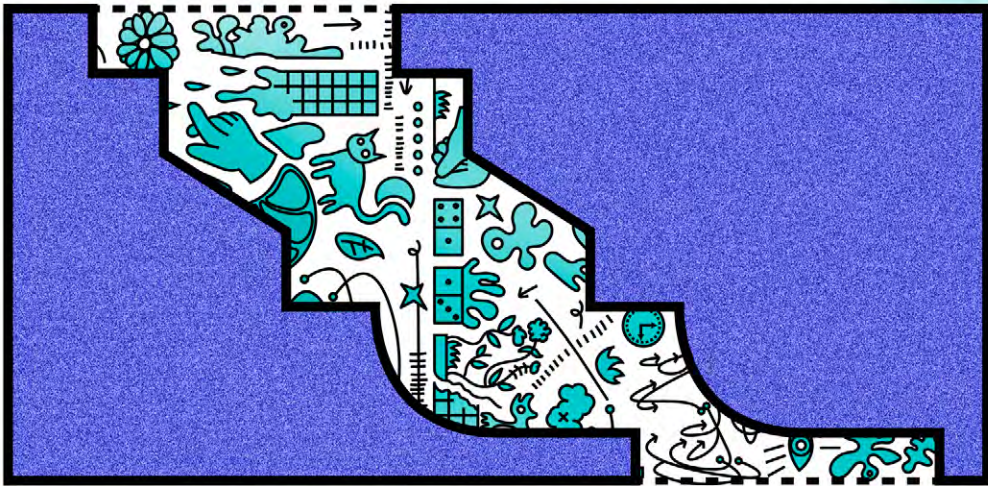
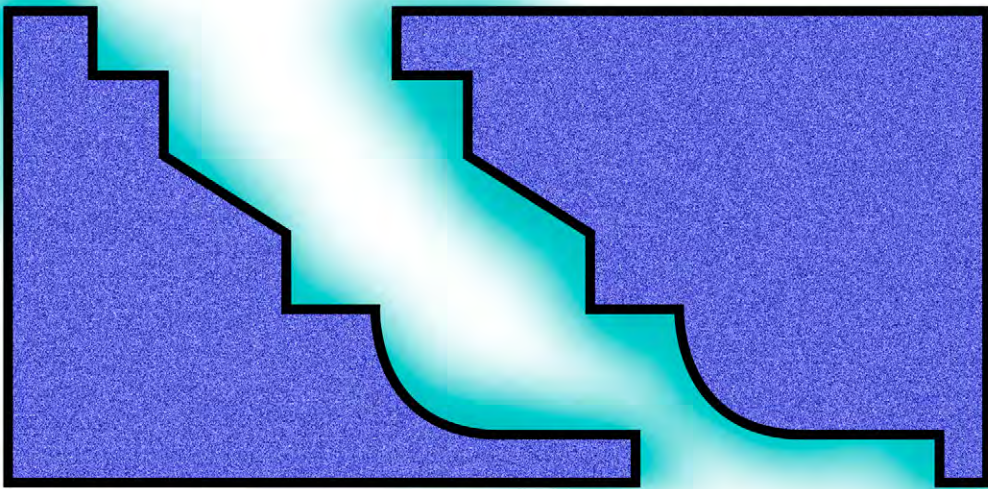
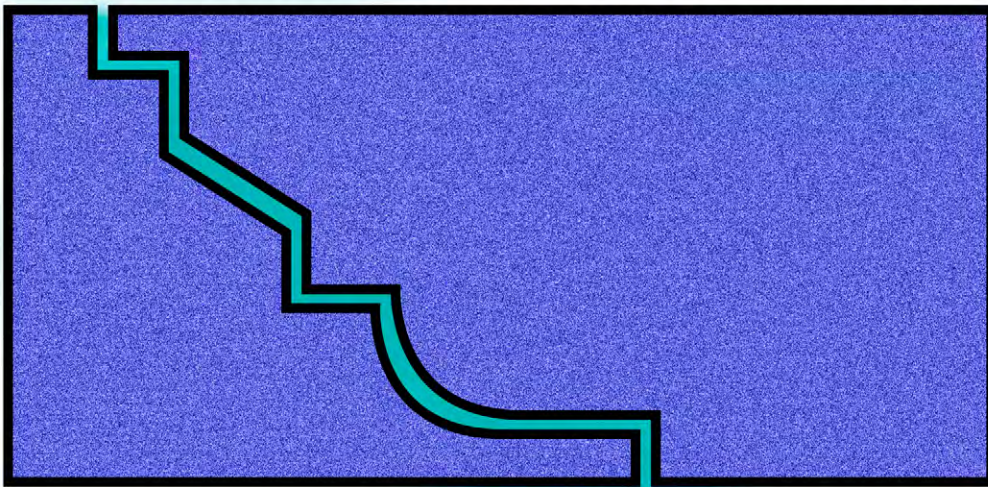


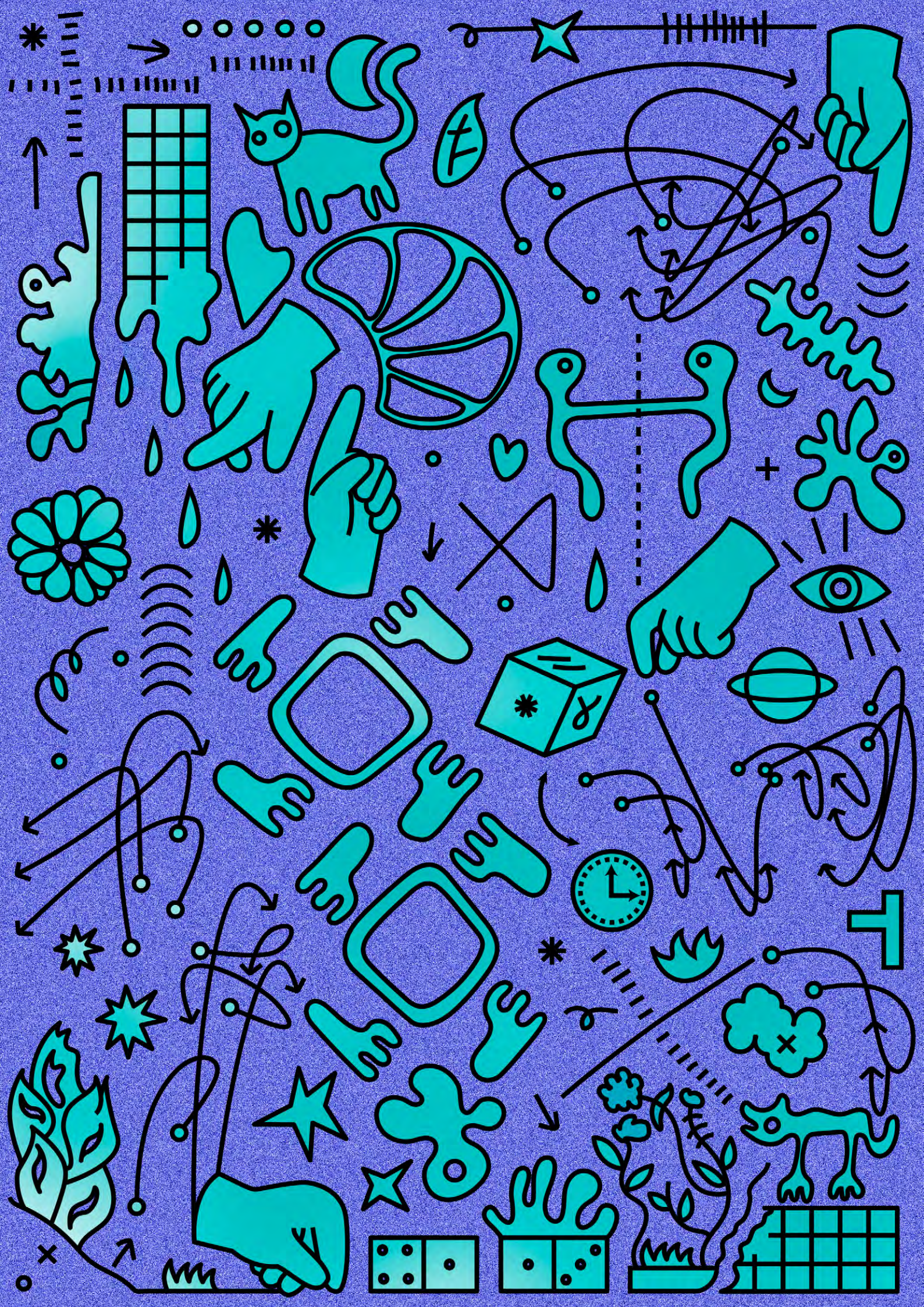
# TAKING



A Guide to Participatory Tools and Techniques



# PART



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# Warning:

Participation in the Museum of  
the Commons



## **WARNING: PARTICIPATION IN THE MUSEUM OF THE COMMONS**

Fran MM Cabeza de Vaca  
Head of Education

Since 1999, as part of his long-standing project *On Translation: Warning*, the artist Antoni Muntadas has been displaying a simple sentence on ephemeral publications such as postcards, flyers and billboards in public places, set in white capitals on a red background: 'WARNING: PERCEPTION REQUIRES INVOLVEMENT'.

This warning, which could be read as an invitation, a statement of intent, an exhortation or even a threat, alerts us to the mechanisms that are present in all forms of communication, with a particular emphasis on those triggered by works of art. It also hints at the strategies employed in media and advertising for the benefit of the market and of politics as spectacle. In our current social and cultural context, passivity appears to be encouraged in uncritical recipients by the proliferation and mass reproduction of images, consumed via endless scrolling. As Andrea Soto Calderón explains in her book *La performatividad de las imágenes* (2020), the paradoxical effect of living in a world saturated by images is a drastic reduction in our ability to observe attentively. From this perspective, the real issue with the exponential growth of image production-and-perception in today's society is the steep decline in the power of the image: a kind of erasure through excess. Against this backdrop, the message conveyed by Muntadas's *On Translation: Warning* is like a snap of the fingers that breaks the spell, draws us out of our perceptive lethargy and revives the possibility that we may actively participate in the process of perception. Warning: involvement is *essential* for true perception.

The aesthetic regime of perception that is produced by the excessive proliferation of images is situated within broader social dynamics. Apathy and disaffection are fuelling a gradual dismantling of collective gathering spaces and unravelling community networks at different levels. Faced with this trend towards the disintegration of communities in modern-day societies, numerous responses have emerged from the arts sector as part of what Claire Bishop terms the 'social turn' – an artistic shift towards community in which artists

have evolved from their traditional position as producers of artworks to become generators of situations. Here, the idea of an artwork as an object is replaced by that of the artwork as a project or process with blurred boundaries, in which spectators are invited to participate. Bishop traces the genealogy of this social turn in the arts in her book *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (2012), which covers a variety of movements and practices ranging from the Situationist International to performances by Graciela Carnevale and Oscar Masotta during the Argentinian dictatorship, the mass performances by the Proletkult Theatre in the early days of the Soviet Union, the dissident ceremonies and demonstrations held by Milan Knížák in 1960s Slovakia, and Augusto Boal's influential Theatre of the Oppressed. It also includes more recent performative practices, such as those of Dora García, among many others. In the words of Jacques Rancière, these practices appeal to an emancipated spectator, and challenge, often radically, the idea that art is to be passively received. Whether we like it or not, in these practices, perception and involvement are one and the same.

In 2023, the Museo Reina Sofía was visited by a total of 2,530,560 people. Would it be correct to say that all these visitors were 'participants' in the museum? At the Education Department, we would be overjoyed to learn that many of them had heeded Muntadas's exhortation as they discovered the work of Guatemalan artist Margarita Azurdia, watched one of Angela Melitopoulos's video installations or marvelled at Ángeles Santos's impressive painting *A World* (1929). We like to believe that, even amid the trend towards indiscriminate image consumption described earlier, many of these people played an active part in the communication loop established by artworks, closing a circle left open by the artists, through their presence and undivided attention. Let us hope that, at the very least, the experience offered by the museum helps to transform the ways in which they observe, listen, perceive and pay attention, are present. With this in mind, the Education Department is keen for large numbers of people to feel invited to *take part*, as the title of this publication suggests, in this radical practice of perception.

The Museo Reina Sofía's 'Team of Teams' project takes up an old conversation topic around the idea of the audience at cultural institutions that has been raised by successive L'Internationale programmes. As

*The Constituent Museum: Constellations of Knowledge, Politics and Mediation* (2018) explains, the term 'constituencies' offers a way of describing the relationship between institutions and their interlocutors that transcends the notion of the visitor and casts doubt on the use of other terms such as 'audience' and 'user'. It was during the *Our Many Europes* programme (2018–22) that the term 'constituencies' began to be more widely discussed and its potential and limitations analysed, as in publications like *FROM/TO: Letters From/To the Constituent Museum* (2022).

In this new cycle for L'Internationale, with the *Museum of the Commons* programme (2023–26) the Museo Reina Sofía is exploring the idea of participation through public programmes involving networks, schools and educational resources, of which this publication, *Taking Part: A Guide to Participatory Tools and Techniques*, is one. Intended as a simple guide, written by political scientist Jorge Gaupp, advisor to the Museo Reina Sofía's Study Centre, it begins with an introductory essay that compiles recent arguments and research on the evolutionary relevance of cooperation and participation in humans, contrasting them with ideas and movements that promote competition and individualism as drivers of progress. The bulk of the publication features an extensive range of carefully chosen activities and techniques which have been updated and classified to encourage varying degrees of participation among all kinds of groups, from students of any age and level of education, formal or informal, to activist collectives, groups of adults, study groups and institutional groups, among others. It draws on such varied sources as social activism, corporate management, education, institutional governance and theatre.

We understand participation as a muscle, trained through gestures as simple as forming a circle and holding hands, gazing into the eyes of someone we have just met or handling conflict through role play. We are aware that through such simple (albeit often unwittingly complex) actions – actions that bring people together – a more participatory, democratic society can emerge. Only under these conditions (and through empowered outreach strategies) will there be a place for art that we feel part of, that we want to be part of and to take part *in*.





## TAKING PART: A GUIDE TO PARTICIPATORY TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Jorge Gaupp

Investigador colaborador

Participatory tools are increasingly used among a wide variety of groups and institutions to help solve problems and boost organisational performance. Despite this, they remain uncharted territory for most people, including many of those who lead groups or work with other people on a daily basis. In other cases, people are biased towards these tools, dismissing them as something only used by (and useful to) specific types of groups: 'That's just a hippy thing they use in squats and ecovillages', some say. 'They're an excuse for Google and other big companies to squeeze their workers dry', argue others. 'That's for teenagers' is another dismissive reaction. But these ideas hold little sway when we learn that participatory tools are used (and useful) within such different settings as municipal governance, theatre, formal and informal education, corporate management and social activism.

This guide focuses on these five areas, selecting dynamics found in each of them. Naturally, each of these different settings has its own specific objectives when it comes to developing participatory techniques. Generally speaking, in municipal governance, they tend to be used to channel social demands and strengthen institutional democracy; in theatre, they enable collective work on the body and emotions; in education, they motivate students and serve as learning strategies; in corporate management, they can improve performance; and in social activism, they promote equality and facilitate conflict resolution.

What all participatory cultures share is the need to transcend individual opinions and interests in order to successfully work towards a common goal. Not only does clearly focused participation boost group motivation, it also stimulates creativity and improves decision-making. In turn, individuals' lives can be enhanced by participating in group dynamics, which, as the section that follows seeks to demonstrate, offer benefits beyond enabling a specific group of people to achieve their collective goals.

Once the 'why' of participatory tools is clear, further questions will arise: What do I do now? Where do I start? To help you in response, the final part of this guide features seventy-five participatory activities for use with any group, which are summarised in a practical manner and tagged with the needs they address, so that users can quickly and easily search for and select the most appropriate technique. For deeper engagement, a series of recommendations and references is also provided.

## WHY SHOULD WE PARTICIPATE?

In the past, the main challenges involved in collaborative projects were bringing people with different ideas to work together and avoiding long, rambling discussions. These days, we have tools to tackle or mitigate these challenges, many of which can be found in this guide. But even with these tools in hand, the primary issue that remains is a widespread unwillingness to participate in group projects.

There are many reasons for this trend. Precarious working conditions and low salaries combine with social pressures triggered by the notion of the 'entrepreneurial self' to make investing time in anything not guaranteed to deliver financial resources or professional growth seem a frightening prospect. What's more, increasingly sophisticated methods are used to cause screen addiction, stealing our time to fill databases. It will be difficult to get out of this rut without some form of collective action.

The aim of this guide is not to tell you how to behave or to pass moral judgement, as each group must establish its own values and dynamics during the participatory process. Instead, we encourage you to take part in participatory processes because you want to, because it makes you happier and because it makes you wiser.

— *Because we want to*

Since the late 1990s, and in the last ten years especially, a radical shift has occurred in the disciplines that seek to study what is known as 'human nature', breathing new life into the concept. In such varied fields as education, sociology, evolutionary psychology, primatology, physical and cultural anthropology, genetics, neuroscience, socio-

biology, criminology, political science and branches of economics such as game theory, theorists have shown that, although culture and education are key factors in shaping our behaviours, our genetic inheritance has a major influence on what brings us pleasure and pain, both physically and mentally. This can be explained by the fact that for hundreds of thousands of years, humans and their ancestors have lived in cultural, educational and material environments that have helped forge our current physical and psychological forms, and therefore our social behaviours.

Broadly speaking, this shift in perspective appears to suggest that, far from being inherently selfish, immoral and antisocial (as sciences believed in the late twentieth century), human beings tend to feel happier and healthier when they show reciprocity, cooperation, solidarity and altruism – in other words, when they play a part in improving community life.

Although this might seem obvious to some, it makes little sense to others (perhaps even the modern-day majority). They justify their scepticism by citing top-down historiography or current affairs. How can humans be anything other than selfish, evil or stupid when we are constantly killing one another and destroying our planet, and when our history as a species is a succession of wars and power struggles? One answer to this question is that war and environmental destruction are the product of decisions made by elites via mechanisms of power and accumulation, lack of contact between different societies, epistemological errors and propaganda, rather than any natural inclination among the broader population. For a more in-depth understanding of this idea, we can delve further into the disciplines listed above. Many of them are interrelated and there is considerable overlap between the research undertaken in these fields. Let us consider several particularly significant studies.

In their 2011 book *A Cooperative Species: Human Reciprocity and Its Evolution*, economist Samuel Bowles and behavioural scientist Herbert Gintis show that human beings are cooperative even with complete strangers and to a far greater extent than any other animal species, with the exception of social insects. According to them, cooperation is not driven solely by self-interest but is also the result of genuine care for others' wellbeing and respect for social and

ethical norms. The authors observe that 'contributing to the success of a joint project for the benefit of one's group, even at a personal cost, evokes feelings of satisfaction, pride, even elation'. Bowles and Gintis reveal how the groups of *Homo sapiens* that were most inclined to cooperate and uphold ethical standards tended to survive and spread more than other groups. Drawing on different forms of mutualism and altruism, our ancestors 80,000 years ago were able to hunt two-ton African buffalo, to share the meat and to feed and care for other mothers' babies as a community. The book also cites hundreds of examples of effective forms of governance and communal resource management around the world, qualifying the dilemma known as the 'tragedy of the commons', which is still taught in economics today. Returning to the present, it examines social psychology experiments in which 'many, perhaps most, experimental subjects were found to be fair-minded, generous toward those similarly inclined, and nasty toward those who violate these prosocial precepts'.

But why is this the case? In the revolutionary *Survival of the Friendliest: Understanding Our Origins and Rediscovering Our Common Humanity* (2020), Brian Hare and Vanessa Woods show that the main cognitive difference between humans and other primates is our ability to learn from other people. They argue that cooperation is the key to the success of *Homo sapiens* compared to other, much stronger hominids with larger brains. Among our closest ancestors, like bonobos, females triggered a process of self-domestication by selecting the friendliest males (most suited to teamwork) to mate with instead of the most belligerent or aggressive. This casts light on why individuals with smaller canine teeth and softer features prevailed in human evolution. Indeed, human beings are the only one of more than 200 primate species to blush, which shows how important we consider other people's opinions of us, and to have a large white area in our eyes, which allows us to see where others are looking.

Research of this kind was made possible by the recognition of female agency in natural selection, which had been ignored in early evolutionary science due to patriarchal bias, as anthropologist and primatologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy explains in *The Woman That Never Evolved* (1981). Blaffer Hrdy played a central role in developing what is now the most widely accepted explanation of the origin of cooperative and altruistic behaviour in our species: cooperative breeding

between groups of mothers and other caregivers. In *Mother Nature: A History of Mothers, Infants and Natural Selection* (1999), she presents evidence of the importance of this cooperative breeding among hominids since they descended from the trees, contradicting prior assumptions that projected the modern nuclear family model onto the Palaeolithic. In *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding* (2009), she argues that groups of mothers and wet nurses selected the offspring most capable of reading others' intentions and cooperating with the group by giving them better food and care. However, this argument did not gain traction until 2014, when the study 'The Evolutionary Origin of Human Hyper-cooperation', led by Judith Burkart and Carel van Schaik, was published in *Nature* magazine. The article reports on the results of an experiment to determine the degree of altruism present in the behaviour of fifteen different primate species, including humans, showing that species that engage in cooperative breeding are considerably more altruistic than the others.

Meanwhile, archaeologists Alecia Schrenk, Lorna Tilley and their team found bones belonging to *Homo sapiens* and Neanderthal sufferers of different diseases which meant they would have had to have been cared for in order to survive. Their most famous discovery was a hunter-gatherer who lived 4,000 years ago and was paralysed from the waist down, with very limited use of his arms, for at least the last ten years of his life. After detecting the DNA of incapacitating diseases upon analysing these bones, Tilley coined the term 'bioarchaeology of care'. As a result of this line of research, scholars have been able to foreground findings that would once have been downplayed or overlooked.

This body of evidence contradicts research undertaken in the 1960s and 70s, which gave rise to what was later termed 'veneer theory' (Waal, 2005). According to this theory, civilised human morality is no more than a recently invented veneer and all that is needed for the ferocious beast that dwells within us to emerge is a slight alteration to our culturally regulated way of life. However, this idea is endorsed by only a handful of widely disseminated experiments, several literary works and extensive tabloid press coverage. In recent years, all of the main studies have been critically reviewed.

The most famous experiment in this area was carried out by Philip Zimbardo at Stanford University (California) in 1971, who recruited twenty-four young men to act as prisoners and guards. As per the study and hundreds of subsequent articles and interviews, as well as three films and four episodes of different series, the guards began to display spontaneous, unusual, perverse violence against the prisoners shortly after stepping into their roles. Almost forty years later, in 2009, sociologist and documentarist Thibault Le Texier began to examine materials from the study for a documentary film. To his surprise, he learned from these videos and documents that the young recruits had expressed no desire to treat others sadistically and violently; rather, they had received orders to mistreat them in all kinds of ways by the researchers themselves. Despite their instructions, the men had tried to resist such behaviours. 'It took me a long time to realise it was all a hoax', he later commented in an interview (Bregman 2021, 185). This discovery granted Le Texier an article in the world-leading journal *American Psychologist*: 'Debunking the Stanford Prison Experiment' (2013).

Other experiments that have purported to show evidence of a selfish, antisocial, violent human nature, such as the Milgram experiment or the Robbers Cave experiment (Perry, 2018), have also been called into question. Even Richard Dawkins, almost twenty years ago, retracted his ideas about our supposedly selfish nature in the introduction to later editions of his best-selling 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, suggesting that it should have been titled 'The Immortal Gene' or even 'The Cooperative Gene' instead (Dawkins 2006, 11). Indeed, ever since Lynn Margulis discovered that bacteria were capable of modifying the genetic inheritance of different types of cells in mammals, the very notion of individuality is being challenged in the field of genetics. This issue is raised by biologists and philosophers Scott Gilbert, Jan Sapp and Alfred Tauber in their 2012 article 'A Symbiotic View of Life: We Have Never Been Individuals'. Going one step further, they reveal how a focus on cooperation can also be observed in anatomy, physiology, immunology, developmental biology and neurology. In their view, the symbiosis between different kingdoms of life is becoming 'a core principle of contemporary biology, and it is replacing an essentialist conception of 'individuality'.

– *Because it makes us happier*

It would not be unreasonable to think that, if our bodies are designed to collaborate with other bodies, to do so should have a positive psychological outcome. But is there any research on this specific topic? How does prosocial behaviour relate to happiness? The 2019 *World Happiness Report* features a section led by Lara Aknin that presents a systematic review of the available evidence in this area. The report begins by reminding us that we humans are the primate species that provides most assistance to family, friends and strangers, even when it comes at a cost to ourselves. Thirty-seven studies are evaluated, revealing a 'robust link' between helping other people with no expectation of monetary compensation (i.e. volunteering) and greater life satisfaction, positive affect and reduced depression. This correlation is present in rich and poor countries and in different economic, political and cultural contexts. That said, women provide more assistance than men and obtain greater satisfaction from doing so. The report also cites studies that point to greater well-being among volunteers than among non-volunteers, even when the latter participate in sports or cultural clubs. All of these studies are based on observing the correlation between variables in existing social groups.

Meanwhile, the experiments carried out by neuroscientist Richard Davidson in 2019 demonstrate that there is an 'innate propensity for kindness', but that this kindness must be nurtured. For example, 99 percent of children from different cultures choose a cooperative, generous puppet over a selfish one. Supporting and showing compassion for others also enhances overall emotional well-being and health. In this regard, Davidson makes a distinction between compassion (the commitment and tools to alleviate other people's suffering) and empathy (the ability to feel what others are feeling), viewing the former as more effective and identifying different neural circuits for the two emotions. For example, helping others activates the motor area of the brain and stimulates the immune system. Perhaps his most unique, renowned contribution is the discovery of neuroplasticity around tenderness and kindness as part of the compassion circuit. Davidson shows that these traits can be trained at any age, and that this can lead to improvements in health and in academic outcomes.

– *Because it makes us wiser*

According to research by Wegard Harsvik and Ingvar Skjerve, in the Western market economy, society has long been viewed through the lens of selfishness, competition and conflict. This perspective served (and continues to serve) the Taylorist by business culture, in which workers are perceived as two-dimensional, idle, selfish beings to be exploited. It also serves a neoliberal paradigm that overlooks society and produces isolated, self-exploited individuals, besieged by the constant anxiety of those who fear failing to accumulate the money, fame or power necessary to be considered successful. In short, it serves capitalism, which, throughout its history, has been most strongly opposed by groups based on voluntary participation, such as unions, associations and parties.

Yet, the consequences of this neoliberal perspective stretch far beyond an economic and labour market model. Viewing human beings as innately selfish has profound ramifications for political, educational, cultural and legal systems, among other areas of life, as well as for perceptions of social participation. What is the point of participating in communities if they will inevitably fail because of prevailing selfishness, or else take advantage of our good will? Wouldn't it be better for everyone to look out for themselves? In biomedicine, this would be termed a 'nocebo effect': 'If we believe most people can't be trusted, that's how we'll treat each other, to everyone's detriment. Few ideas have as much power to shape the world as our view of other people. Because ultimately, you get what you expect to get' (Bregman 2020, 9).

What we 'expect to get', based on fear and distrust, might easily lead to the racism, sexism, classism, xenophobia and religious prejudice that so much oppression, slaughter and war continues to fuel. But scientific research has some good news for us: this nocebo effect can be prevented or mitigated by participating in plural communities. In sociology, the most robust theory on how to bring an end to prejudice is the contact hypothesis. In 2006, Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp compiled 515 studies from 38 different countries, observing that meaningful contact with others leads to greater trust, solidarity and mutual understanding, and that the more diverse our circle of



friends, the less fear, hatred and prejudice we feel towards outsiders.

In our society, neoliberal thought is combined with Christianity-based ethics, in which the unbearable prevailing individualism is countered by a moral appeal to 'do good'. Both ideologies or systems of thought are based on a similar assumption, however, which is that humans are inherently selfish or sinful. As a result, Christianity views helping others as a sacrifice or a necessary hardship carried out upon God's command. This notion reinforces a binary separation between selfishness and altruism, which, according to the data now available, does not accurately reflect our true nature.

Research shows that we engage and collaborate with other people because it is good both for them and for ourselves. In light of certain current trends, participation could be seen not so much as a moral imperative but as a necessity for our species, and, ultimately, as the smartest way forward.

## **HOW CAN WE PARTICIPATE?**

The activities presented in the section that follows have been selected, updated, tagged and organised with reference to a variety of manuals, handbooks, articles and interviews that are cited at the end of each activity. Although the summaries provided here are sufficient to grasp the activities, it would be helpful to consult the sources cited in each case for more information and a more in-depth understanding. Links to PDFs or websites that can be viewed at any time are given for almost all sources, but anyone wishing to use these activities on a regular basis should consult the more detailed print handbooks cited in the bibliography at the end of this document, which contain many more examples and recommendations.

These recommendations focus on the contexts addressed by each source: municipal governance (Bustos, García and Chueca 2018), theatre (Boal 2001; Cañas Torregosa 2009; Herrero Pagán 2023), education (Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987; Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguileta 2009; Gil et al. 2010), corporate management (Gray, Brown and Macanujo 2012) and social activism (Alberich et al. 2009; Grupo Dinámicas 2014; Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2005–2016; Colectivo Larre 2023). However, many of them overlap and allow us to identify

a series of key tips for using the activities in this guide successfully:

- The facilitator(s) must reflect on the purpose and audience of the participatory process in question when planning an activity
- The facilitator(s) should seek to understand what it is that legitimises their work with the group and where this legitimacy comes from
- As well as explaining the reasons for using each activity, facilitator(s) must also ensure that group participants understand and accept them before continuing
- Participatory dynamics must not be used to legitimise decisions that have already been made; the facilitator(s) must be open to learning from the group and allowing participants to set their own goals
- Participants must be made aware of all the rules before beginning an activity
- It is important to consider and manage the expectations of everyone involved in the activity appropriately
- The unique characteristics and diversity of the group in question should be taken into consideration; it can be helpful to modify the activities to reflect these characteristics
- The facilitator(s) must set an example when it comes to active listening and assertive communication
- All participatory processes must be constantly monitored and corrected to prevent 'scope creep'

The aim of this guide is not to provide an exhaustive set of instructions for implementing participatory processes, addressing all possible issues arising along the way. For a manual of this kind, see the excellent *Manual de metodologías participativas* (CIMAS 2009), or, for a more general guide, see pages 7–14 of the *Guía práctica para facilitar la participación ciudadana* (Bustos, García and Chueca 2018).

The activities presented here are numbered and organised into three types, inspired by the book *Gamestorming* (Gray et al. 2012). These classifications relate to the stage in the process at which the group find themselves, or to the situation or theme that they seek to explore:

- **Type 1: OPENING** techniques to build knowledge and group cohesion, come up with ideas or find common ground
- **Type 2: EXPLORING** techniques aimed at identifying, examining, experimenting, exploring and motivating, both within and beyond the group
- **Type 3: CLOSING** techniques to help the group reach conclusions, make decisions, implement actions, solve conflicts, improve internal communication, reach agreements or adopt new stances

Within each type, the activities are organised from those requiring the least experience and preparation on the part of the facilitator(s) to those tackling deeper, more sensitive topics, demanding more preparation or making more intense use of the body. Before attempting more advanced activities, it would be advisable for the facilitator(s) and the group to experience some of the easier ones first.

Finally, the activities are tagged to indicate what purposes they serve. For quick reference, the table below lists the activities corresponding to each purpose by number, and in order of appearance:



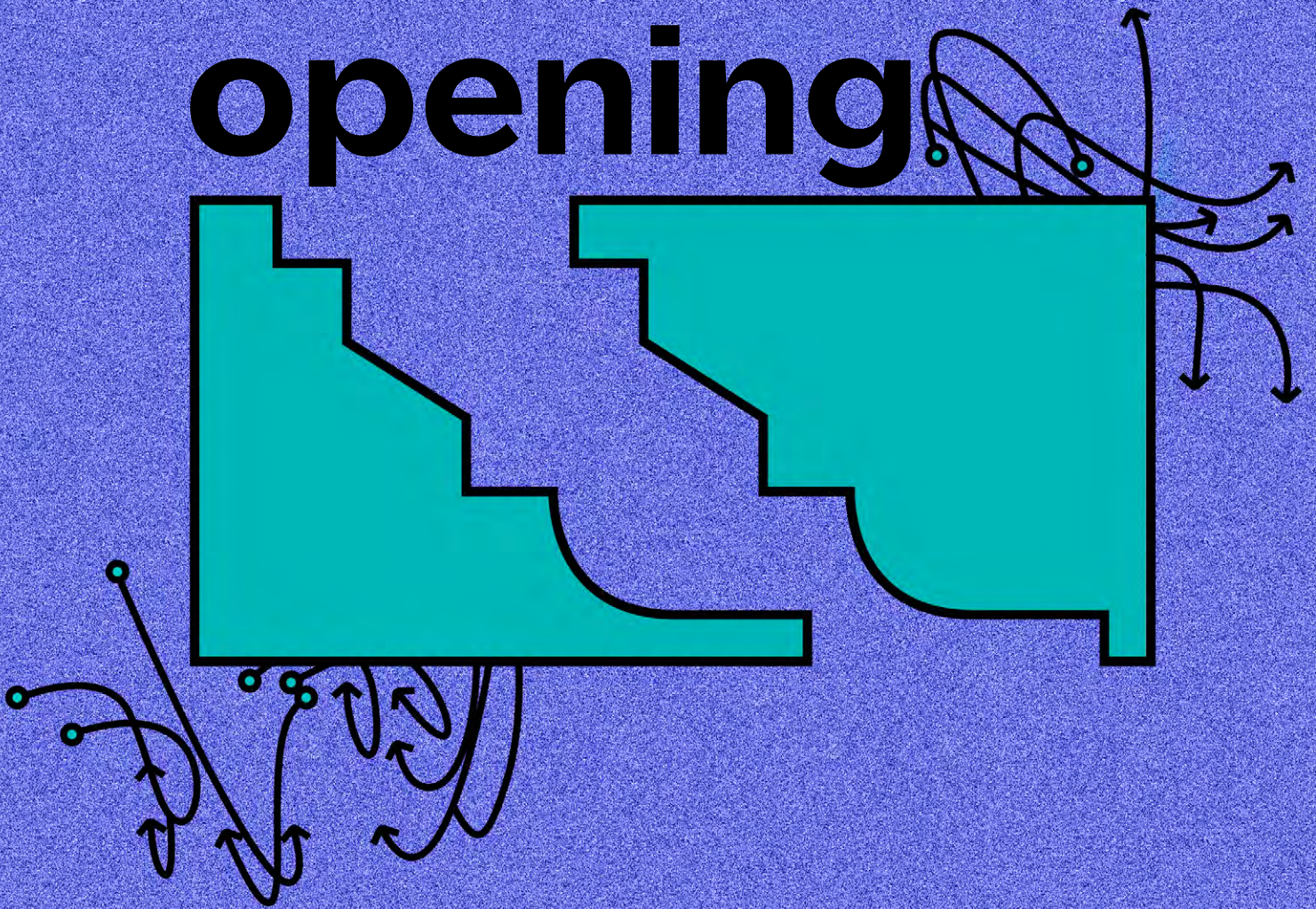
Getting to know one another	1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 23, 61, 62, 65
Training perception	7, 8, 16, 17, 18, 21, 25, 26, 56
Boosting motivation	2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 40, 45, 50, 51, 52, 53, 59, 61, 63, 64, 74, 75
Building group cohesion	2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 33, 36, 40, 45, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75
Identifying topics of interest	7, 9, 30, 35, 41
Stimulating ideas	4, 5, 6, 39, 40, 43, 45, 46, 49, 52, 59, 68
Obtaining information	6, 9, 32, 33, 34, 41, 42, 44
Defining concepts	39, 40, 48
Identifying problems	9, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 52, 53, 59
Preventing conflicts	10, 12, 54, 56, 57, 58, 64, 65, 70, 72
Using the body	14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 48, 54, 59, 61, 64, 74
Reflecting on group dynamics and roles	10, 24, 33, 35, 38, 40, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 55, 56, 59, 60, 63, 65
Analysing a situation or topic	5, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 52, 53, 59
Analysing decision-making	46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 55, 58
Organising tasks	10, 46, 49, 66
Making decisions	52, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71
Improving internal communication	8, 24, 25, 47, 52, 54, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 72, 73
Solving conflicts	32, 33, 47, 55, 56, 58, 59, 63, 64, 65, 71, 72, 73

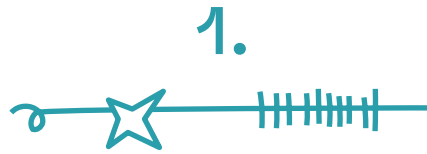
# PARTICIPATORY



# ACTIVITIES

**opening**





## BALL OF WOOL

### Purpose:

↔ Getting to know one another ↔

### Instructions:

The group sit in a circle. The person holding the ball of wool says their name and one of their characteristics or interests, e.g. a pet hate. Then, taking (and keeping) hold of the end of the wool, they throw the ball to the person sitting opposite. The person who catches it then says their name and pet hate (e.g.), before taking hold of the wool and throwing the ball to the third person. This process is repeated until everyone has spoken and the group have formed a woollen cobweb. Then, they perform the activity in reverse order to undo the cobweb. This time, as each participant catches the ball of wool, they should say the name and pet hate of the person who initially threw it to them, adding a positive quality of that person.

For more information, see: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2010](#)

## 2.



## IMAGINARY LIVES

### Purpose:

- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔

### Instructions:

In a group where nobody knows one another, the facilitator asks the participants to walk around the room. When a signal is given, they must each stop in front of the person nearest to them. Then, just one of the people in each pair should say what they think the other person's name is and how they imagine their life to have been. When the facilitator signals it is time to do so, the participants walk around the room again and repeat the activity, aiming to perform the opposite role than they did in the previous round. At the end, the participants can be given time to chat to the people they encountered during the activity, if desired.

As an alternative, instead of forming pairs, a single participant can be asked to stand in front of the whole group and suggest possible names and imaginary lives for the other group members, which can then be discussed. The advantage of this alternative is that it can help individuals to handle an audience in a controlled manner, while the disadvantage is that it minimises bilateral interactions, which are key to building group cohesion.

Source: [María Herrero \(individual interview, 2023\)](#)



## 3.

**PAIR INTRODUCTIONS****Purpose:**

- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔

**Instructions:**

Each participant is asked to introduce another (and vice versa), providing basic information about them. They will be given 5–10 minutes to talk to their partner and prepare their introduction beforehand.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 20](#)

4.



## BRAINSTORM

### Purpose:

↔ Stimulating ideas ↔

### Instructions:

If there is an issue to resolve or a topic to discuss, participants can be asked to suggest relevant ideas. The facilitator should explain that the aim is not to criticise or judge the ideas suggested by others, but simply to amass as many ideas as possible. The activity can also be carried out by presenting a fictional scenario similar to the problem to be solved by the group. The facilitator or another participant will note down and attempt to group the ideas (e.g. via a series of questions, such as 'Who?', 'What?', 'When?', 'Where?', etc., or a mind map). Ideas can be spoken aloud or written down by individual group members within a limited period of time. Participants can put themselves in someone else's shoes (rolestorming) or imagine themselves in a different time or place.

For more information, see: [Saavedra 2023](#)

## 5.

**TETRALEMMA****Purpose:**

- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔

**Instructions:**

This technique is used to group contributions to activities such as thought showers, interviews, debates or giving feedback on previous work in a productive manner. It entails compiling participants' interventions on a diagram with two axes and five categories: 'Yes, because...' on the left; 'No, because...' on the right; 'Somewhat yes, somewhat no' in the middle; 'Yes and no' (at the same time) at the top, and 'Neither yes nor no' (because the question lies elsewhere) at the bottom.

For more information, see: [Alberich et al. 2009, 43](#)



## QUESTION MATRIX AND INITIAL IDEAS

### Purpose:

- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔
- ↔ Obtaining information ↔

### Instructions:

When faced with a series of topics that the group consider relevant, a table can be produced to consider four basic questions in each case:

- What do we know?
- What don't we know? (Problems, good practices, etc.)
- What might we guess? (Hypotheses)
- What can we predict?' (Trends)

For more information, see: [Alberich et al. 2009, 16](#)



## SIMULTANEOUS STORYTELLING

### Purpose:

- ↔ Training perception ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Identifying topics of interest ↔

### Instructions:

The group divide into smaller groups of four. In each group, one person listens while the other three each tell a story. For a specified time (e.g. two minutes), the three narrators talk at the same time without stopping (their story can be based on real or imaginary events), while the listener attempts to listen to all three and memorise as many details as possible from each person. After two minutes, each narrator asks the listener three questions about their story. The listener scores a point for every correct answer. Four rounds are held to allow every member of the group to participate.

Source: [Cañas Torregosa 2009, 91](#)

## 8.

**COLLECTIVE COUNTING****Purpose:**

- ↔ Training perception ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔

**Instructions:**

In this game, the group must attempt to count up to thirty without anyone speaking at the same time and without organising turns in advance. One person starts by saying 'One', another person jumps in and says 'Two', and so on. If the group manage to reach thirty, they can continue for as long as they wish to.

It is unusual for groups to be successful on their first attempt, but they are likely to improve as they go along as they learn to more accurately anticipate the gestures each person makes before speaking. Groups usually improve as they become more cohesive, so the game could be played several times over a period of time as a way of gauging the degree of mutual attention and communication within the group and encouraging them to progress.

Source: [María Herrero \(individual interview, 2023\)](#)



## STROLL

### Purpose:

- ↔ Obtener información ↔
- ↔ Encontrar cuestiones de interés ↔
- ↔ Diagnosticar problemas ↔

### Instructions:

In this activity, participants spend at least one hour walking around a place that is unfamiliar to them (they could also walk from one place to another). There are many possible approaches to this activity: participants can walk in silence and focus on observing what is around them; they can talk to others in the group, or ask passers-by questions; they can walk aimlessly or follow a line drawn on a map to show possible obstacles (e.g. motorways, fences, etc.), for example.

Whatever approach is taken, participants are to note down and/or take photos or videos of salient aspects of their route, as well as recording any ideas, perceptions or sensations that they experience. After the walk, they should spend some time analysing this information and reflecting on the activity.

For more information, see: [Bustos, García and Chueca 2018, 42](#)

For more on rural walks, see also: [Alberich et al. 2009, 17](#)



## SQUARE ONE

### Purpose:

- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Organising tasks ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Preventing conflicts ↔

### Instructions:

Participants are given a sheet of paper listing the following fields: 'Your name'; 'A flaw'; 'A skill'; 'A shortcoming'; 'What you bring to the group'; 'What you get out of the group'; 'What you would like to bring to the group that you are not currently'; 'What you would like to get out of the group that you are not currently'; 'What you expect from this process and how the facilitator can help you'. Then, each individual has fifteen minutes to fill in the information before sharing it with the rest of the group. It is important for every participant to be given the same amount of time to present their ideas and to feel that their expectations are being taken into consideration. This activity could be used to start a discussion on the topics that the group consider to be a priority to work on.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 5](#)





## SECRET FRIEND

### Purpose:

- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔

### Instructions:

At the group's first meeting, each participant is asked to write their name, their profession and several of their hobbies and preferences on a sheet of paper. These sheets of paper are then redistributed among the group at random, one per person. Then, participants are told that once a day (for several days or weeks) they are to communicate anonymously, in a friendly, even affectionate manner, with the person whose information sheet they have (e.g. by giving small gifts, to be delivered by another group member). The facilitator then sets a date when the 'secret friends' will be revealed. On that day, participants will be asked who they think their secret friend is and why.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 21](#)



## LIST OF QUALITIES

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Preventing conflicts ↔

### Instructions:

In groups that are already familiar with one another, having spent at least two weeks together, the facilitator supplies paper and sticky tape. Participants are asked to help one another stick a blank sheet of paper to their backs. Then, each participant is asked to write a positive adjective on each of the other group members' backs, aiming not to repeat those written by others. (If desired and resources allow, the facilitator can write a list of qualities on the whiteboard before starting the activity.) It is important for the facilitator to check that nobody is writing negative adjectives. Once the facilitator deems the sheets of paper to be full, they stop the activity. Participants keep their own sheets of paper and take them home, without discussing them with anyone else.

Source: [José María Salguero \(individual interview\)](#)

13.



## MISSING PERSON

### Purpose:

- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔

### Instructions:

A volunteer is asked to leave the room. When they come back in, they must identify the 'missing person' (a group member nominated by the rest of the group) by asking five questions that can only be answered using 'yes' or 'no'.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 218](#)



## AMAZING INVENTION

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔

### Instructions:

One person leaves the room (let us call her Carmen). The rest of the group must then come up with an imaginary invention and choose another member of the group (let us call her Maria) to explain it using gestures. When the person who has left the room (Carmen) returns, they must guess what the invention is on the basis of Maria's gestures, as follows:

When Carmen returns to the room, she must stand in front of Maria. Maria will stretch out her arms, sliding them between Carmen's arms and chest, while Carmen holds her arms behind her back to hide them. A scarf or small blanket can be used to cover Carmen's shoulders to make it more realistic.

The two group members, having now become one, will present the invention as if they were at a conference. However, only Maria, who is behind Carmen, knows what the invention is, and she cannot speak; she must depict it using just her hands. Carmen must begin by greeting the audience verbally, then attempt to explain what the invention is based on Maria's gestures.

The round ends when Carmen manages to guess the invention (e.g. 'a clothes dryer that folds the clothes'), or when the audience decides that she will be unable to guess it correctly. If Carmen manages to guess the invention, she and Maria get to choose the next two people to carry out the activity. If they are unable to do so, the audience can choose instead.

Source: [María Herrero \(individual interview, 2023\)](#)

## 15.



## CHAIN LETTERS

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔

### Instructions:

Sitting in a circle, the group create a chain of letters. Each person adds a letter that could help form a word, but they must avoid completing a full word with that letter.

One person starts by saying a letter, e.g. 's'. The person to their right then adds another letter, e.g. 't'. In their minds, the participants will register that they have formed the inexistent word 'st'. The next person says another letter, e.g. 'r'. The next person will add another letter, e.g. 'a'. This forms the group of letters 'stra'. They must avoid completing a word, e.g. by adding 'w' ('straw'), but their letter must contribute to forming a word, e.g. 'i' if they are thinking of 'strain' or 'straight'. If the next person realises that these words are possible, they will avoid saying 'n' and instead say 'g'. If the following persons say 'h', and then 't', the last one will lose because he or she will have said a full word: 'straight'. Participants must add letters that contribute to forming a real word.

This activity is particularly effective if it is used before the following activity (16. RHYTHM MACHINE) and, after completing both activities, the opportunity is taken to reflect on the participants' experience and the possibilities for expressing oneself that are offered by using language rather than moving one's body or making nonverbal sounds.

Source: [Cañas Torregosa 2009, 91](#)



## RHYTHM MACHINE

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔
- ↔ Training perception ↔

### Instructions:

The group sits in a circle with one participant standing in the middle, imagining that they are a cog in a complex machine. They perform a rhythmic movement with their body and make a sound to represent the function of this part of the machine, while the group members in the circle watch and listen. Then, a second person gets up and adds a second cog to the machine with their body, performing a complementary (not identical) sound and movement. A third person does the same, then a fourth, forming a sound-and-motion chain, until the whole group is part of a single complex, harmonious machine.

Once all the participants have become part of the machine, the facilitator will tell the first person to speed up and the participants must attempt to keep pace with this change in the machine's operation. When the machine is on the brink of 'exploding', the facilitator will ask the first 'cog'/person to gradually slow down until everyone comes to a halt. For the activity to work, each participant must make an effort to really listen to the sounds, and so become attuned.

An alternative would be to carry out the same activity but ask the participants to imagine themselves to be a (non-human) hate machine, then a love machine, interpreting the words 'hate' and 'love' freely.

Another suggested version would entail completing the same exercise but adding one or more emotions and a theme. For example, developing interlinked machines based on the regions of the participants' coun-

try, e.g. Germany (Bavarian machine, Berliner machine, Saxon machine, etc.), France (Breton machine, Parisian machine, Marseillais machine, etc.), Spain (Catalan machine, Galician machine, Andalusian machine, etc.); on political parties, etc., or on specific artistic genres or disciplines, e.g. silent film, circus, opera, literature, etc

Source: [Boal 2001, 180–81](#)



## OCTOPUS

### Purpose:

- ↔ Training perception ↔
- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔

### Instructions:

Create groups of around five participants in an open space. In each group, have one person stand in the middle with their eyes open, forming the 'octopus's head', while the other four stand around them to form the tentacles, each touching the 'head' (person) with one finger and closing their eyes. Then, instruct the 'head' to move around and the 'tentacles' (other people) to follow them, without losing physical contact. The participants should swap positions to give everyone a chance to be the head, before discussing their experiences with the broader group.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 12](#)



## 18.

**THE BLIND PERSON AND THE GUIDE DOG****Purpose:**

- ↔ Training perception ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔

**Instructions:**

Divide the group into pairs. Have one person in each pair play the role of a blind person and the other a guide dog, standing behind their 'blind' partner and putting their hand on their shoulder (a blindfold could be used). Then have them explore the room. The guide dog should whisper directions to allow the blind person to evade obstacles and other participants, who will also be walking around doing the same thing. The facilitator should emphasise the importance of exploring the sensory perceptions of the 'blind' person. After several minutes, have the participants swap roles. Finally, have them share their experiences with the group as a whole. As an alternative, this activity can be carried out outdoors as long as due precautions are taken.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 11](#)

## 19.



## ELECTRIC CURRENT

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔

### Instructions:

The group, including the facilitator, sit in a circle holding hands. The facilitator starts the activity by squeezing the hand of the person to their right, who does the same to the next person, until the hand-squeezes have gone round the whole circle. The facilitator will refer to this as 'conducting the electric current'.

Next, every fifth participant acts as a 'substation'. The substation can decide whether to continue to conduct the current onwards or reverse its direction (by squeezing the hand of the person it came from). As they transmit or reverse the current, the substation must make a sound that gives the group a clue as to the direction in which the current is flowing.

Then, one participant chosen at random is asked to stand in the centre and identify someone who is transmitting the current at the exact moment when they squeeze another person's hand. They have three guesses. Participants who are discovered swap with the person in the centre. This activity can be carried out as many times as the facilitator deems appropriate.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 62](#)



## THE CIRCLE

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔

### Instructions:

The group divides into smaller groups of five. Four of the group members form a tight circle, with one person in the centre. The person in the centre stiffens their body and falls towards one of the sides of the circle. The other group members must stop them from falling and push them upright again. After several minutes, the person in the middle should swap with one of the other members of their group until everyone has had a turn. After the activity, the group members briefly share their experiences.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 10](#)



## CIRCLE RUN

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔
- ↔ Training perception ↔

### Instructions:

The group gets into pairs. The pair hold hands and form a circle, with one pair left outside. The pair on the outside walk clockwise around the circle, holding hands with their partner.

At a time agreed by the pair on the outside, they touch the hands of one of the pairs in the circle. Both pairs then run around the circle in opposite directions, trying to be the first back to the empty spot. The last pair to reach it loses and must take a turn as the pair on the outside.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 75](#)



## FOREHEAD TO FOREHEAD

### Purpose:

- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔

### Instructions:

For this activity, there must be an uneven number of participants, so that when the group gets into pairs, one person is left without a partner. This person will be the game director; when they say 'Forehead to forehead', the pairs must all adopt this position. The director will then instruct them to adopt different positions: nose to nose, back to back, etc. If the director says 'Hold' before giving an instruction, the pairs must add the new position to their existing position. If the director does not say 'Hold', they simply adopt the new position.

After giving several different instructions, the director will again say 'Forehead to forehead'. At this prompt, everyone must find a new partner quickly, including the director. The person with no partner this time around becomes the director, and they start the cycle over again.

Source: [Cañas Torregosa 2009, 63](#)

## 23.

**EXPRESSIVE BODIES****Purpose:**

- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔

**Instructions:**

Prepare one piece of paper per group member. Divide these into pairs and write the name of a different animal on each pair (so that each animal is repeated twice). Then hand these out at random and tell participants that for the next five minutes and *without making a noise*, they are to behave like the animal on the piece of paper they have, and to look for their animal partner. When they think they have found their partner, they should link arms and remain silent while the rest of the group finishes. *They must not tell each other what animal they are until everyone is in pairs.* Then, each person in turn will say what animal they were to see whether everyone chose correctly.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 37](#)



## IMAGINARY CARNIVAL

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔

### Instructions:

The facilitator asks the participants each to imagine, in as much detail as possible, the costume, location, festivities and people (from outside the group) that they would most like to have at a carnival celebration, with no limits on money, time or space. They are given no more than ten minutes to do so. Each person then presents their thoughts, trying to explain them as clearly as possible. As a way to allow group members to get to know one another, the activity could end at this point.

As a possible extension activity, the group could be asked to come to an agreement on a single kind of costume, celebration and location, as well as on the celebrities or people from outside the group to invite. They can use elements from different people's existing proposals or use a single person's proposal in full.

As an alternative, the participants could also consider which group members they would include in their carnival celebration and in what roles. This version could encourage closer interaction but it could also give rise to conflict, so the facilitator should consider the pros and cons carefully.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 20](#)



## MODELLING SENSATIONS

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Training perception ↔

### Instructions:

In pairs, one person is invited to think of a very clear emotion that they have experienced at a specific time and then create a 'human sculpture' of it, using their partner's body to represent this emotion. To facilitate the process, the 'sculpture' should keep their eyes closed and allow themselves to be moved around. The pairs are to be given as much time as they need to complete their sculptures. Once they have done so, the sculptors are invited to walk around the classroom looking at the other sculptures. This activity is to be completed in silence. At the end of this round, the pairs swap roles.

When they have completed the two rounds of the first phase, a second phase begins. One of the pairs is asked to volunteer to reproduce their sculptures in front of the group (first one partner, then the other). The other group members are invited to interpret the emotions portrayed and give specific examples of when these emotions might be felt.

Finally, the group is invited to reflect on how it felt to sculpt and be sculpted, and whether it is easier to express feelings through the body than to interpret them.

For more information and a series of useful short texts, see: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2014](#)





## CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔
- ↔ Training perception ↔

### Instructions:

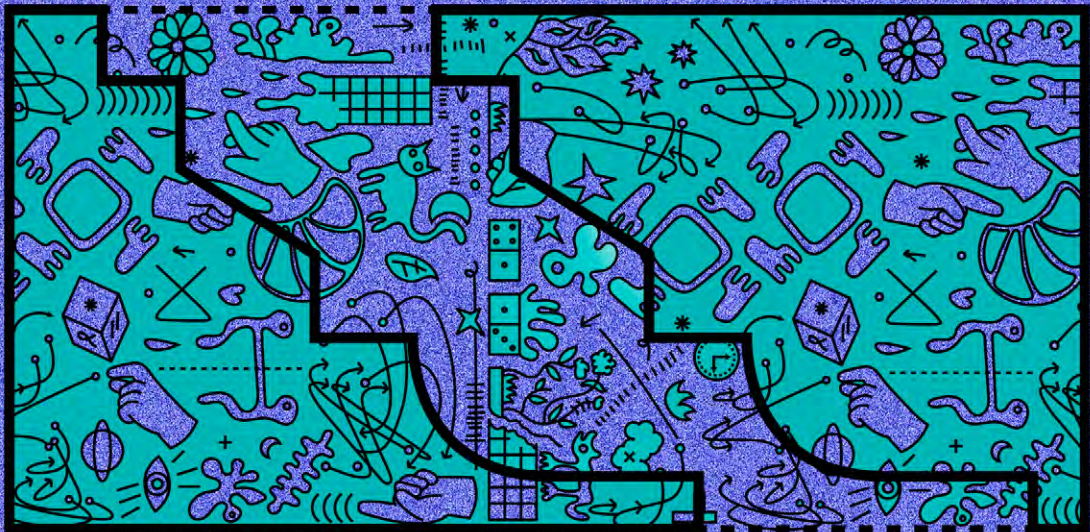
The participants are divided into two equal groups. One group is asked to form a circle, linking arms and looking outward. The other group is asked to form a concentric circle around them, looking inward (to face them), holding hands.

Then, each person in the outer circle is asked to stand in front of someone in the inner circle, looking carefully at them (they should be given at least thirty seconds to do this). Once this has occurred, the pairs so-formed are asked to turn their backs to one another, holding hands or linking arms with the person beside them in their circle.

The facilitator then plays music and asks the two circles to move to the left for as long as the music is playing. When the facilitator stops the music, the participants must find their partner, hold hands and sit on the floor. The last pair to do so loses and must leave the circles.

The activity is repeated and the losing pairs form a jury to decide on the losing pair in each round. The activity comes to an end when only one winning pair remains in the middle.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 35](#)



**exploring**

## 27.

**SWOT ANALYSIS****Purpose:**

- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔

**Instructions:**

The group is given a table containing the following categories: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (Prospects and Obstacles could also be included). Each participant adds the information that they consider relevant to the topic or situation in question. By completing the table as a group, it should be possible not only to identify positive and negative aspects, but also to tentatively formulate possible measures to be taken.

For more information, see: [Alberich et al. 2009, 20](#)

## 28.

**FORCE FIELD DIAGRAM****Purpose:**

- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔

**Instructions:**

In the context of a real or desired situation, a table is drawn up with two columns: positive (driving) forces and negative (restraining) forces. The group complete the table in pairs, then come back together as a whole group to discuss their work. The importance of each factor is then scored from one to four and the participants consider whether some forces offset others.

For more information, see: [Pérez Verzini n.d](#)

## 29.

**ISSUE TREE****Purpose:**

- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔

**Instructions:**

This activity can be used to help a group grasp the complexity of a problem. The problem should be written on a large sheet of paper or a whiteboard, with arrows pointing upwards to boxes labelled 'symptoms'. Another set of boxes labelled 'immediate causes' should be drawn below the problem, linking to it with arrows. Below this, a further set of boxes labelled 'underlying causes' should be linked to the immediate causes. Cards are to be handed out for each participant to write the symptoms and causes that they consider relevant (one on each card). As a group, they should then affix the cards to the appropriate boxes.

For more information, see: [Bustos, García and Chueca 2018, 20](#)  
[Case study: Alberich et al. 2009, 49](#)

## 30.

**ASSOCIATION CHAIN****Purpose:**

- ↔ Identifying topics of interest ↔
- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔

**Instructions:**

Starting with several key words, participants are asked to suggest associated words and then discuss whether they are linked and why.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 190](#)

## 31.

**PHILLIPS 6/6****Purpose:**

↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔

**Instructions:**

In a large group, participants get into groups of six to spend six minutes discussing an agreed-upon topic (decided before starting the activity). Then, a spokesperson from each group of six presents their group's conclusions, which the facilitator writes on the whiteboard. Once every group has contributed, the conclusions are discussed with the rest of the group with the aim of reaching a consensus or, at least, a majority.

For more information, see: [Bustos, García and Chueca 2018, 79](#)

## 32.

**TIMELINE****Purpose:**

- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔
- ↔ Obtaining information ↔

**Instructions:**

To explore a topic of discussion, the facilitator draws a timeline. Participants add Post-its or cards listing the factors or events that they consider relevant to understanding how the current situation has come about. Question marks can be used to indicate any factors or events about which the participants remain uncertain. Depending on the topic, this activity may give rise to, or help resolve, more controversy than similar tools with a lesser focus on the causes of a situation. The activity can be approached in a variety of alternative, creative ways.

For more information, see: [Alberich et al. 2009, 15](#)



## 33.

**FILM CLUB****Purpose:**

- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔
- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Obtaining information ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔

**Instructions:**

In an already consolidated group, the facilitator can select a realist film that they believe will help the group understand a situation or phenomenon that they need to explore, especially if there are conflicts within the group linked to discrimination or cultural and social diversity. Ideally, there is a gathering for the group to watch the film together and then discuss about it.

For more information (including a list of possible films), see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 41–53](#)

## 34.

**DELPHI****Purpose:**

- ↔ Obtaining information ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔

**Instructions:**

To analyse a topic in depth over a two-month period, the group is invited to request information from experts via two rounds of questionnaires, both of which the group will have designed themselves: the first before approaching the experts, the second on the basis of the experts' answers to the first. The group will then write a report analysing the results of both questionnaires, which will also be checked by an expert. This information will all be compiled in a final report. No face-to-face meetings are required.

For more information, see: [Bustos, García and Chueca 2018, 39](#)

## 35.

**BAROMETER****Purpose:**

- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Identifying topics of interest ↔

**Instructions:**

The facilitator draws a straight line on the floor, with one end representing agreement and the other disagreement. For each question asked, the participants are invited to position themselves along the line according to their level of agreement or disagreement. The activity can continue in relation to participants' responses or additional questions.

For more information, see: [Bustos, García and Chueca 2018, 23](#)

## 36.

**WORLD CAFÉ****Purpose:**

- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔

**Instructions:**

The group is divided into smaller groups of four (ideal) or five (maximum). Four or five chairs are positioned around each table with a paper table runner, coloured pens and a selection of items to make the space more welcoming (coffee, biscuits, flowers, etc.). Once participants are seated, the facilitator explains the activity, its purpose and its goals. Next, they ask all of the groups a single question, decided upon in advance, on the basis of their interests. Each participant will be asked to spend twenty minutes answering the question and writing their thoughts on the paper table runner.

After an initial round of fifteen or twenty minutes, the groups will be asked to change tables – all except one member of each. The person who stays put will be asked to spend five minutes discussing what is written on that table's paper runner with the new people now sitting there with them. Then, there will be another twenty-minute round with a new question (which may or may not be related to the previous question). The number of rounds will depend on the number of questions, but it should be at least three. As the activity progresses, the participants will observe links between the answers to certain questions.

For more information, see: [The World Cafe n.d](#)

## 37.



## OPEN SPACE

### Purpose:

- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Identifying problems ↔

### Instructions:

This activity can be used with large groups, from twenty to two thousand members. One or several topics of discussion or key issues that are difficult for the group to resolve or have many possible solutions should be identified (e.g. 'What does the organisation need to improve in the future?').

Before the activity, the facilitator creates various circles with chairs, distributed in the room(s) as far as possible from each other. Then, the facilitator gives a number to each circle and writes them on a board. The participants are given cards and asked to write down a more specific aspect of one of the issues or topics that they find particularly interesting and would like to discuss with the rest of the group. Everyone is encouraged to write something, although it is not compulsory. The facilitator should emphasise that there is no need to be knowledgeable about the topic to suggest an aspect for discussion.

Participants are asked to affix their cards to the available circles shown on a board. They should try to schedule very similar aspects or topics in a single space/session. All groups will work simultaneously on the topics they have chosen. The time of the session should be decided in advance to be the same for every group: a session can run from thirty minutes to four hours.

Once the specific topics have been established, each group nominates one person to act as moderator and another to take minutes (on fanfold/flipchart paper or on a laptop; if using paper, they will also need to find a space with somewhere to lean on to write, e.g. a wall

or whiteboard). The group then agree on a title or titles for the specific topic that they will be working on.

Once the discussions are complete, participants feed back on their conversations to the whole group. The facilitator helps the group identify several key ideas coming out of their discussions. They then decide whether it is necessary to continue working together to cast further light on the topic. If so, another round of discussions can be held. New sets of topics may be established, or a different approach taken.

During the discussion process, it is important to tell the participants that the groups can decide to finish early or join another group whenever they wish to do so, and that individual participants are free to switch thematic groups whenever and as often as they wish. It is also important to emphasise that no approach is inherently wrong and that it does not matter if the groups are different sizes – as few as two people is acceptable. The facilitator should seek to encourage the participants who have suggested less popular ideas. They should also emphasise that every group is free to explore the topic however they wish, as long as all the groups take notes of their discussions and conclusions so that they can share them later on. This activity should not be used if the decision-makers in the organisation have already identified a solution to the issue at hand, or wish to control the process.

For more information, see: [Wirtz 2022](#)

## 38.

**GOLDFISH BOWL****Purpose:**

- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔

**Instructions:**

The group split into three smaller groups, or into two if there are fewer than twenty participants. The first group sit on chairs arranged in a circle facing inward while the second group sit around them in a concentric circle, followed by a third circle formed by the third group (if there is one). The first group (in the middle) discuss a topic for ten to fifteen minutes until they reach some conclusions. The second group watch the first and give their opinions on the first group's conclusions. The third group comment on the other two groups' opinions. The facilitator then moderates a closing session to analyse the topic in greater depth, based on the groups' discussions.

As a possible alternative/extension, the groups could swap positions after the first round and repeat the activity. Another option is for the first group to present a SOCIODRAMA (activity 59, below), the second group to analyse the content and the third group to discuss how the topic and the discussion were approached.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 135](#)

## 39.

**CONCEPT DOMINOES****Purpose:**

- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔
- ↔ Defining concepts ↔

**Instructions:**

Make a set of dominoes from small pieces of card, each featuring two ideas or concepts instead of numbers. Each of these ideas is to be understood as a cause or an effect. The set should include double dominoes, on which the same idea appears twice.

The game follows the same rules as dominoes except that participants play in two teams that collectively take turns to place a domino, instead of individually or in pairs. Before they can place their domino, the team must explain how it is a cause or effect of one of the concepts on the end tile they are placing it beside. If the other group agree, they can place their domino. If not, the team will miss their turn.

The facilitator will summarise the links that emerge between concepts at the end of a game. If they are familiar with the topic, they can ask the participants to analyse and explain their arguments where relevant.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 150](#)



## 40.



## INTERPRETING CARDS

### Purpose:

- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Defining concepts ↔
- ↔ Identifying problems ↔

### Instructions:

Once the group has identified a topic, they will be asked to draw elements relating to it on blank cards (as many as required to address every aspect of the topic). These cards could be combined with others showing random drawings like the cards from the game *Dixit*, or with tarot cards, to give the participants more options to express their feelings and stimulate new ideas. For a more creative, surreal alternative, the activity could be based on *Dixit* cards alone.

With the group sitting in a circle, the facilitator will distribute the cards face down and ask one participant to turn over and describe a card. They will also ask them to say what they think it might mean. The card should remain on the table while the next person is asked to do the same thing. After the second person, every participant must also say whether they can see any connection between their card and the other cards on the table. When the person whose turn it is has spoken, the other participants can suggest additional connections.

Once all the cards are on the table, the facilitator can lead a discussion aimed at reaching a conclusion on the topic.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 142](#)

## 41.

**PARTICIPATORY MAPS****Purpose:**

- ↔ Obtaining information ↔
- ↔ Identifying topics of interest ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Identifying problems ↔

**Instructions:**

In order to identify aspects of interest in an area, groups can collectively produce maps. For example, they can show neighbourhood initiatives or sacrifice zones, draw locations based on their emotional weight for the group, add different layers, etc.

For more information, see: [Risler and Ares 2013](#)

## 42.



## EXTERNAL SOCIOGRAM

### Purpose:

- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Obtaining information ↔

### Instructions:

The aim of this activity is to visualise, weigh and identify connections between different stakeholders and social groups in an area in order to ascertain the extent of a particular group's isolation and to establish potential allies or rivals.

Blank cards or Post-its of different shapes should be handed out, e.g. triangles for powerful stakeholders, squares for organised stakeholders and circles for unorganised sectors of the population. The participants should then fill in the cards with organisations or individuals that they consider relevant.

They will then be asked to affix their cards to a large sheet of paper or a whiteboard, drawing lines to connect the different stakeholders. The lines can vary (in colour, thickness, continuity, etc.) to show connections of different kinds. For example, there may be links of dependency, continuity, disinterest or conflict, as well as temporary or indirect links, etc. The group will need to come up with a way to represent the specific context in question.

For more information, see: [Alberich et al. 2009, 27](#)

## 43.



## LOOKING AHEAD

### Purpose:

- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔

### Instructions:

The facilitator will ask a question about something that could be achieved in the future (e.g. How might the organisation operate in five years' time? How could the community be improved?) and invite each participant to answer individually in writing. Then, in groups of four to eight people, the participants will be invited to share their answers and use them to develop an ideal model. They should also provide details as to how it would work. This activity can take some time, spanning up to several days. Once they have finished, the groups will be asked to share their models with the rest of the participants. Each model will be noted on fanfold/flipchart paper or a whiteboard. Then, the group may either be asked to choose a model and give reasons for their choice (what qualities does it have and how feasible is it?), or to develop a final model based on the suggested models.

When they have devised their ideal model, the participants will be asked to reflect together on the issues to be resolved now in order to make it a reality and identify the specific tasks required. This may lead to further activities.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 260](#)

## 44.

**DELIBERATIVE SURVEY****Purpose:**

- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Obtaining information ↔

**Instructions:**

A sample of people willing to attend a deliberative forum will be selected to participate in the following activities (always working with that same sample of people). First, an opinion survey will be held on a controversial topic about which there is a lack of quality information. Then, participants will be given information about the main points of view on the topic, with experts representing each point of view also invited to attend. After that, deliberative activities will be carried out (from an open assembly to smaller group activities, depending on the number of people), and then the survey will be conducted again.

Finally, the participants will be informed of the results and encouraged to reflect together on the reasons for the change (or absence of change) in their answers to the survey.

For more information, see: [Ganuza, Francés, Lafuente and Garrido 2012](#)

## 45.



## A STORY WITH RULES

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔

### Instructions:

In groups of six or more people, the participants are divided into two teams. If the facilitator wishes to focus on group dynamics and roles, one participant per group can be appointed as an observer.

Each team is asked to come up with a story. It can be about anything they like, but it must be written using lyrics of already existing songs. They should also decide how to tell the story to the other team (nominating a single narrator, acting it out as a play, having each person narrate one part, etc.), then go ahead and tell it to the other team and vice versa. The activity ends with a short discussion where the participants can share their experiences of the activity and listen to the observers (if appointed).

As a possible alternative, instead of using song lyrics, the teams could write their stories following three rules devised by the other team.

In another version of the activity, instead of allowing the participants to choose the theme of their stories, the facilitator could ask them to write a story about a situation that is familiar to them and that it would be helpful to explore further. This is a simplified version of SOCIODRAMA (activity 59, below), which could be used to introduce the latter.

Source: [María Herrero \(individual interview, 2023\)](#)

## 46.



## VILLAGE NEEDS

### Purpose:

- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Analysing decision-making ↔
- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔
- ↔ Organising tasks ↔

### Instructions:

This activity requires an initial group of at least 10 people. The facilitator should supply a list of at least six tasks that do not require very specific skills, such as searching for items, making things, writing a text, contacting someone, etc.

Participants should work in groups of at least five people. They should also be given five minutes to decide how to organise themselves before attempting to complete the tasks.

They should be given a set period of time to do so, ranging from ten minutes to several days (depending on the difficulty of the tasks). The first group to complete the tasks will win.

When a team has completed all the tasks, the facilitator should check that they have done so properly. If they have, they will be declared the winners, but the facilitator should also ask to see the other group's tasks.

Finally, the participants should discuss how each group organised its members to complete the tasks and consider whether this reflects the broader dynamics of the group beyond this activity.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 247](#)

## 47.

**BUILDING A STRUCTURE****Purpose:**

- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Analysing decision-making ↔
- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔

**Instructions:**

Appoint one or two observers (two is recommended). Place a pile of building blocks and all kinds of other materials (figurines, office supplies, drawings, plans, etc.) in the middle. The more materials, the better.

Invite the group to build something together, providing no other instructions. The most important part of this activity is observing how the group make decisions, assign roles, handle pressure and interact with one another, and what the final outcome is.

Once the activity is finished, invite the group to discuss what they did, identifying any similarities with the usual dynamics present in the group, and have the observers and the facilitator offer feedback.

Optionally, this activity may be filmed to allow the group to observe the process together afterwards, although the potential for the camera to influence participants' behaviour should be taken into consideration.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 23](#)



## 48.

**STATUES****Purpose:**

- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Defining concepts ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔

**Instructions:**

In this activity, the group are asked to design and present a figure (it can be anything: a thing, an animal, a group of people..) to represent a topic using neither sound nor movement. Ideally, all members should participate.

The topics used in this activity are usually ideas, concepts or institutions rather than specific situations that may require a more elaborate sequence with movement, although it may be possible to perform a sequence if the group is quite large.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 92](#)

## 49.



## DESIGNING AN ORGANISATION

### Purpose:

- ↔ Organising tasks ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Analysing decision-making ↔
- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔

### Instructions:

The participants are divided into groups (four at most). The facilitator asks them how they would go about organising some kind of permanent organisation, such as a cooperative, union or cultural establishment. They are also asked to agree on the organisation's objectives and decision-making structure, and the tasks that it should carry out in the short and long term.

These groups each have thirty minutes to make these decisions and write them on a whiteboard or on flipchart/fanfold paper. When they have done so, they present their proposals. Then all the participants come back together for a whole-group discussion, comparing the different proposals and analysing how each of the groups approached the decision-making process, the resources they used and the difficulties they faced.

Finally, the facilitator asks: 'What kinds of leadership or decision-making will there be in the organisations you have proposed? Are they similar to the dynamics that emerged in your group during this activity?'

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 234](#)

## 50.



## THE FLOOD

### Purpose:

- ↔ Analysing decision-making ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔

### Instructions:

The participants are asked to imagine the following situation: You arrive home from a holiday to discover that it has been raining heavily for the last three days in your residential area, which is located near a reservoir. As you are nearing home, you encounter a police officer instructing residents to evacuate due to the imminent threat of the dam breaking as the river swells. You ask the officer to let you quickly fetch a few important items from your home and they reluctantly agree. Inside your home, you realise that you have no more than five minutes to decide what to take with you, and you can only take four items.

Each participant is given the following list of items (which the facilitator may edit) and told that they each have five minutes to choose four of them (they will also be notified when there is one minute remaining).

### LIST OF ITEMS TO BE SAVED:

1. A long poem you have been working on for several months, which is ready to be submitted to the annual competition run by the literary society you belong to.
2. An album of photographs from when you were a baby and a young child.
3. An old mobile phone with all your photographs from the last few years.
4. Your grandma's wedding dress, which you or your spouse wore

at your wedding, or which you have been keeping for when you get married.

5. The diary you have been writing since last year.
6. A ship in a bottle that you made when you spent six weeks sick in bed at eleven years old.
7. A very expensive guitar that you have had for a long time and that makes your music sound a million times better.
8. The files and accounts belonging to a group that is important to you (neighbourhood association, activist group, parish council, political party, etc.).
9. Your favourite boots.
10. All your grades and certificates from secondary school onwards.
11. A birthday card signed by all your friends at a surprise party they threw for you.
12. A beautiful atlas from 1887 that you borrowed from a friend.
13. A unique, very expensive rug that you bought when you were travelling through Asia, which takes pride of place on your dining room floor.
14. A tray of seedlings to plant out that are notoriously difficult to grow but are just starting to sprout.
15. Your father's stamp collection, which dates back to 1920 and is worth several thousand euros.
16. Love letters from your first love.
17. Two bottles of an excellent, aged wine, which you had been keeping for a special occasion.

Everything that they do not save will be destroyed in the flood. Which will they save? If there is time, they should list their four saved items in order of priority. Once everyone has chosen their items, they divide into groups of four or five. All of the groups have fifteen minutes to agree on the four items that they would each save as a group (they will be told when there are three minutes remaining).

After that, each group chooses a spokesperson. The spokespeople form a group and try to reach a consensus on behalf of all the participants as to what they would save and, if possible, in what order. They have twenty minutes to do so, with a warning when there are three minutes remaining.

Finally, the group conducts an evaluation, lasting at least twenty to thirty minutes, where they discuss their feelings during the activity, whether the final decision represents all their opinions, whether the spokespeople adequately represented their groups, what roles emerged and what factors made it easier or harder to reach a consensus.

For more information and a series of helpful short texts on the concept of consensus and how to reach it, see: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2005](#)

## 51.



## ROLE PLAY

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Analysing decision-making ↔

### Instructions:

In groups of five to twenty-five people, the facilitator asks for several volunteers (as many as there are roles to distribute). Each volunteer is given a card featuring a role and a short description of the role (cards can be assigned at random or, if the facilitator knows the group well, based on individual volunteers' characteristics). The roles may require the participants to be negative, conciliatory, obedient to rules, unwaveringly happy, passive, authoritarian, responsible, creative, etc. (the facilitator can vary these characteristics to suit the group).

Once the roles have been assigned, the facilitator describes a situation that the group could encounter in real life, one which has several possible solutions. They ask the volunteers to reach a joint decision, with each person playing the role on their card. The rest of the group observe and take note of what is happening. After no more than fifteen minutes, the role play comes to an end and the group discuss the outcome.

As a possible alternative, the activity could focus on roles that are more personal or social than work-related (leader, clown, mediator, worrier, conformist, introvert, etc.). If so, then each participant should be given the six roles on small pieces of paper and asked to choose the two that are most relevant to them within the group. Then, the participants should go around the room showing their roles to the other group members, who may decide to swap if they think another one suits them better or if they would prefer to have that role. Finally, a group discussion should be held to allow participants to



share their feelings about the different roles and about other people swapping roles with them.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 37](#)) and [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 39](#)

## 52.



## MINISTERIAL CABINET

### Purpose:

- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔
- ↔ Making decisions ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔

### Instructions:

In a group of no more than twenty participants, hold a meeting in the format of a ministerial cabinet meeting. The topic to be discussed can be decided in advance by the facilitator or by the participants themselves, e.g. as part of a different activity. It can be an imaginary situation or a real issue affecting the group. Once everyone has clearly understood the topic in question, give the group time to research it (from thirty minutes to a few days).

Then (either the facilitator or the group members) appoint a president, who will act as moderator; a secretary, who will down the agreements reached (this could be the facilitator); and ministers, who will represent the departments responsible for the issue being discussed. To make the activity more fun, the ministers could represent various irrelevant or invented departments. The facilitator can participate by asking questions and calling for new or different arguments or perspectives from the group.

The president opens the session by presenting the issue and suggesting a solution. Each minister then offers an opinion on behalf of their department, evidencing their arguments with the information they have compiled during research.





When the discussion is finished, the secretary reads their meeting minutes and attempts to organise the ideas expressed (perhaps with help from the rest of the group).

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 113](#)

## 53.



## TRIAL BY JURY

### Purpose:

- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔

### Instructions:

In a group of at least seven people, the participants hold a trial by jury to judge a problematic idea or situation rather than a person. The first step is to write an indictment explaining what the idea or situation is accused of and the evidence upon which this accusation is based. This can be written before the activity by the facilitator or by the group, perhaps as part of another activity.

Then, the following roles are distributed between the group members: a judge, two courtroom clerks (to note down each contribution), and five to seven jury members. The other participants are divided into two groups: the defence and the prosecution. (In groups of fewer than ten people, there must be at least one judge, one secretary (e.g. the facilitator), one jury member, two defenders and two prosecutors.

The group defending the accused must appoint one or two defence lawyers, compile the evidence they will use and identify their witnesses (ideally five witnesses, to be played by members of the group). Likewise, the prosecuting group must appoint one or two prosecutors, compile evidence and select the same number of witnesses as the defence.

Then, the defence and prosecution groups gather to discuss and prepare for their participation in the trial, compiling written, visual or audio material. Meanwhile, the jury and the clerks review the indictment. The facilitator will decide how long to give the groups to prepare; this may vary from ten minutes to several days. If the

groups are given more than twenty minutes, the jury and clerks can watch *12 Angry Men* (1957) or another film featuring a jury while they wait. The judge should spend this time investigating the types of valid objections that can be made (by both sides) at real trials during witness interrogation (leading, relevance, speculation, etc.) and consider a possible sentence in case the accused is found guilty.

The trial begins with the judge reading the indictment and the following rules of procedure:

- The prosecution speaks first, then the defence. Both speak twice, They each having a maximum of ten minutes for their first turn and five minutes for their second turn.
- The prosecution and defence take turns to call witnesses. They each have three minutes to interrogate each of their own witnesses and another three minutes to interrogate the other party's witnesses.
- After the witness interrogation, there is a five-minute break to allow each party to prepare their final arguments, which they then have five minutes to present.
- It is for the judge to decide whether or not to accept the objections made by the prosecution or the defence, likewise any changes to this procedure: the trial can be held in an afternoon or across several days.
- The jury has ten minutes to deliberate in order to reach a verdict (guilty/not guilty) and establish the grounds for it.
- A member of the jury reads their verdict.
- Finally, the judge summarises the main facts of the trial and delivers their sentence based on the jury's decision.

Once the trial is over, the facilitator moderates a discussion for the whole group to reflect on the topic explored in the trial and its links to real life, to hear how the participants felt in their roles and what they learned from the experience.

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 120](#)

## 54.

**ESCAPING THE CIRCLE****Purpose:**

- ↔ Preventing conflicts ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔

**Instructions:**

The whole group stand in a circle, linking arms and locking them tightly. Prior to this, several people will have been asked to stand away from the group and told to enter the circle one by one. They then have two minutes to escape from it, 'in any way they can'.

The people in the circle are told (out of earshot of the others) that, without going too far, they must stop the others from escaping 'in any way they can', but that if any of the prisoners asks verbally to leave the circle, they must stand aside to let them out.

Afterwards, the whole group evaluate the activity by discussing any conflict that arose and how the participants felt, analysing the methods used by both parties, their effectiveness and their outcome, and seeking parallels with society and everyday life.

For more information, see: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2005](#)

## 55.



## ROLLING THE DICE

### Purpose:

- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔
- ↔ Analysing decision-making ↔

### Instructions:

The facilitator makes a dice from a square cardboard box covered with paper, writing one of the following sentences (or any others they consider appropriate) on each face:

1. What causes problems in the group, and are there any threats to its stability?
2. Do we communicate enough as a group?
3. How do we solve conflict?
4. What unites us as a group?
5. Are we able to seek help when we're having problems, and if so from whom?
6. What can I bring to the group to improve our relationships?

The group members sit in a circle. One person rolls the dice and answers the question. Then, whoever is sitting next to them will answer the same question and so on, until everyone has had a turn. Then, another participant will roll the dice and answer the question, etc.. The facilitator will write down the group's answers so that they can give feedback and identify consensus and areas for improvement after the activity.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 18](#)

## 56.



## SILENCE

### Purpose:

- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Training perception ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Preventing conflicts ↔

### Instructions:

In this activity, the group role-plays a conflict in the classroom. As in all games of this kind, the participants should understand the importance of fully engaging with their role.

The setting is a classroom. If possible, the group should sit on traditional classroom chairs. The group are told only that they are going to participate in an activity in which everyone who has not received a role will play a pupil in a maths class.

The facilitator asks for two volunteers, one to be the teacher and the other a pupil. The teacher must leave the room to get the instructions apart from the group. The teacher and the pupil are each given their own instruction sheets (the pupil's name will be written on the teacher's sheet). They are not to read one another's sheet, nor is anyone else.

From this point, the game continues according to the instructions provided for each role (see below) while the rest of the group observe. After ten minutes, the group evaluate the activity. Then, the role play can be repeated one or more times with a the same or a different pair and the rest of the group as observers with the aim of identifying possible solutions or alternative ways of handling the conflict.

The group will then be asked to discuss a series of questions, such as: How did you feel? How do you think the other person (the teacher or the pupil) felt? What was/were the conflict(s)? How did each person

behave? The facilitator will ask the group to carry out a brainstorm to identify possible approaches to conflict and select those that they consider most useful.

One important conclusion from this activity, which the facilitator should highlight if it comes up during the discussion, is that many conflicts go unresolved due to a lack of information about the other party's circumstances and a failure to empathise with them.

#### **ROLES:**

**TEACHER:** You call \_\_\_\_\_ up to the whiteboard to solve a division problem. Your pupils are not usually any trouble. If the pupil does not come to the whiteboard when you ask them to, you will need to persuade them to do so or to respond in some way, as you have been put in a difficult position in front of the rest of the class.

**PUPIL:** Last night, you had a big fight with your family at home. The situation remains very tense and all you want to do is cry, but you had to come to class. You hear your name but you know you won't be able to hold back your tears if you go up to the whiteboard. You will only explain what is wrong if someone is kind to you and inspires your trust.

For more information, see: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2005](#)

## 57.



## THE WILL

### Purpose:

- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Preventing conflicts ↔

### Instructions:

This role play is designed for at least nine participants. Before starting, the participants should be reminded to fully engage with their roles but not to overact.

The group sit around a table (or, if this is not possible, on chairs arranged in a circle). The facilitator reads the instructions and the list of people participating in the meeting aloud. Both documents (below) are handed out, as are role-play cards for each participant (these cards should not be read aloud). Each participant should have a card showing the name, age and kinship of their character affixed to their clothing (with a safety pin or sticker, for example), somewhere it can be seen, to allow them to be identified during the game.

Those not participating in the role play are given the document 'Assertive Communication and Tables of Emotions' (see activity 72. PRACTISING ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION), which will be useful as they observe how the role-play participants communicate with one another, also equipping them with the terminology they need to talk about emotions. They can take notes if they wish to do so.

Role-play participants are given a minute or two to read their card, make sure they have understood it, identify their partner, children, etc. and sit with them at the table, where they will begin to perform their role.

The role play begins upon the facilitator's signal and lasts for as long as necessary, though no more than thirty minutes. When it is



finished, one of the observers reads the document 'Assertive communication' (see activity 72). Straight after this, both the role-play participants and the observers take part in a group evaluation, discussing aspects relating to communication, with a particular focus on emotional responses.

This activity forms part of a broader workshop, where more useful information and additional materials are available: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2014](#)

## MATERIALS

- **Instructions (to be read aloud and handed out to everyone):**  
An elderly man has died in Lugo, at the age of ninety-seven. His estate comprises a large flat in the city centre, which has been renovated and has a lift; an older flat with no lift on the outskirts of the city; a parking space in a communal garage; a house in a village that is crumbling due to lack of maintenance and has no value, and approximately 50,000 euros in bank accounts. The family meets to try to decide what to do with his estate.

- **List of participants (to be read aloud and handed out):**

**ÁNGEL:** Seventy-three years old. Eldest son of the deceased. He lives in Murcia and has been retired for years. He has a good pension and so does his wife. He is married to Dori and has a son called Carlos.

**ALFREDO:** Sixty-six years old. Youngest son of the deceased. He lives in Badajoz and has recently retired on a small pension. He is married to Mari Nieves, who has no pension.

**LUCAS and JAVIER:** Thirty-seven and thirty-five years old. Grandsons of the deceased. They live in Madrid. Javier got married recently and has a large mortgage. Their father died last year, so they are direct heirs to their grandfather. Their mother is Monica. Lucas is a secondary school teacher and lives alone in a rented flat.

**MONICA:** Sixty-four years old. Daughter-in-law of the deceased and mother of Lucas and Javier. She is a widow and lives alone in Madrid.

**DORI:** Seventy years old. Daughter-in-law of the deceased and wife of Ángel.

**MARI NIEVES:** Sixty-six years old. Daughter-in-law of the deceased and wife of Alfredo.

**CARLOS:** Forty-five years old. Grandson of the deceased and son of Ángel. He lives in a village in Murcia.

**ANGELINES:** Eighty-four years old. Lover of the deceased for the last twenty years of his life. She has loved and cared for him for years, although she has been forced to remain in the background as neither the deceased nor his family wished to make the relationship public.

- **Roles (to be given to each participant, but not to be read aloud):**

**ÁNGEL:** As the eldest son of the deceased, you believe you should lead this family meeting. You want to sell everything and share out the money because Lugo is a long way away and it isn't worth keeping property there that will only cause problems. You are well-off financially, so you are in no rush to sell because property prices are low at the moment. You would be open to keeping one of the properties if your son Carlos or your grandchildren show an interest in visiting their grandparents' homeland now and again. You can't stand your brother Alfredo, who's always blaming you for everything and has accused you of failing to look after your father properly. You can't stand his wife Mari Nieves either. You're tired of their rudeness and you're no longer prepared to let them get one over you.

**ALFREDO:** You need the money and would prefer to sell everything as soon as possible and split the proceeds. You're angry because you've always been the one to look after your father, while the rest of the family took no responsibility.

You're the only one that visited him every month and spent Christmas with him, despite living a long way away. You're especially resentful of your brother Ángel, who has been boasting that he was the one who looked after your parents the most, when you know that's a lie. You think it's important to say this loud and clear at the meeting so that everyone is aware of it. You couldn't bear it if your brother or your nephews, who (except Carlos) wanted nothing to do with the family, ended up with one of the properties, even if it had no value at all.

**LUCAS:** You're fine with selling the whole estate, the money would come in very handy, but you'd like to keep the village house where you spent summer holidays as a child with your late father, splitting it with your brother and renovating it bit by bit. You don't get on very well with your uncle and aunt so you would prefer your mother Monica, who has a strong personality, to take charge of the matter.

**JAVIER:** You're fine with selling the whole estate and splitting the money, but you'd like to keep the village house where you spent the summer holidays as a child with your late father, splitting it with your brother and renovating it bit by bit. You don't get on very well with your uncle and aunt so you would prefer your mother Monica, who has a strong personality, to take charge of the matter.

**MONICA:** You didn't get on with your parents-in-law at all because they were very unpleasant to you years ago, which is why you decided not to participate in their care. You don't get on with your brother-in-law Alfredo or his wife because you consider them to be selfish, and sure to try and take the bulk of the estate. You won't mince your words when it comes to making sure they don't get away with it. You're defending your sons' interests as heirs.

**DORI:** You support your husband Ángel in everything he does. You think it's time everyone knew how unfairly he has been treated by his own family, especially his brother Alfredo. You and Ángel went out of your way to care for his sick mother years

ago when you had just retired and her other sons were still working and couldn't travel to Lugo. Now Alfredo is unfairly taking all the credit for caring for the brothers' parents.

**MARI NIEVES:** You support your husband Alfredo in everything he does. You can't stand any of your in-laws, who you find sanctimonious and hypocritical. You've put up with umpteen Christmases and trips to Lugo with your husband to look after his family and you want your efforts to be acknowledged, especially when it comes to splitting the estate. There is no doubt in your mind that you and your husband deserve a bigger share.

**CARLOS:** You are the eldest grandchild and the only one who bothered to visit your grandfather and help care for him from time to time. You think the bad blood in your family is awful. You get along with everyone and you don't want your family to fall apart. You'd like the family to keep the village house and at least one of the properties in Lugo so that you can all get together there. You'd be willing to travel to the village with your partner and children now and again to help renovate the house.

**ANGELINES:** You believe you know the family well and have a moral obligation to advise them and convey the old man's wishes: he didn't want any of the properties to be sold and he wanted the house in Lugo to be used as a gathering place so that the family would stay in touch. You also think you deserve some kind of compensation from the estate for the many years you spent looking after the old man.

## 58.



## SEEKING CONSENSUS

### Purpose:

- ↔ Preventing conflicts ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Analysing decision-making ↔

### Instructions:

Before starting this activity, the group should look at the different roles listed in the table shown below (the roles can be changed or reduced if necessary). Then, the group can either fill in the table 'List of roles' first, to help them consider appropriate behaviour and attempt to reproduce it during the activity, or embark on the activity without completing the table.

Divide the group into smaller groups of six or seven. Then, either ask each group to organise a draw among its members to distribute the roles between them, or have the facilitator distribute the roles however they see fit. The aim is not to select the most capable person for each role, but rather to distribute them at random so that every participant has a role to play that does not come naturally to them, and so requires them to act.

Ask the participants to fill in the 'Table of questions' (see below), ticking 'true' or 'false'. Then, adopting the roles that they have drawn, ask them to attempt to reach consensus in answer to the each of the questions in the table. The third column, which is titled 'I would phrase it like this', gives the participants an opportunity to rewrite the statements, encouraging greater alignment of their positions and opinions and bringing them closer to a consensus. It is important to remind them that they must each adopt the characteristics of the role they have been assigned.

Finally, ask the group to evaluate the activity by answering the following questions: How did each of the behaviours and strategies facilitate or hinder dialogue? Which roles and behaviours (not individuals) were positive and which were less so? If the group has not already completed the table to show appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and language, they can do so now.

For more information, see: [Gil et al. 2010](#)

**LIST OF ROLES (may be edited if necessary):**

	APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR AND LANGUAGE	INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR AND LANGUAGE
<b>Coordinator:</b> an individual with leadership skills, who is not swayed by the group members' desire to have fun or mess around and keeps the group focused on achieving their working objectives at all times.		
<b>Assistant coordinator:</b> their role is to make the coordinator's life easier and help implement their ideas and suggestions.		
<b>Expert:</b> their scientific and technical training and their analytical abilities make them the ideal person to suggest ideas and solutions to problems arising at work.		
<b>Mediator with expertise in conflict resolution:</b> their role is characterised by good humour, willingness to resolve conflicts and concern for maintaining a pleasant, conflict-free working environment.		



<p><b>Advocate for colleagues:</b> their role is to defend the group members from the coordinator's demands if they are deemed unfair.</p>		
<p><b>Worker:</b> a member of the group whose responsibility is to complete the tasks entrusted to them by the coordinator to the best of their abilities.</p>		
<p><b>Other possible roles:</b> critic, peacekeeper, cheerleader, troublemaker, hinderer, evaluator, scapegoat, etc.</p>		



**TABLE OF QUESTIONS (may be edited if necessary):**

ARE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE?	T	F	I WOULD PHRASE IT LIKE THIS:
Violence is a resource available to individuals to defend themselves from society.			
Television can be an excellent form of education for young children.			
Discipline and respect for social norms are key when it comes to conflict resolution.			
Society's concern over the rise in drug-taking among young people is over the top.			
Human beings are generally evil by nature.			
The most important thing in life is for everyone to fight for their own interests, without worrying too much about other people.			
These days, governments and institutions are more capable of addressing society's problems.			
In the current context, it is impossible for a worker to truly trust their boss.			
Men and women are different in almost every meaningful way.			



## 59.



## SOCIODRAMA

### Purpose:

- ↔ Identifying problems ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔
- ↔ Analysing a situation or topic ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔

### Instructions:

A sociodrama is a theatrical performance of a situation that allows participants to experience and analyse it, without the need for a script, costumes, set or long periods of time. Before embarking on a sociodrama, the group or community chooses a situation or conflict that they wish to address, which should be neither too specific nor too general. It can be helpful to use situations that have arisen in previous group activities.

Once the topic has been chosen, the group discuss what they know about it and how they experience and understand it, without necessarily coming to an agreement. The group then write down every aspect of the discussion in a structured manner, including the arguments raised and the ways in which they were expressed. This scenario is what will subsequently be performed.

On the basis of this scenario, group members identify characters and choose which ones they wish to play. Once they are ready, they hold a short rehearsal, perhaps using signs and everyday objects to signify places. They then perform the play, either to other members of their community or simply to the group itself.

Finally, the group come together to analyse their experiences, feelings and any lessons learned during the process. (Once again, other techniques may be used to structure this discussion – or not, as the case may be.)

For more information, see: [Vargas, Bustillos and Marfán 1987, 81](#), y [Alberich et al. 2009, 12](#)

A more elaborate, in-depth version of the sociodrama is forum theatre, a powerful tool that requires a degree of preparation that goes beyond the scope of this quick reference guide. For more information, see: [Szwarc 2018](#)

## 60.



## GROUP SOCIOGRAM

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔

### Instructions:

Ask each participant to either draw and affix, or just affix, a simple picture of themselves or a small photo to a notice board or large piece of card.

Their image should be positioned according to their perceived relationships with their colleagues (based on familiarity or affinity), placed closest to those with whom they have the closest relationship. Each may also suggest that other people should move their images. Too, they can indicate the relative strength of different relationships by drawing thinner or thicker lines between images.

The group should then discuss the activity, sharing how they feel about the final position of their image and about others' suggestions that they move their image. The facilitator must moderate the discussion to ensure that it is not diverted by bickering.

As an extension of this activity, the sociogram can be displayed in a common area so that group members can change the positions of their images as relationships within the group evolve over time.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 36](#)

## 61.



## NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

### Purpose:

- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔

### Instructions:

The group get into pairs and sit on chairs facing one another, very close but without touching.

The facilitator reads a series of statements that both people in each pair must simultaneously try to convey to one another. They must avoid any kind of noise or physical contact. They have a maximum of thirty seconds to convey each idea. Some possible ideas are:

- What a beautiful day!
- My favourite team lost yesterday.
- I'm in love with my work colleague.
- What's that on the shelf?
- I love your smile.
- I'm feeling really sad.
- The last NATO bombing killed fifteen civilians, most of them children.
- My mum spoils me.

The group repeats the activity with new ideas. This time, closing their eyes and holding hands, the paired participants must attempt to express the ideas through their hands. Some possible ideas are:

- I'm feeling affectionate.
- Tomorrow, we're going on strike.
- The person I loved most has passed away.

- I ate lentils on Tuesday.
- Everyone clapped for me and I'm so thrilled.
- Flamenco is a highly valuable part of our cultural heritage.
- It's been a long time since I saw such a beautiful flower.
- I'm glad that we're friends.

The group then come together to discuss how they felt, what difficulties and opportunities they encountered when using nonverbal communication, and how much physical contact helped or hindered. Is it easier to express emotions or concepts? How do we interpret what other people are trying to convey to us? etc.

For more information and some useful short texts to accompany the activity, see: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2014](#)

## 62.



## PERSONAL STORIES

### Purpose:

- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔

### Instructions:

This activity is for groups of people that are relatively comfortable with one another, either because they have spent time together or because they have successfully completed other activities involving the use of the body. When the activity is presented, the facilitator asks the participants if they agree to abide by three rules (or principles): confidentiality, respect and active listening. This means avoiding sarcasm and derogatory comments or jokes. Anyone who refuses to abide by these rules will be excluded from the activity.

Next, each person is given a box or envelope (ideally, one that is decorated in some way) containing several sheets of paper. The first one reads: 'Once upon a time, there was a person called...'. They are asked to recount (in broad terms) the events, stages, milestones and disruptions in their lives to date, especially within their social and family groups, and then, looking up to five years into the future, to predict what will happen to them then. They each have up to forty-five minutes to spend creating this self-narrated personal history. Before they start on this activity, the facilitator can explain that they will be invited to share their stories at the end, leaving out any parts they wish to keep private, and that they will take their texts home after the activity.

As each participant reads their personal history, the group should listen in complete silence until they have finished. Then, they can give empathetic feedback. It is very important for the facilitator to monitor this process. Once all the participants have read their stories, they will put them in their box or envelope to take home with them.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 35](#)

## 63.



## SURVIVAL WALK

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔

### Instructions:

After some days of preparation, the group will be taken for a walk in the countryside, where they have to complete challenges and achieve goals. The facilitator may wish to mention or recommend related television programmes, such as *Man vs. Wild*.

Prior to the activity, the facilitator must plan the walk by visiting the area, hiding the food that the participants will need to find with the help of a map and selecting a place for them to spend the night. If they wish to do so, they can add clues or challenges as if for a scavenger hunt.

In the days leading up to the walk, the group should be taught how to orient themselves outdoors and how to read topographic maps.

Before the walk, the group will be informed of the following six rules:

- They must complete the walk together
- They cannot take food
- They must take their time when making decisions
- They cannot receive external help unless it is absolutely necessary
- To obtain food, they must identify a location on the route and complete a challenge
- Failure to comply with any of these rules will lead to the suspension of the activity

The participants will follow the route marked on the map that they will be given, which will show where they can find provisions. The facilitator will accompany the group, acting as an observer. They will monitor the group's safety and compliance with the rules, but will not participate, offer guidance, give clues or make decisions. It is important that the facilitator complies strictly with their role. They can take notes or even film key points along the route where possible, documenting the participants' excitement, their frustration and how they handle it, messages of encouragement or discouragement, decision-making processes, approach to the challenges, etc. The group will need to be self-sufficient in overcoming the challenges they face.

Once they have completed the route and rested, the group will hold an in-depth discussion where they will reflect on their approach to working as a team and identify links to their everyday lives. The facilitator will provide helpful feedback.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, 37](#)



## 64.



## THE PLANETS

### Purpose:

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Preventing conflicts ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔

### Instructions:

The participants are divided into three equal groups. Each group represents the inhabitants of a planet.

This is a role-play activity. Before starting the activity, it is advisable to talk to the group about what role play entails and how important it is to get into the role and try to think and behave as one's character would, etc.

A large open space is required. Ideally, the activity should be held outdoors in a grassy area, although it could also be carried out in a large room without furniture. This activity requires considerable physical movement.

It is helpful for the facilitator to place pieces of card showing the names of the planets in the three areas set aside for the groups, which could be three different corners of the room or outdoor areas that are relatively far apart while still allowing the groups to see each other.

Once the three groups have moved to their own areas, the facilitator gives each a sheet of paper explaining its collective role. The participants then have five to ten minutes to read the instructions and think about how they will perform their group's role, before the activity begins. The facilitator remains available to answer any questions the groups may have. The activity begins when the facilitator says 'Go'. They observe from the sidelines from this point on.

The inhabitants of the three planets then gather together. The facilitator gives them a reasonable amount of time to resolve their conflicts and when it is apparent that the discussion is winding down, they bring the group together to negotiate and make decisions. Then, they are given another ten minutes to see how they behave. The roles are designed in such a way as to trigger clear conflicts of interest between the inhabitants of the three planets. The aim of the activity is to bring all these conflicts to the surface and give the participants enough time to create mechanisms to resolve them and put these in practice.

The facilitator calls an end to the activity when they can see that the conflict has been resolved or when the participants have reached a stalemate that they are struggling to overcome. In the event of a stalemate, the facilitator may prompt the groups to hold an 'inter-planetary summit'. This takes the form of a meeting with chairs set out in concentric circles and three spokespeople in the middle (one per planet), who attempt to negotiate a consensual solution through dialogue. The planets should be given five or ten minutes to prepare their proposals for the summit.

At the end of this activity, it is very important to conduct an evaluation to discuss the participants' feelings, behaviours and values during the activity. In this evaluation session, the group should analyse the usual aspects emerging during role play. They should start by sharing their feelings, then discuss the degree of knowledge that each group had with regard to the other parties' lack of understanding. They should then list the conflicts that arose and the methods adopted to resolve them, starting with spontaneous approaches before moving on to more planned, mutually agreed mechanisms. Finally, they should analyse the reasons for the conflicts, compare the methods used to resolve them and link what happened during the activity to real-life dynamics.

## ROLES:

### SECULAX-SECULORUM

- \* You are very religious and puritanical: duty comes before pleasure
- \* Your society is hierarchical

- \* You have a leader who you must protect at all costs (choose them now)
- \* You have a serious illness that can only be cured by rolling on the ground on the planet Ruralix (this includes your leader)
- \* Your greeting is a deep bow.

### APHRODITANIA

- \* Your primary goal in life is to be happy and have offspring
- \* Your sexual behaviour is very liberal
- \* To reproduce, you can only mate with inhabitants of other planets
- \* You are quite individualistic
- \* To greet one another, you rub noses

### RURALIX

- \* On your planet, you live off agriculture
- \* You can only harvest your crops one day a year. Today is that day
- \* You have no bosses. To make decisions, you must all agree
- \* You are nonviolent pacifists
- \* Your greeting is a hug
- \* You mark the borders of your territory so that it can be identified by beings from other planets (do this now)
- \* Your planet is unassailable. Nobody from any other planet can enter it. They can only enter on harvest day

For more information, see: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2005](#)

## 65.

**CHECK IN, CHECK OUT****Purpose:**

- ↔ Reflecting on group dynamics and roles ↔
- ↔ Getting to know one another ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Preventing conflicts ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔

**Instructions:**

This activity invites participants in a working group, activity, meeting or assembly to 'check in' and 'check out' – i.e. to share their mood and their mental and/or physical condition with one another, before and after their gathering – in such a way that nobody feels obliged to share personal information.

The facilitator or the group itself identifies some initial concepts or ideas relating to the topic that is to be addressed by the group. Each of these concepts or ideas is then written or illustrated as an image, word or symbol, on a piece of card or paper, to create a set of cards.

These cards can be used in a variety of activities. For example, each participant could choose a card and explain their relationship with and approach to the concept shown, triggering a conversation with the rest of the group. Participants can also use categories (written on a large piece of paper or flip chart) to group the ideas or concepts.

For more information, see: [Colectivo Larre 2023](#)

## 66.

**CALENDAR****Purpose:**

↔ Making decisions ↔

↔ Organising tasks ↔

**Instructions:**

To give working groups a short- and long-term overview of their work, they can produce a weekly or monthly calendar containing as much detail as they wish to add, e.g. the responsibilities of each participant. There are many tools and applications available for this purpose, the relevance of which will vary according to the group's interests.

For more information, see: [INESDI 2022](#)



**closing**



## DETERMINING POTENTIAL

### Purpose:

↔ Making decisions ↔

### Instructions:

Draw a table featuring two axes: 'Applicability (high and low)' and 'Creative potential (high and low)'. This creates four quadrants in which ideas can be categorised as 'top ideas' (highly potent and applicable), 'immediate ideas', 'future ideas' and 'rejected ideas'.

For more information, see: [Bustos, García and Chueca 2018, 35](#)



## PRIORITISING PROPOSALS

### Purpose:

- ↔ Making decisions ↔
- ↔ Stimulating ideas ↔

### Instructions:

In a situation where a group suggests different proposals or solutions, produce a table or matrix (individually, in smaller groups or by the whole group) with four variables to be assessed for each proposal:

- **Relevance:** the aim here is to analyse the extent to which each proposal contributes to effectively solving the problem or issue in question. A high (=5), medium (=3) or low (=1) score will be assigned
- **Economic and technical viability:** this variable measures economic and technical aspects of each proposal, i.e. the resources required to implement it and their availability. In this case, the scoring works the other way around: high costs and resource requirements result in low viability (=1), and so on
- **Expected support:** the aim here is to estimate the external support that may be anticipated to affect the broader viability of the proposal, beyond economic and technical considerations: collaborative contributions from different social stakeholders or organisations, positive reception of the project's (actual or anticipated) outcome, etc. A high score (=5) indicates high levels of expected support, while a lower score indicates moderate (=3) or low (=1) levels
- **Urgency:** for this variable, the group must assess the relative urgency of the proposal's implementation. The scores will be as follows: high urgency (=5), moderate urgency (=3), low urgency (=1)

The aim is not to make decisions directly using this method (other activities such as weighted voting [see below] are more helpful here)



but to help the group reflect on important considerations and include them in the decision-making process. The squares in the matrix can also be used to note down ideas, alternatives or nuances that can help make the proposals more viable if they are selected for implementation (What support must be sought? Where can funding be obtained? etc.).

For more information, see: [Bustos, García and Chueca 2018, 81](#)



## WEIGHTED VOTING

### Purpose:

↔ Making decisions ↔

### Instructions:

In a situation where several proposals are suggested but cannot all be chosen and no consensus has been reached, hand out a certain number of 'points' (counters, coins, stickers, etc.) to each participant for them to distribute between the proposals. By way of example, if two proposals are to be selected from a total of five, each person could be given five points and told that they can give no more than three points to each proposal.

If there are proposals from different working groups or collectives, participants can be asked not to vote for their own proposals to prevent a situation where each person votes for themselves. Once all the points have been distributed, calculate the total score for each proposal and draw up a list of the proposals in priority order.

(It is advisable to use this activity after the activities on consensus decision-making and consistency as well as proposal prioritisation.)

For more information, see: [Bustos, García and Chueca 2018, 90](#)



## CHOOSING VALUES

### Purpose:

- ↔ Cohesionar el grupo ↔
- ↔ Prevenir conflictos ↔
- ↔ Tomar decisiones ↔

### Instructions:

The facilitator invites the participants to write the values they would like the group to have on the whiteboard, offering a few suggestions to break the ice.

Then, each person is given one minute to come up with the five values that they as an individual consider to be most important; after that, participants in pairs are given several minutes to decide on five values, and then again in groups of four. In each of these last two rounds, they must try to reach a consensus.

Finally, the whole group should seek to establish a consensus. During this round, the group may choose to rank all of the values in order of priority rather than selecting just five. Voting should only be used as a last resort.

For more information, see: [Soledad Gil et al. 2010](#)

## 71.

**ESTABLISHING CONSISTENCY****Purpose:**

↔ Making decisions ↔

↔ Solving conflicts ↔

**Instructions:**

Give the group between one hour and ninety minutes to agree on a series of basic principles or standards that they wish to apply to a space (freedom, inclusiveness, care, etc.), before reflecting on whether these are a good fit for the proposals that they are considering.

For more information, see: [Bustos, García and Chueca 2018, 36](#)



## PRACTISING ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

### ¿Para qué sirve?

- ↔ Preventing conflicts ↔
- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔

### ¿En qué consiste?

The facilitator gives all of the participants a copy of 'Assertive Communication and Tables of Emotions', which is reproduced below and can be consulted [here](#) along with other relevant materials in fanzine format.

The facilitator explains the activity and states for which period the participants are asked to attempt to recall, identify and express their past emotions (the last hour, week, month, year, etc.). This can be selected by the facilitator or agreed by the group.

The facilitator asks the participants to commit to keeping everything shared during the meeting confidential and not reveal it to third parties (they could also be asked to make this commitment in writing); everyone who wishes to participate must agree to this.

The group sit in a circle. Taking turns and following the script in the text (this is very important), each person tells the other participants how they felt during an event that they were involved in.

After this activity, a final round is held in which each participant comments on their experience of expressing themselves or listening to others. Here, it is important to avoid judgement, justification and clarification and focus solely on emotions. It can be a good idea for the group to carry out a relaxing motivational activity afterwards.

This activity forms part of a broader workshop, for which more useful information and additional materials are available. See: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2014](#).

## ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION AND TABLES OF EMOTIONS

Authors: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga](#)

Many misunderstandings, disagreements and conflicts are caused by our inability to connect with our feelings when we see something happen or process certain information. Western society does not tend to educate us to be aware of what we feel. Emotions, which play a hugely important role in our mental processes, ideas and communication, are often beyond conscious thought and function almost automatically. To make matters worse, we are not brought up to know how to express our emotions; talking about our feelings is often frowned upon due to social pressure.

Assertive communication challenges us to rewind our education in order to find ourselves emotionally, setting aside rational thought for a short period of time.

When conflict appears, it is common for the people involved to experience intensely negative emotions, triggering a whole range of feelings that are rooted in two basic emotions: fear (insecurity) and hatred (resentment). Although we are often barely aware of them, these emotions of discomfort are a serious hindrance to communication and lead to a multitude of improper forms of expression, giving rise to all kinds of defensive barriers and avoidance mechanisms. These improper, judgemental forms of expression, barriers and avoidance mechanisms (excuses, victimhood, evasion, etc.) are built on rational arguments. This is why we must set rational communication aside momentarily to focus on expressing our true thoughts.

Assertive communication can be used to resolve conflicts via the method explained below. In the interests of interpersonal hygiene, individuals and groups can also adopt this method to share their emotions on a regular basis.

## What does assertive communication entail?

a) We must enter a state of inner silence, relaxation or disconnection to allow us to calm our racing thoughts as much as possible. We can take as long as we need (thirty minutes, one hour, three hours, one day, etc.) to calmly reflect on the specific facts of the situation we are analysing (e.g. our relationship over the last few months, a conflict we are trying to resolve, etc.), facts which are triggering our emotions. We must make an exhaustive list of these facts as we seek to recall every single one, noting down everything we can recall on a piece of paper. Then, we must engage in self-reflection with the aim of identifying the feelings and specific emotions (positive and negative) that are aroused in us by each of these facts. These should be listed as precisely and exhaustively as possible, drawing on the tables of emotions for reference.

b) It is now time to convey what we have written down to the specific person or people with whom we are carrying out this exercise. First, we will select our preferred method: at random; taking turns; expressing all our negative emotions followed by our positive emotions, etc. We will speak in the second person at all times, maintaining eye contact with the person we are addressing. We will describe the fact as neutrally, objectively and comprehensively as possible, avoiding any kind of interpretation or judgement, before listing all the emotions we have experienced. For example: 'You promised to do X and you didn't do it. This is the third time you've done this. It makes me feel disappointed, angry, distrustful and helpless.' In this example, it would be inappropriate to say: 'You're an irresponsible person who never keeps their promises and that makes me feel... '

c) The person listening also has a very difficult task, as some of the things they are hearing may seem hurtful, shocking or unfair. (Ideally, the participants will take turns to speak and listen.) Their main job is to manage their emotions as they listen, making sure that their feelings do not undermine their ability to be attentive and show empathy. As we have said, it is very normal to become evasive or put up defensive walls

when we experience feelings of insecurity. The person listening can overcome these risks by remaining completely silent. They should not try to explain themselves, defend themselves or clear up misunderstandings. They should merely listen and try to absorb what they are hearing. Often, as the days go by and our emotions cool, the things we have been told (which we may initially reject) begin to seem more reasonable and can even help us change our behaviour. If there has been a genuine misunderstanding, the person affected must always be given the chance to resolve it, either with the other individual or with the group. This should always be addressed on a different day from the assertive communication session to avoid interfering in the group's dynamics.





## TABLES OF EMOTIONS

### EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS OF DISCOMFORT FEAR, HATRED, RAGE

INDIGNATION	DEFIANCE	RESENTMENT	FRUSTRATION
Deceived	Inadequate	Hurt	Anxious
Sabotaged	Confused	Criticised, slandered	Insecure
Coerced, pressured	Weak, vulnerable	Misled	Worried
Bewildered	Stupid	Distrustful	Clingy
Overwhelmed	Distant	Attacked	Tense
Disappointed	Undervalued, underestimated	Used, manipulated	Misguided
Isolated	Unconfident	Critical	Incapable, useless
Victimised	Abandoned	Suspicious, sceptical	Imbalanced
Desperate	Disoriented, lost	Intolerant	Nervous
Demotivated	Rejected, excluded	Resentful, offended	Guilty
	Stubborn, determined	Annoyed, irritated, short-tempered	Embarrassed, troubled
		Indifferent, disdainful	Distressed
		Jealous	Envious

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		Betrayed	Foolish, humiliated
		<b>Sad</b>	Regretful
		Nostalgic, melancholic	<b>Jaded</b>
		Self-pitying	Bored
		Scared, intimidated	
		Hopeless, despairing	
		Depressed	
		Passive, apathetic	
		Tired	
		Helpless	

Source: compiled by the author based on material by Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga



## EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS OF WELLBEING

### HOPE

Strength	Joy	Calmness
Wishful	Creative, imaginative	Involved
Empathetic	Intuitive	Generous, supportive
Sexually desirous	Capable of enjoyment	Understanding, tolerant, respectful
Capable	Captivating	Available, solicitous
Competent	Jubilant, euphoric, enthusiastic	Affectionate, warm
Unconventional	Desired	Loving
Self-motivated	Excited	Relaxed
Appreciated	Eager	Satisfied
Brave	Vivacious	Content
Free	Spontaneous	Kind
Responsible	Sincere, truthful	Balanced, harmonious
Efficient	Curious	Fond
Strong-minded	Self-confident	
Self-reliant	Trusting	





Independent, self-sufficient	Confident	
Resourceful	Optimistic	
	Open-minded	
	Fulfilled	
	Capable of acceptance and forgiveness	
	Grateful	
	Liked, loved	

Source: compiled by the author based on material by Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga



## SEE–JUDGE–ACT

### Purpose:

- ↔ Solving conflicts ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Improving internal communication ↔

### ¿En qué consiste?

This method is used for personal and collective growth. When used on an ongoing basis, it equips individuals and groups with training in contextual analysis, core values and what is known as 'open praxis'. This provides the basis for a methodology to analyse and attempt to manage or resolve conflicts that may arise in small communities.

In response to conflict, the following steps should be followed:

#### ∞ SEE ∞

1. The conflict is brought before the group by one or more of the affected parties and explained in detail.
2. They highlight the most significant aspects of the conflict (behaviours, experiences, situations, etc.).
3. Each party expresses their feelings about the conflict, followed by the observers if relevant (assertive communication).
4. The conflict is compared with similar conflicts, both past and present.
5. The consequences of the conflict at all levels are identified.
6. The presumed causes of the conflict are identified (personal, environmental, structural, etc.).

#### ∞ JUDGE ∞

1. Ask what each member of the group thinks about the conflict, its causes and its consequences. Replies should be linked to their personal values.
2. Request feedback: How does each member of the group perceive the people or parties involved in the conflict?

3. Ask how other groups, movements, etc. in the same context or people in general have approached or behaved in conflicts of this kind.
4. Consider the significant aspects of the conflict identified in the previous section in parallel with the group's ideological values (traditions, ideological foundations, unwritten ideological values, etc.). Nuestros valores colectivos que se potencian o deterioran en este conflicto.
5. Identify the collective values that may be promoted or undermined by this conflict. La realidad nos interpela: ¿tenemos algún desafío que encajar?
6. Provide specific examples of people or groups that have taken action or written guidelines on handling similar situations.
7. Consider the current context: Is there a threat to be managed?
8. Ask: 'How can we be of mutual assistance to one another at this time of crisis?'

### § ACT §

1. What specific action does each person commit to taking in response to the conflict, based on everything discussed so far?
2. What personal attitudes do they undertake to work on?
3. What specific measures will each person take to fulfil their commitments?
4. Can specific commitments be made at the group level? Is the group willing to make these commitments? What commitments can be made and what measures will be taken to fulfil them?
5. What is the deadline for fulfilling these personal and group commitments? When will the group evaluate whether or not they have been fulfilled?

For more information, see: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2005](#)



## THE ONION

### Purpose:

- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔
- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Using the body ↔

### Instructions:

A volunteer is asked to play a farmer, while the rest of the group forms the onion. To represent the onion, the participants must stand as close to one another as possible. The farmer 'peels' the onion, separating the participants one by one. Every time a participant is removed from the group, they become a farmer too and help peel the onion. This activity can be repeated several times. At the end of the activity, the group discuss their experiences.

For more information, see: [Azpeitia, Galaradi and Arguilea 2009, p. 8](#)

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**HUG TUNNEL****Purpose:**

- ↔ Building group cohesion ↔
- ↔ Boosting motivation ↔

**Instructions:**

In a group where participants are already familiar with one another and previous activities using the body have been successfully carried out, the participants will stand in two lines facing one another, leaving a passageway down the middle with room for one person to walk between the lines. One by one, starting with one end of the line, participants who wish to do so can slowly walk down the passageway with their eyes closed until they reach the end, where they will rejoin one of the lines. As each person walks through the tunnel, they will be 'washed' by the others, who will hug and stroke them respectfully and affectionately. The game will end when everyone has been 'washed'.

For more information, see: [Grupo Antimilitarista Tortuga 2014](#)



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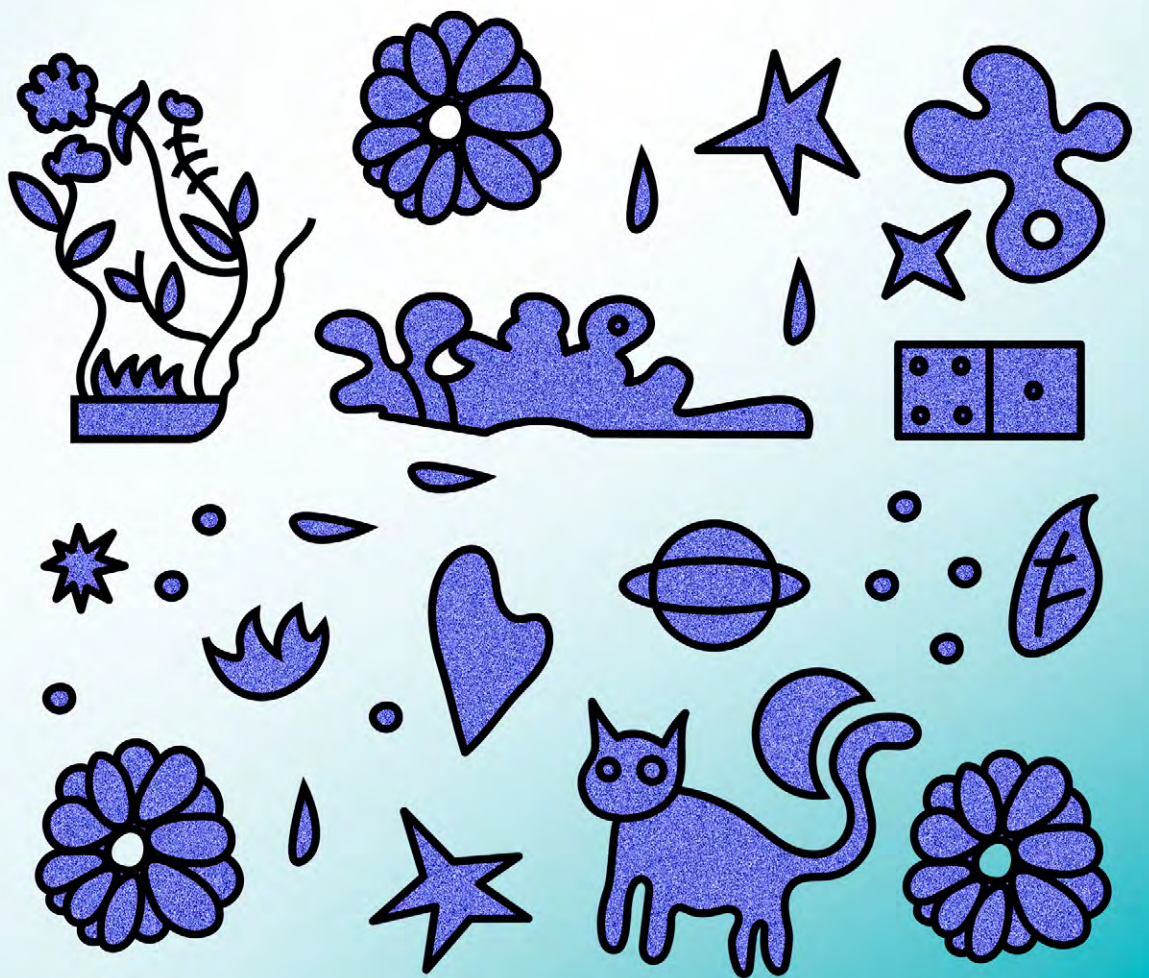
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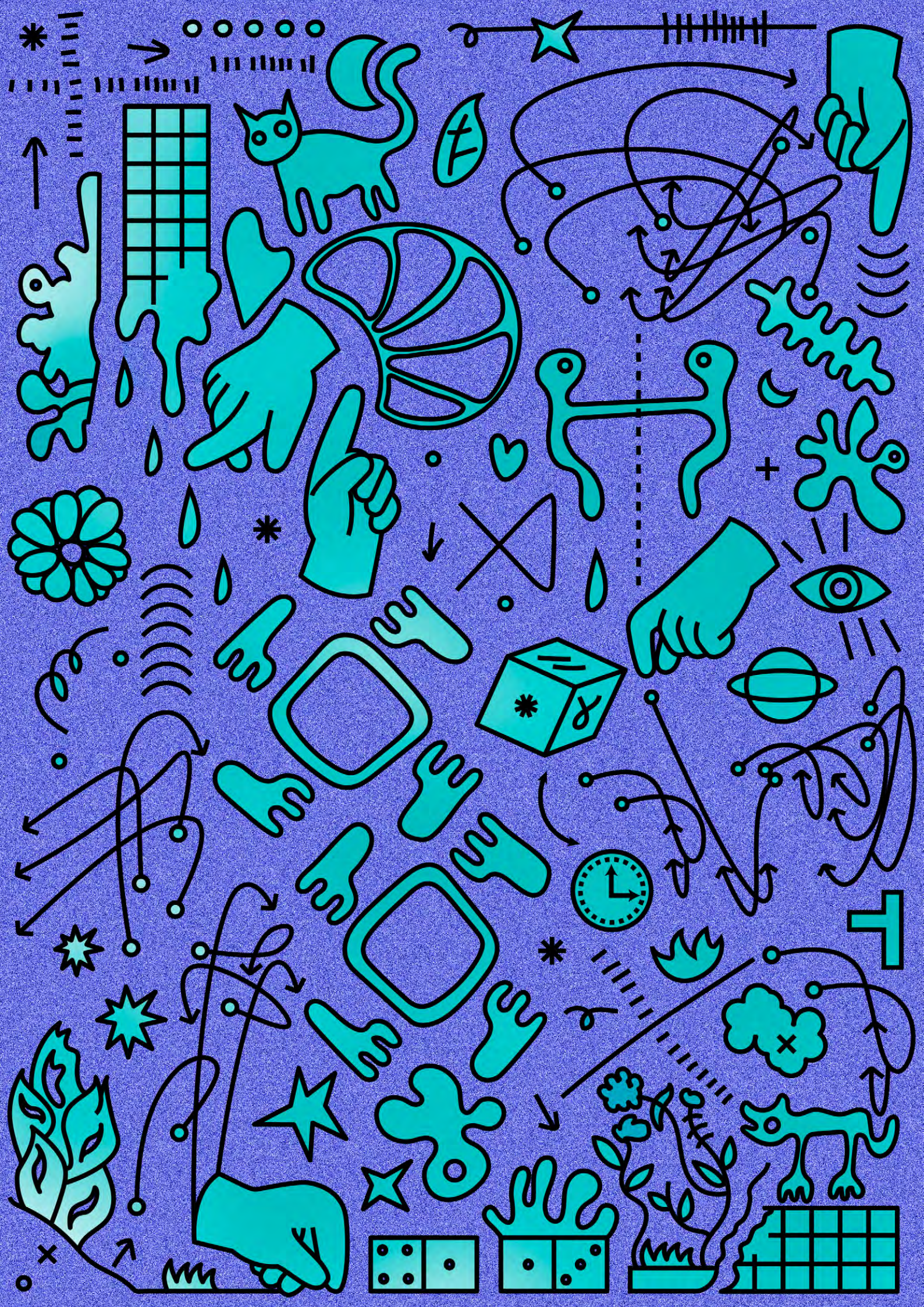
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