

Designing a regional network facilitator guide:

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Aim of the workshop

The aim of this workshop is for your group and other groups in the region to come together and develop the foundations for a regional network based on your own unique needs and wants. The workshop allows you to:

- Find out what's going on locally and be hugely energised by the diversity of activity!
- Get to know people better, find out how they got involved, what motivates them and what their expertise is.
- Explore how Transition groups thrive, learn about common barriers to carrying out Transition, and explore those connections that your groups already have outside of the Transition Movement in order to gain some common understanding.
- Define together what a regional network could do in your area.
- Enable everyone present to share what skills, experience, knowledge or support they could offer to others on a more personal level, and what they would like to get out of a regional network – we call this what people can “give” and what they would like to “gain”.
- Define the next achievable steps to make a regional network a reality.

Workshop Outline:

- **10am – 10.30am: Arrivals**
Tea and coffee, making friends old and new.
- **10.30am – 10.50am: Check-in**
Housekeeping and introducing the day along with asking every attendee to introduce themselves, which Transition initiative they come from and one thing they are most proud of in their work.
- **10.50am – 11.20am: Mapping in three ways**
Exploring geographical differences and similarities of Transition initiatives present.
 - Discussing how long Transition initiatives have been going.
 - Discussing how long attendees have been involved in Transition and wider grassroots action on climate change and sustainability.
- **11.20am – 12.30pm: Thrives, barriers and local connections**
Small group work exploring three questions:
 - What helps your Transition initiative to thrive?
 - What are the barriers to doing what you want to do?
 - What are your local connections?
- **12.30pm – 1.30pm: LUNCH**
- **1.30pm – 2.15pm: What would be the roles and themes of a regional network?**
A whole group discussion, chaired and illustrated with graphics. Participants to vote using “dot democracy” – five sticky dots to indicate their perceived most important themes.
- **2.15pm – 2.30pm: Break**
- **2.30pm – 3.15pm: Give and gain activity**
Asking what each attendee would give and what they would like to gain from the emerging themes of the regional network within their real-world capacity.
- **3.15pm – 4.00pm: Next practical steps**
Small group work transforming each theme into practical action and deciding on the next practical step.
- **4.00pm – 4.30pm: Closing, in two parts**
 - **Balloon game** – a fun activity to come up with a name for the regional network.
 - **Closing circle** – thanking attendees and asking what they would say to people who could not attend.

Preparation

Setting forth:

- If you want to offer a regional network event to Transition groups in your region, it can be useful to find out if Transitioners also feel the same way! Perhaps send out a simple online questionnaire to ask:
 - What's your name and which initiative are you from?
 - Would it be of interest to meet with other Transitioners in the area to share learning, activity and lunch?
- When finding a place to hold the workshop, ideally there would be a willing and enthusiastic local Transition group that can help with planning and suggest local venues and how to take care of lunch. It is also essential that the venue is:
 - In a location that is easy for people to get to by public transport and by carshare.
 - Try to ensure that a venue is physically accessible (including, but not limited to: no stepped or ramped entrance, meeting on ground level unless there is a lift, accessible toilet).
 - If possible ask potential participants to get in touch with their access needs to see if they can be accommodated.
 - Large enough for the number of people you might expect to come, and with enough room to have everyone together in a circle, as well as space for breaking out into small group sessions of between 4 and 6 people. There should also be enough space for everyone to eat comfortably.
 - Affordable or – even better – free. You may need to consider how to fund the event; although it doesn't need to cost a lot of money, you may want to think about:
 - Venue hire costs.
 - How you might do lunch.
 - How you might do refreshments.
 - Whether you will offer subsidy for travel.
 - Whether anyone will need overnight accommodation.
 - How you will source stationery to help run the event and capture what is said for future sharing.

There are multiple ways to finance these items, the easiest being to share the costs between the participants, or through local currency, support in kind, sponsorship or exchange.

Once you've decided to go for it . . .

There are a few things to do before making a big announcement.

- **Set up your communications**
 - Setting up online communications may be critically important. Here are some ideas gleaned from our experience:
 - Consider a Facebook event for easy sharing and discussion, including cross-posting to Transition initiatives on Facebook pages.
 - An Eventbrite event, which is free if you're not charging, is a good way to keep track of who has committed to attend and for you to easily communicate with those who have committed.
 - Emails to individual Transition Towns are particularly useful in the initial stages to raise awareness and direct possible attendees to other management platforms.
 - Create a communications timeline to help manage the process of event promotion.
- Who's going to come?
 - The workshops in England were just for Transitioners, even though we knew that there were significant collaborations between Transition initiatives and other organisations at a local level. Your context may be different to ours, so invite who feels relevant.

Don't feel you have to do all of the above – if you have good links with groups nearby, then not all these things may be required.

Before the Day:

Equipment Checklist

You'll need all these things to facilitate the day:

- This guide.
- Venue information.
- Digital camera for videos and photos.
- Attendee lists.
- Sticky labels for names.
- Contact recording forms so you can capture participants' names, transition groups, emails and phone numbers to share with the group later on.
- Workshop outline – both for your reference, and written on a piece of flipchart paper to put on the wall for participants to see.
 - **10am – 10.30am: Arrivals**
 - **10.30am – 10.50am: Check-in**
 - **10.50am – 11.20am: Mapping in three ways**
 - **11.20am – 12.30pm: Thrives, Barriers and Local Connections**
 - **12.30pm – 1.30pm: LUNCH**
 - **1.30pm – 2.15pm: What would be the roles and themes of a regional network?**
 - **2.15pm – 2.30pm: Break**
 - **2.30pm – 3.15pm: Give and gain activity**
 - **3.15pm – 4.00pm: Next practical steps**
 - **4.00pm – 4.30pm: Closing, in two parts**
 - **The Balloon Game**
 - **Closing Circle**
- Lots of A4 paper.
- Lots of flipchart paper.
- Felt tips & chunky pens.
- Sticky dots.
- Lots of sticky notes (Post-it notes are great).
- Masking tape.
- Post workshop questionnaire.

If not provided by the venue:

- Tea, coffee, milk, soya milk, sugar, biscuits, cups, teaspoons, etc.
- Lunchtime food and cutlery.

Facilitation guide for the day

We suggest timings for the day, but these can be adjusted to fit your timescales.

Welcome:

10am – 10.30am (30 minutes)

Participants arrive between 10am and 10.30am. It's really useful to have a welcome desk with a sign-in sheet and name labels, and someone to provide a warm, smiling welcome!

- It's also good to ask participants to give permission for using photos, sharing emails, etc at this point.
- Tea, coffee and biscuits can be in a different part of the room where there is space for people to get to know each other.

Check-in:

10.30am – 10.50am (20 minutes)



Purpose:

- To welcome everyone and communicate the practicalities of the day.
- To gain an overview of the diversity of activity – it really is inspiring to hear what groups have done.
- For each participant to be empowered to speak from their personal perspective.

Set-up:

- A circle of chairs, one for each participant and for the facilitators.
- The day's schedule on the wall where it is visible to all.

How to facilitate:

Checking in with everyone is a really great way to welcome the whole group, to introduce the host, the Transition initiative and the venue, and to introduce the aims and schedule for the day. In this section, you should:

- Go round the table, asking everyone to say their name and where they are from.
- Describe to the participants why they are here – to explore forming a regional network in the area, and discuss anything else specific to your region (if this has come up in previous communications).
- Describe the day – what to expect and the schedule.
- Cover health and safety points – fire exits, loos and saying thanks to your hosts, venue and anyone else who has contributed towards organisation of the day.
- Thank the host(s) for helping on the day, arranging the venue, etc.
- Record the day for sharing via film, photos and audio (but make sure people are happy with this).

Then ask everyone to speak in turn to get a sense of who is in the room and what they've been up to. In the go-round, ask each person to:

- Say their name and which Transition initiative they are from.
- Talk briefly about one project or characteristic of their Transition initiative that they are most proud of (make sure they select only one, otherwise this part can go on for a long time).

Session 1: Physical mapping exercise

10.50am – 11.20am (30 minutes)

Purpose:

This is a great short exercise that will help you to quickly get a picture of where people are from, how they are doing and more. The aim is:

- To get people up and moving.
- To find out the geographical boundaries of those present and the challenges and opportunities that creates in terms of meeting and organising regionally.
- To find out who is and who is not present.
- To understand the diversity in space, location and experience of participants.
- To empower participants to start thinking about their Transition initiatives as well as their place within those initiatives.

Set-up:

- A clear space, enabling participants to move around and locate themselves relative to each other. This could take place outside, as long as it's focused and quiet enough.

How to facilitate:

The aim is to get people to position themselves in the room based on a series of questions, in order to get a visual representation of their answers. This gives everyone present an overview of their geographical relationships, provides information about Transition groups and also some personal information about involvement in Transition.

Read out each question and ask people to position themselves appropriately, giving time between each question for reflection and observations from the group.

- Where are you based?
 - Work out where north and south are in the room.
 - Ask the group to organise among themselves where each initiative is in relation to the others.
 - Ask them to observe:
 - The ease of connection – what are the local transport links?
 - Who is not attending and why.
 - If there are any geographical or other boundaries to consider.
 - What the local authority/municipality structures are that may or may not be helpful.
 - If travel has an impact on how people interact.
- How long has your initiative been going?
 - Ask the group to organise themselves in a line based on the length of time each initiative has been running.
 - What do they observe from this? Is the group very or not very experienced? Is there a range or a polarity?
- How long have you been involved? (This is directed specifically at the individual participants.)
 - Start by asking how long people have been involved in Transition – what was the moment that encouraged them to step in?
 - Then ask about their involvement in environmental activism more generally. Does the group have the same views on this topic?
- Finally, pair people up who don't know each other, ideally pairing those who have been involved for a long time with those who are relatively new to Transition, and get them to discuss how and why they got involved in Transition.
 - Ask a couple of people for feedback.

Session 2: Thrives/barriers/local connections exercise

11.20am – 12.30pm (70 minutes)



Purpose:

- To empower participants to think from the perspective of their Transition initiatives.
- To explore common and not so common themes across the group.
- To start to think about how this may influence the role of a regional network.

Set-up:

- You'll need to have prepared three sheets of flipchart paper per group, each with "Thrive", "Barriers" or "Local Connections" written in the middle. You can get the groups to do this themselves if you haven't prepared it beforehand.
- Each group will need three stacks of Post-its, of three different colours, and three pieces of A4 paper.

How to facilitate:

Spend 5 minutes explaining the session outline below:

- Ask the group to divide into smaller groups of three to six people, ideally with people who are not in their Transition initiative.
- Explain that this session explores what helps your group to thrive, what the barriers are to being successful and what connections you already have in your area. Doing this helps you to think about the common issues that affect all groups and what can be done to make Transition a nurturing experience. It also helps people to gain more of an understanding about each other and what their groups are doing, which you can then chat about over lunch.

- Each question discussed should take 15 minutes (45 minutes in total):
 - The first 5 minutes should be spent in silence with participants writing on Post-it notes their responses to each question and sticking them on the flipchart paper. This gives people an opportunity to get their ideas out before getting into a conversation on one topic.
 - There will then be 10 minutes of group discussion where more issues can be added on Post-it notes to the flipchart paper. It can be useful to cluster together similar topics, then choose two main points and put them on one piece of A4.
- After this discussion, there should be a feedback session (25 minutes):
 - Ask each group to feed back on each of the three sessions in sequence.
 - Ask each group to feed back the two main points for each section that they wrote on the A4 paper.
 - Open the discussion out more widely to spot the common themes, or significant differences.

BREAK – Lunch:

12.30pm – 1.30pm (60 minutes)

Purpose:

- To eat, take a break and digest the morning's work.
- To provide an opportunity for people to get to know one another better – participants have found that the face-to-face nature of the workshops helps to build a sense of community and trust within the group.

Session 3: What would be the roles and themes of a regional network?

1.30pm – 2.15pm (45 minutes)



Purpose:

- To empower and encourage participants to think about what can be achieved at the regional level and what they could contribute.
- To take all the learning from the morning and apply it to thinking about how useful a regional network would be in supporting the work happening at the local level of Transition groups, as well as developing new activity at the regional level.
- To come up with the four to six key themes of the regional network.

Set-up:

- You'll need to have prepared two sheets of flipchart paper, stuck together in portrait format.
- Write on it "Themes and Roles of a Regional Network" and the name of your region.
- Ask the group to sit around a table with coloured pens and the prepared piece of paper.
- Nominate a Chair (hopefully your co-facilitator). Their role is to facilitate the participants' input by:
 - ensuring only one person speaks at a time.
 - noticing people who would like to speak.
 - noticing direct points.
 - managing the pace of the conversation.
 - prompting people to speak who are not saying a lot.

Sign language can be useful here:



one finger to make a point



one finger on each hand for a direct point.

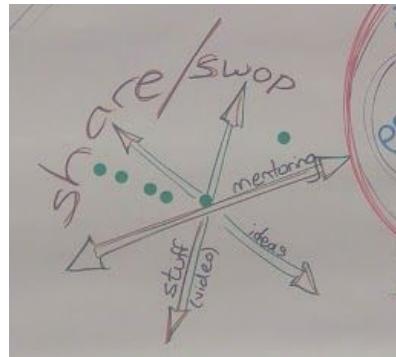
How to facilitate:

Mind mapping the roles and themes of a regional network (35 minutes):

- After introducing the roles and sign language, start by asking the group what the roles and themes of a regional network might be.
- The facilitator captures what is being said in words and images, trying to pull out the main issues. They should ask for clarity to capture the conversation correctly, and also try to draw out what people are saying to really define accurately what they are seeing as a role or theme of a regional network. The idea is to capture very practical concrete ideas, not vague meaningless statements.
- Trust that ideas and informed opinions will come once the discussion begins.

- At the end of the conversation, leave the room for 5 minutes to allow the group to look at the mind map and add to it, should something be missing.
- Then return to the room, ask the group to summarise any additions and ask for clarifications.

Dot democracy (10 minutes):



- Give each participant five sticky dots.
- Each dot is a vote for a role or theme that each individual participant thinks is the most important to take forward. All five dots can go on one role/theme, or each dot can go on a different theme.
- This will form the basis of the give and gain activity.

BREAK (prepare the give and gain activity)

2.15pm – 2.30pm (15 minutes)

Participants can go to the toilet and get a drink; it also allows them some time to digest the last session.

IMPORTANT TASK FOR YOU: As facilitators, look at the graphic illustration and the cumulative voting by dot democracy, then summarise the work of the group by forming four to six key themes from the votes, the drawing and the conversation, to use for the next activity.

Session 4: Give and gain activity

2.30pm – 3.15pm (45 minutes)

Purpose:

- To empower participants to lead on a regional network in a way that suits them.
- To return to the personal scale, exploring what participants can offer to move the regional network forward.
- To explore what skills participants are happy to offer to the regional network and what they'd like to learn.
- To think about what will happen next in a manageable, resource-respecting manner.



Set-up:

- Position chairs around a table, one chair for each participant.
- Write down, as title headings, each of the four to six key themes you have decided on onto separate pieces of flipchart paper. Draw a line down the middle of each piece of paper.
- Place the pieces of flipchart paper in a circle on the table, facing outwards.

How to facilitate:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- Explain that the four to six key themes of your regional network have been drawn from the group work and dot democracy from the last session.
- Introduce “give and gain” by reading out the following explanation by Fabio Santos from the book *Playing for Time: Making Art as if the World Mattered*:

“Imagine a team of people of all ages, ethnical and linguistic backgrounds, sexual orientation and religious beliefs working and living side-by-side for two weeks. Imagine that they have a show to put together by the end of the two weeks without an overall artistic director, a music director, a choreographer or a designer telling people what to do, how to walk, how to stand or how to deliver their lines as there are no lines.”

Who is in charge? The beauty of Give and Gain is that every single person is in charge; in charge of their own personal journey and in charge of the collective journey. Working with others, exchanging stories, ways of living and working goes beyond the superficial cultural exchanges we have become accustomed to. Collaboration gains a deeper meaning allowing for deeper conversations to take place as a result.

In practice, the give and gain ethos is introduced very early on in the project where everyone is asked what they can give and what they hope to gain from the project. This is mapped out in what is called the Give and Gain wheel and stays up on the wall in the rehearsal space where everyone can look at it on a daily basis. The Give and Gain wheel then becomes the blueprint for daily session planning as well as the project and final performance overall plans. By identifying the ones who are keen to write for example, enables the team to plan writing sessions accordingly and as a result, the script for the final show starts to take shape.

The Give and Gain wheel becomes the contract by which we all agree to work towards a common goal, take responsibility for our own learning journey and the learning journey of others. It becomes the roadmap by which we can navigate our way through difference of opinions, disagreements and challenging issues. It enables us to become both a student and a teacher, a director and an actor, a choreographer and a dancer, a producer, a designer, a poet. It enables every single person involved to find the space and place to make a contribution. And enables all contributions to be equally celebrated. The Give and Gain methodology is about sharing creative responsibility to engender changes in ourselves and in the world we live in.“

Use granted by kind permission of Fabio Santos, Original text appears in Lucy Neal's book Playing for time.

30 minutes (15 minutes for “give” and 15 minutes for “gain”):

- Ask people what skills they want to give to the emerging themes of the regional network. Ask them to be as specific as possible and to be honest – this is the chance to think about their own capacity to contribute.
- Ask participants to write one “give” per Post-it and put it on the appropriate theme. It’s helpful to use the same colour Post-its for all “gives”.
- Repeat the process for “gain”, but be aware that this is a more sensitive question for some as they want to contribute, but may not have capacity or feel that they do not have skills to offer (which is usually not the case as people tend to underestimate what they have to offer).
- Stick the Post-its onto each themed flipchart sheet, with “gives” in the first column, then “gains” in the other.

10 minutes:

- Look at what has been put into each column and get people to read out what patterns they see (5 minutes).
- Ask participants to match up the gives and gains; if there are matches this points to potential ways people can support each other immediately. (5 minutes).

Session 5: Towards next practical steps

3.15pm – 4.00pm (45 minutes)



Purpose:

- To empower participants to lead on a regional network in a way that suits them.
- To think about what will realistically happen next, based on the energy and capacity in the room for taking on tasks.

Set-up:

- Ask the participants to sit back in a circle.
- Give each participant a blank sheet of A4 paper and a thick pen.

How to facilitate:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- Ask the group to write on their pieces of paper:
 - What is the one theme you are drawn to in order to work out the **next practical step?**
- Participants write down in silence what they want to work on.
- Ask the participants to stand up with their A4 sheets facing them so no one else can see them, then ask everyone to turn their pieces of paper around at the same time.
- Look at what has emerged and put people who share a theme together into working groups that will discuss the next practical steps.
- Look out for anyone who is on their own and aim to place them in a similar working group.

Working groups explore and decide how to manage the next practical steps (30 minutes):

- Give each working group the give and gain sheets; this may provide direction for their theme.
- Encourage each group to explore their theme – what does this theme mean for the group and what would need to happen for it to become a reality? This is, initially, an envisioning exercise to begin to realise how this chosen theme could develop in the region.
- Critically, the groups should come up with a next practical step that is achievable within their current capacity. This could be as simple as one person volunteering to coordinate the next meeting about that theme, or could be more complex, depending on the resources in the group.

State next practical steps (10 minutes):

- Get each group to feed back to the others their next practical steps.
- These next practical steps mean the regional network has begun!

Session 6: Balloon game

4.00pm – 4.15pm (15 minutes)

Purpose:

- For participants to come up with a name, catchphrase or collection of words that describe the network – and have some fun along the way!

Set-up:

- The participants work in pairs.
- Each pair is given a balloon and a marker pen.

How to facilitate:

- Ask the pairs to blow up the balloon.
- Ask the paired participants to think about the day.
- Ask the participants to think about the key words or phrases that they think sum up their experience during the day. This could be a collection of words, or a phrase, or sentence or poem – it doesn't matter.
- Then ask them to write it on the balloon, then get everyone to throw balloons up in air so they all end up with a different balloon, then ask each person to read out what is on the balloon they have.
- Towards the end of the short exercise, ask the pairs to see if a name for the network is emerging.



Session 7: Closing circle

4.15pm – 4.30pm (15 minutes)

Purpose:

- To close well, returning to the people who are present and showing appreciation for the day.

Set-up:

- Form a circle of chairs, one for each participant.
- Or, if it feels better, form a standing circle.

How to facilitate:

- Thank the participants for the energy and input throughout the day.
- Remind them of what we've worked through.
- Ask a simple question to close: What would you say about the workshop to someone who didn't come?
- Go around the circle inviting everyone to speak.
- Get everyone together and take a picture with the “roles and themes” graphic produced in Session 3.

More Information

Regional Networks Guide <https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/regional-networks-guide/>

Download this guide -

<https://transitionnetwork.org/resources/regional-networks-workshop-facilitation-guide/>

Transition Network Website - <https://transitionnetwork.org>