ensure that this project continues to exist and becomes sustainable beyond me?

## POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Shared governance invites us to explore another form of relationship, a relation of equivalence among individuals, among different circles of the organisation, a relationship in which nobody allows themselves to dominate or be dominated.

It is about finding strength in power WITH, rather than power OVER.

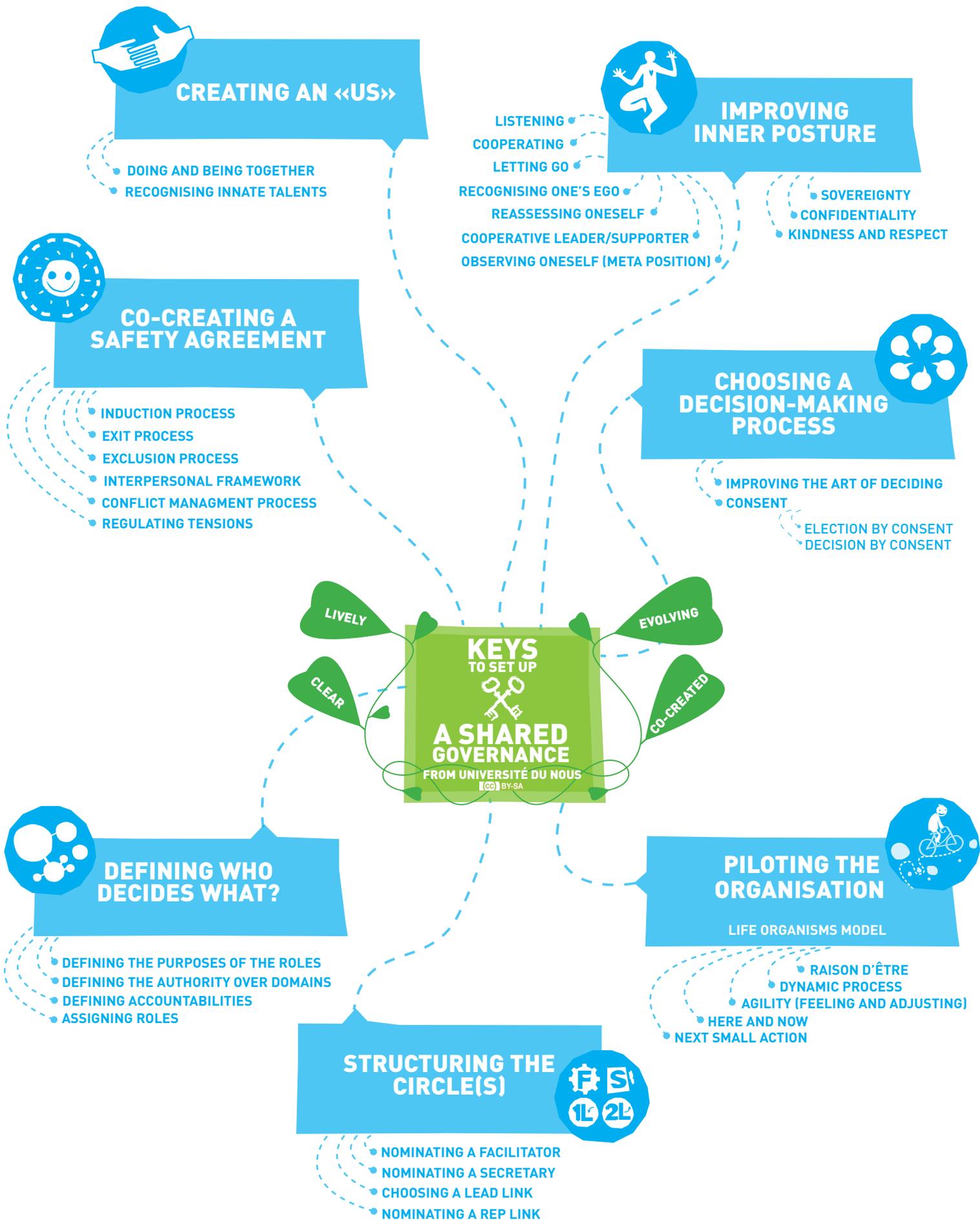
Unconditionally accepting this power is also fully accepting the responsibility that goes with it. These are the two sides of the same coin.



## SHARED GOVERNANCE

To actually build shared governance for a project and give it a better chance of being sustainable, we recommend that the group equip itself with some tools and spaces that allow everyone to exercise his/her power through sharing the decisions that he or she will then have to live with.

# KEYS TO SHARED GOVERNANCE



# CO-CREATING A SAFETY AGREEMENT

To function in circles over the long term. To work with trust. To fully engage, and commit: all this requires trust. To facilitate the building of trust and enable each and every one of us to flourish, we need a ground base of safety. We enable co-creating such a context by raising awareness and putting into words what each person needs in order to feel safe.

These tools require that we take responsibility.

There is no such thing as an ideal safety agreement which will apply to every situation. The examples below are founded on our experience at the Université du Nous and are a point of view, not an absolute truth.

## SAFETY AGREEMENTS

Safety agreements are composed of basic ground rules, which every participant is bound to respect, with the aim of satisfying our need for clear boundaries. Within these boundaries we can expand in total freedom, both individually and collectively.

Ideally, safety agreements are co-created. Often they combine relational, legal and financial aspects. Their creation is therefore a complex task.

They are, in and of themselves, a fascinating group practice through which we dare to explore sensitive subjects, and to create an «Us».

Remember that to attempt to define everything from the very beginning would be a mistake. Rather, we are looking at creating rules which will necessarily evolve with the project.



## Disclaimer!

### SAFETY AGREEMENTS

- Will not ensure the project is fool-proof and problem-free,
- Will not systematically regulate human behaviour within the group. Setting rules and limits does not in itself prevent voluntary or involuntary transgressions.
- Are not designed to avoid conflict or erase differences that are the richest source of material for group evolution.
- Create a document that everyone can refer to for settling debates and deliberating over transgressions.
- Allow the group to dare to cross conflict zones with more ease, rather than skirting around them. To evolve and stay vibrant and creative, any group needs conflict to provide movement and energy.

## TIPS ON CREATING A SAFETY AGREEMENT

- It should be co-created by the founding members and/or the first participants in the group.
- It should evolve with the group.
- It should be validated by all members of the group/organisation.
- It should be challenged by any member of the group who feels the need to do so.

## SOME IDEAS OF WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A SAFETY AGREEMENT FOR SHARED GOVERNANCE



### ■ Decision-making process

How do we make our decisions?



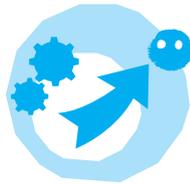
### ■ Basic information on how we relate to each other

How do we relate to each other? How do we communicate? How do we approach conflict management?



### ■ A process for including others

How do we welcome new members? What conditions or contracts are necessary to integrate new people? What requirements or stages are necessary to join the organisation?



### ■ A process for leaving

How can we leave the group or organisation in a way which is safe for the person and the group once I'm committed? It's important that everybody realise that leaving the organisation is a possibility, and the terms and conditions should be defined ahead of time.



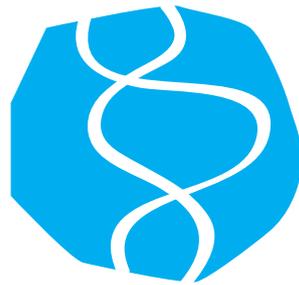
### ■ A process for excluding

If a person puts the organisation in danger, how might we avoid this, or show him/her the way out? If I have invested my energy and commitment in a project I hold a desire for it to live and last. How can the group prevent me from damaging this legacy if I should fail to live up to it? This process usually includes various steps, exclusion from the group being the last stage of a process.

# THE ORGANISATION'S PURPOSE

If we look at an organisation as a living system, its purpose can be interpreted as its mission in life, the reason for which it was born, functions and what makes it necessary and unique in the world. In other words, its DNA. To become aware of the organisation's purpose and facilitate its emergence into being, members may wish to explore questions such as these:

What unique function or service does the organisation bring into the world?  
If this organisation disappears, what will the world lose?



## POINTS FOR REFLECTION IN ALLOWING THE COLLECTIVE PURPOSE TO EMERGE

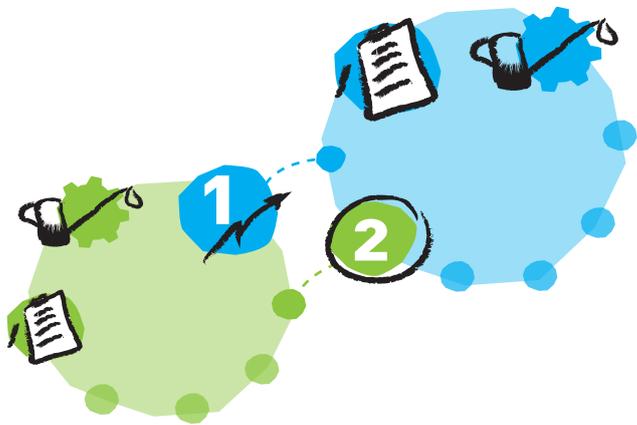
### Building a collectivity

- 1 What I want, what I am: giving expression to my individual desire and passion. Feeling where I wish to put my energy or maybe, even, my own purpose in life.
- 2 What we want: the expression of a group searching for common ground. Creating a shared vision for the creation or development of a collectivity.

### Pathways to purpose

- 1 What I feel: calling upon my intuitive, emotional, sensitive side. This allows us to deepen our sense of purpose, whether it be personal or organisational.
- 2 What we feel: listening to the centre of the circle, to «Us», striving to hear what the organisation is telling us. Leaving «I want» to pay attention to a sense of the collective.
- 3 What we notice: reading concrete, practical signs and data. Not the facts that make up our singular identities, but those important to the organisation's development.

# RELATIONS AMONG CIRCLES



Each sub-Circle created in the Organisation is connected to the Circle which created it with a double link:

The lead link is appointed by the lead link of the Circle that creates the sub-Circle. The role is assigned upon the creation of the sub-Circle.

The rep(resentative) Link is appointed, in an election by consent, by the sub-Circle, as its representative in the Circle it was created by.

All members of the Circle can hold elected Roles in the Circle.

A member can have different Roles, except for the lead Link, who isn't allowed to also hold the roles of Facilitator or that of the rep Link.

The Circle Roles' responsibilities are described in detail below. They can't be reduced but could be supplemented by additional responsibilities, at the Circle's discretion.



## LEAD LINK

**Chosen by the lead link of the closest upper circle.**

- Defines the Circle's strategies, priorities and action plan, so as to best implement the Circle's mission.
- Assigns people to the roles defined by the Circle.
- Assesses whether the people in charge of the Roles are well matched to their position.
- Allocates the resources available for the Circle, particularly financial resources.
- Coordinates, activates, coaches people occupying Roles in the Circle to improve their ability to fulfil their responsibilities and complete the Circle's tasks.
- Accompanies, assists, supports all the members actively working in the circle.
- Cultivates an overall vision of the organisation.
- Is alert to any tensions.
- Attitude:
  - Asks questions.
  - Does not decide on behalf of others.
  - Respects the autonomy and sovereignty of other roles.
  - Facilitates communications and connections.
- Holds all responsibilities (action points) required for the Circle's operations isn't assigned to Roles in the Circle.
- Also fills any Role in the Circle remaining vacant for any reason.



## REP LINK

### **Appointed by consent.**

- Representative of the sub-circle to the upper circle. Sits in the upper circle as a member among equals.
- Improves quality and ensures the smooth flow of information in both directions.

### **In his/her circle:**

- Defines and establishes indicators to measure the Circle's performance.
- Identifies tensions in the circle which may have to be brought to the attention of the upper circle.

### **In the Upper circle:**

- Gives appreciation and information on the health and sustainability of the Circle's operations.
- Is an ally and a counterbalance with respect to the Lead link (not by working against him/her but by providing a balancing power)
- Bearer of the spirit of his/her circle.
- Is attentive to tensions among the other roles of his/her circle.

# BEING AGILE

## ■ Being agile

« **Planning & Controlling** » is still the dominant approach and is rather pervasive in many organisations. It gives us a feeling of complete control and therefore a feeling of safety and comfort, following this sort of reasoning: «Nothing bad can happen to us, everything is already planned.»

This type of management may seem «comfortable», however it can still bring us to some erroneous illusions and projections, the source of which is to be found in our fears.

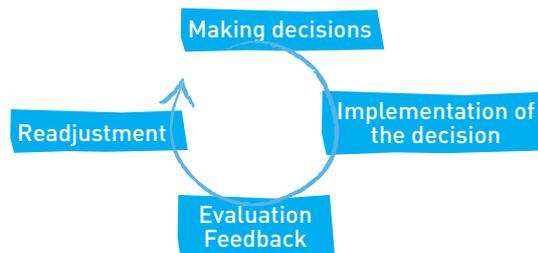
Actually, we have to cope with an ever changing reality. The resulting unexpected events and blocks force us to develop a dynamic response focused on the present.

« **Planning is invaluable, but the plans are useless** »  
Churchill



« **Feel & Adjust** » is an approach that invites us to capture present «tensions», adjusting our decisions based on the emergent reality. It can give us a sense of discomfort and danger, but it actually favours «conscious and aware» responses to the current reality.

In this style, the organisation is driven in a dynamic and agile manner. Attention is given to the here and now by listening to the signals, and remaining adaptable. There are regular cycles of decision-making, implementation of the decision, moments for evaluation/feedback, re-adjustment through a new decision.



## The CIRCLE as an organic structure

- Has a Border and a Purpose.
- Self-organising within its Borders in service to its Purpose.
- Self-structures its own governance.
- Performs work via dynamic operative process.
  
- Circles with larger borders may include more specialised sub-circles.
- The lead links connect the larger circles with sub-circles.
- The rep links connect the sub-circles with the larger circles.



## DYNAMIC STEERING

Switch from «predict and control» to «feel and adjust»

- Centred upon the **purpose** of the organisation (not the individuals’).
- Steering in connection with **real** data.
- Steering by «**small steps**».
- Seeking **pragmatic** decisions (not «the best»).
- Taking **small** decisions, implementing them **quickly**.
- **Delaying** decisions at the last moment.
- Each subject may be **revised** at any time after a period of implementation: cycling through «**try-check-review-adjust**»

# HORIZONTALITY AND VERTICALITY

«Let's try a metaphor: horizontality is related to the way; verticality is related to result »

When starting a group a horizontal We is built, in which we decide together. In a single circle, each ME is invited to experience its sovereignty in a state of equivalence. Some processes inspired by Sociocracy promote a communicative fluency and facilitate this particular form of sovereignty, particularly decision by consent. This creates a reassuring framework that supports cooperation. However, a collective focussed only on the horizontal only may be time-consuming.

A search for efficiency can push the organisation to seek verticality.

We all probably have some experience of a rather absurd and/or painful verticality. For the past millennia, our societies have been very hierarchical. Power, and abuse of power, have long been intermingled. Mechanisms of "Power Over" have prevailed. It is tempting to take the opposite party and opt for the total horizontal concept. In the 20th century, particularly from the 60s onwards, many alternative initiatives began a struggle against the abuse of verticality. Many then became disenchanted with the «merely» horizontal approach. Ecological governance is about integrating the best aspects of horizontality and verticality.

For example, the main player of verticality (lead link) is appointed horizontally, by consent.

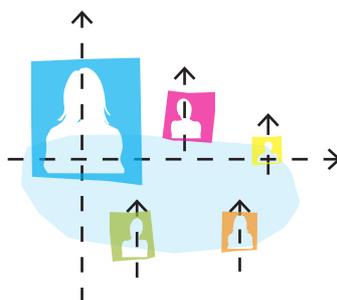
Verticality implies:

- submission to authority (blind and irresponsible) according to the old paradigm;
- trust (lucid and responsible) according to a new vision of power sharing.

Trust is the key word for this type of organisation. Trust in others, trust in interconnecting roles, trusting they will complete their tasks so that I may complete mine. Trusting that what we are each doing is an independent co-creation, beyond my control, creating and performing pieces of what we have to do, and that these will fall into place with fluidity, beauty and power in service to the purpose we have chosen.

A person assigned to a role (whether elected or appointed) is sovereign in his/her role.

Verticality allows us to make certain decisions without consulting other roles. A person in a role can choose whether to consult with others or not. The mix of vertical / horizontal makes it possible to experiment with another way of sharing power.



Safeguards to prevent possible abuses of power are found in the horizontal. In the circles and sub-circles, we continue to practice management by consent and other participatory methods. Within the entire organisation, vertical energy flows from top to bottom, given that the sub-circles responsibilities are defined by the upper circle. It also circulates upwards through the «rep links», these members of the sub-circles whose role is to «raise up» the information and who have a right to object in the upper circle. The rep link is elected by consent by the sub-Circle it will represent in the upper circle.

Please note that we refer to sub-circles, but this does not mean they are less important, they are an essential part of the organisation. The name merely indicates that they were created by a movement from an existing role.

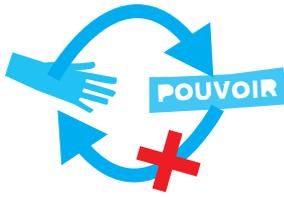
Furthermore, any glitch, any abuse of power can be the subject of tension that needs to be expressed in the appropriate space.

A lack of verticality can, especially if the group is a large one, risk delaying decision-making and sometimes inhibiting action.

# THE PITFALLS OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

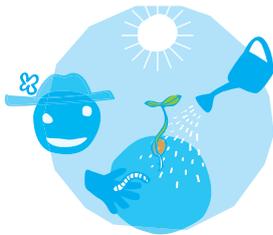


## SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AVOIDING PITFALLS



### ■ Sharing power

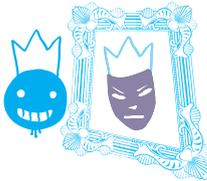
The founders must first understand deeply what it means to share power and have a genuine and sincere will to do so. Starting a project by putting the power in the centre can feel simple at first. A desire to back-pedal may cause the implosion of the group. Power can be given but it can't be taken back!



### ■ Accept that you'll have to invest in this area

The development and implementation of governance takes time, energy and money. Don't hesitate to get training in the use of different tools in order to meet the challenges of this type of governance.

Let yourself be guided on this journey. To avoid the triggering of egos through this type of operation requires an experienced external perspective and coaching so that the group may overcome its resistance and blocks with regard to the profound changes required by these new ways of interacting.



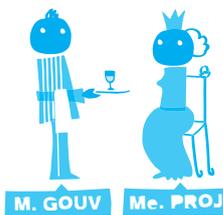
### ■ Tools won't make us happy!

Many effective and powerful tools exist to help us structure our work. However they don't work to the exclusion of the human factor. But they can help us regulate and outline our egos, helping us to open up to a real change of attitude.



### ■ Agility and evolution

Governance and its rules must continue to evolve in a lively way that's tailored to the project and its development. Turning agreements into dogma written in stone is the antithesis of shared governance. A clear process for the evolution of our agreements should be included in the system's governance and operations. Don't seek out the best decision, the "perfect" solution that will anticipate all the problems that we'll have to face. Good governance with quality remains agile and allows for constant adaptation to the specific situations we encounter along the way.



### ■ Governance serves to the project

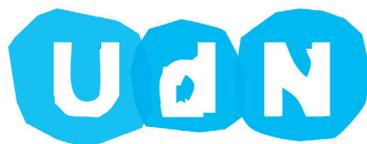
Making governance an objective in itself can also be a pitfall. Governance exists to serve the project and not the other way round. Shared governance can become a tool for personal development rather than a means for developing the project.



### ■ It's not for everyone

Finally, this type of process is not suitable for everyone, some people may prefer to leave the project.

# APPENDIX



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<http://owni.fr/2011/02/11/application-bd-monnaie-alternative-une-solution-cash/>

### « RENDRE LA CRÉATION MONÉTAIRE À LA SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE »

Philippe Derudder, éditions Yves Michel, 2005, 240p.

### « LA DETTE PUBLIQUE, UNE AFFAIRE RENTABLE. À qui profite le système »

Philippe Derudder et André-Jacques Holbecq, éditions Yves Michel, 2008

### LE J.E.U.

Vidéo: Mado, explication du J.E.U.

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xem8pk\\_conference-mado-1\\_webcam](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xem8pk_conference-mado-1_webcam)

### « DE LA RARETÉ »

Jean-François Noubel

TEDX 2011:

<http://www.canalplus.fr/c-infos-documentaires/pid3717-tedx-paris-2011.html>

## TOOLS

### « MULTIBÀ0 »

Technologie collaborative permettant de mutualiser et valoriser les ressources sur le comment faire ensemble et la gestion de projet.

<http://www.multibao.org>

### « S'ORGANISER POUR REUSSIR »

David Allen, Leduc.S éditions, 2008, 287p.

### « LA BOÎTE À OUTILS DE LA CRÉATIVITÉ »

Edward de Bono, éditions d'Organisation, 2013.

### « LES SIX CHAPEAUX DE LA RÉFLEXION : La méthode de référence mondiale »

Edward de Bono, éditions Eyrolles, 2005.

### BIENS COMMUNS

Villes en biens communs: Des événements à travers la francophonie pour explorer, créer, faire connaître les communs.

[http://villes.bienscommuns.org/en-savoir\\_plus.html](http://villes.bienscommuns.org/en-savoir_plus.html)

### « DÉCOUVRIR L'ANALYSE TRANSACTIONNELLE »

Christine Chevalier et Martine Walter, interéditions, 2014.

## COMMUNICATION

### « COMMUNICATION ET POUVOIR »

Marshall B. Rosenberg, éditions Esserci, 2008.

### « LES MOTS SONT DES FENÊTRES OU BIEN CE SONT DES MURS »

Marshall Rosenberg, éditions La Découverte, 2004

### « DU JE AU NOUS »

Thomas d'Ansembourg, éditions L'homme Eds De, 2014.

### « LA SPIRALE DYNAMIQUE. Comprendre comment les hommes s'organisent et pourquoi ils changent. »

Fabien et Patricia Chabreuil. Interéditions, 2005.

## EDUCATION

### « AU CŒUR DES ÉMOTIONS DE L'ENFANT »

Filliozat Isabelle, éditions Pocket Marabout, 2013

### « EDUQUER SANS PUNIR »

Thomas Gordon, éditions Pocket Marabout, 2013

### « PARENTS EFFICACES AU QUOTIDIEN »

Thomas Gordon, éditions Pocket Marabout, 2013

### « POUR UNE ENFANCE HEUREUSE : repenser l'éducation à la lumière des dernières découvertes sur le cerveau »

Dr Catherine Gueguen, éditions Pocket, 2015.

## SPIRITUALITY

### « LES 4 ACCORDS TOLTEQUES »

Don Miguel Ruiz, ed Jouvence, 2005

### « TAO TE KING »

Lao Tseu

### « LE POUVOIR DU MOMENT PRÉSENT »

Eckhart Tolle, édition J'ai lu, 2009.

# OUR PARTNERS

## **ALTER EGO**

Centre de coopération par le jeu.  
[www.compagnie-alterego.com](http://www.compagnie-alterego.com)

## **LES AMANINS**

Centre agro-écologique, d'accueil, de partage, d'expérimentation (alimentation, pédagogie, construction, gestion des déchets, le lien et la coopération entre individus...).

[www.lesamanins.com](http://www.lesamanins.com)

## **COLIBRIS**

Coopérer pour changer.  
[www.colibris-lemouvement.org](http://www.colibris-lemouvement.org)

## **FLORENCE CONTI**

Communication visuelle.  
[www.a-part-ca.com](http://www.a-part-ca.com)

## **HABITERRE**

Habitat collectif.  
[www.habiterre.org](http://www.habiterre.org)

## **IGI**

Organisme formant à l'HolacracyTM.  
[www.igipartners.com](http://www.igipartners.com)

## **ISABELLE DESPLATS**

Coopérer avec soi et avec les autres.  
[www.isabelledesplatsformation.com](http://www.isabelledesplatsformation.com)

## **KAIZEN**

Changer le monde pas à pas  
[www.kaizen-magazine.com](http://www.kaizen-magazine.com)

## **MARTINE VAN DITZHUYZEN**

L'espace du Jeu. Mime et théâtre gestuel, marionette.  
[www.martinevanditzhuyzen.nl](http://www.martinevanditzhuyzen.nl)

## **OUTILS RESEAUX**

Initier et accompagner les pratiques coopératives, en s'appuyant sur des outils Internet.  
<http://outils-reseaux.org>

## **SYMBA**

Economie symbiotique: mettre au service des adhérents un modèle monétaire qui encourage une prospérité économique, sociale et environnementale en Ile de France.  
[www.symba.co](http://www.symba.co)

## **TAOVILLAGE**

Jeu développement personnel coopératif.  
[www.taovillage.com](http://www.taovillage.com)

## **TERR'EVEILLE**

Le travail qui relie: ateliers d'écologie profonde.  
[www.terreveille.be](http://www.terreveille.be)

## **TRANSITION Wallonie-Bruxelles**

Mettre en œuvre une société plus heureuse et plus résiliente.  
[www.reseautransition.be](http://www.reseautransition.be)

## **THOMAS WOLFF**

Partage de ressources 100% réutilisables: gestion de projets innovants / organisation collective / concertation territoriale / démarches participatives / web 2.0.  
[www.thomas-wolff.fr](http://www.thomas-wolff.fr)

## **ZOUPIC**

Etienne Hayem, travaille sur le sujet de la richesse, des monnaies.  
[www.zoupic.com](http://www.zoupic.com)



