How to Use this Toolkit

HOW TO USE THE RE.IMAGINING ACTIVISM TOOLKIT

The Toolkit consists of:

The Introductory Modules – a 1.5 – 2h training session for audiences we would like to introduce to and engage with the Smart CSOs thinking and the content of Re.imagining Activism.

Workshop Modules – in-depth, focuses sessions which allow opportunities to explore the material in more depth and adapt it to specific work contexts.

The toolkit builds closely on the Re.imagining Activism guide to allow coherence and continuity between the formats, and to allow trainers to draw on content of the Guide to support their training.

Introductory Modules

Following demand from the Smart CSOs network, the Introductory Modules are intended as a guide for civil society thinkers, activists, and change agents who are introducing ideas around the Great Transition and system change strategies to fairly new, albeit “warm”, audiences.

The modules therefore sets out a series of topics, presentation materials and points for discussion to interest, inspire and inform new audiences. It provides content for a 2 – 2.5 hour session which can be delivered using presentation-based and participatory formats. Some of the elements of the session may be more time-consuming than others, and are therefore suggested as optional.

The purpose of these introductory modules are to provide a clear flow and logic to trainers so that they feel confident to communicate the information in the Guide, whilst also encouraging audiences to reflect and question their own beliefs and approaches.

The first half is more exploratory and participatory. The purpose is to invite participants to reflect, challenge themselves and explore their own vision of transformative social change. The second half is more presentation-based as it is presenting the research and suggestions developed by the Network on specific strategies and ways of thinking differently. Further workshop sessions are available to build on this initial introductory session.

Workshop modules

Workshop modules are specific sessions allowing trainers to run either one intensive workshop or multiple, separate session on specific topics of the Guide. They are best adapted for audiences already familiar with ideas from the Guide, either because they have already attended a Primer session, or because they have read the Guide and been involved in discussions about it.

Modules may be added over time to respond to the evolving needs of the Smart CSOs community.

GENERAL FORMAT OF TOOLKIT

The Introductory modules and the Workshop modules follow the following formatting conventions:

CONTENTS: shows the sequence of sections and approximate times

AIMS: overall aims of the training session

KEY MESSAGES: summary of main points from each section

TIMING: expected time required to deliver the session
SESSION OUTLINE
step-by-step guidelines for delivering training on this topic

SECTIONS
sub-topics within the overall theme of this session

KEY CONCEPTS
summary of the key bullet points from the Re.imagining Activism guide. Without referring to all the information in the guide, this summary should be sufficient for you to deliver a basic training on these topics.

RESOURCES
additional references

*italics* are used when examples of wording are provided which facilitators can use to explain the topic.

**Note**, however, that at all times we encourage trainers to personalise and adopt the material so that it can be delivered in an authentic and meaningful way.

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**Trainer and Facilitator Resources**
This toolkit gives only limited guidance on how to effectively facilitate groups, as we wanted to focus on the content, and instead share other existing resources with you that may help you reflect on your facilitation style and experiment with different approaches:

» vark-learn.com «

» seedsforchange.org.uk «

» infed.org «

» seedsforchange.org.uk «

» cgspace.cgiar.org «

» managingforimpact.org «

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**COMMUNICATION STYLES**

Here are a few pointers related to communication styles, and for more information, we direct you to the resources above!

As a trainer, it is valuable to be aware of your own strengths and preferences as a communicator. This will allow you to shine and to feel confident in the way you communicate and interact with audiences.

Our strengths as communicators are closely linked to our own learning styles. There are various models of learning styles, one of our favourites is the VARK model of the following styles, describing four styles of learning that different people tend to lean towards:

• Visual learning

• Auditory learning

• Reading/writing learning

• Kinesthetic learning
You can do a quick assessment to find out your learning styles here.

It is also important to think about the preferences and learning styles of your audience. Generally, an audience will include people with different learning styles. Our training materials have tried to provide for different learning styles, but you may want to adapt them to best suit your own communication preferences and those of your audience.

Part of being an authentic and persuasive leader and speaker, is understanding yourself and why you are engaged in social change. Why are you engaged in these efforts? What drives you? What type of success is meaningful to you? To help you build your own understanding of these questions and to communicate them to your audience, you may want to work through the workshop toolkit from 350.org and work on your own Story of Self – see « Story of Self tool »

**PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In your training, aim to be dynamic, open and flexible in order to adapt to the group’s needs. Aim to create a safe space where different opinions, experiences and feelings can be shared and listened to.

When planning a training session, workshop, or simple presentation, consider logistical and social aspects like:

- What kind of power dynamics exist within group?
- Where is the audience in their learning journey? How do they see themselves having an impact, what are their current tools and mental models and how can you relate to that?
- Whom to invite and how to make them feel welcome?
- How the layout of the room will influence the ability of the group to see each other and communicate together?
- How diverse is your group and how will this impact on the types of opinions, approaches and needs of the participants?
- What materials are needed? (eg. flipchart, projector, markers, board, speakers, etc.)
- Do the participants need to do any preparation prior to the training? (eg. read materials, watch a video, etc.)
- How can the group continue their learning after the session and how they can be connected?

**Some learnings from our pilot Training of Trainer workshops:**

In May 2016, we organised a pilot Training of Trainer workshop in Brussels to test this toolkit. Here are some of our lessons learned:

Images, visual presentations and interactive exercises help engage the audience and improve their learning.

Different audiences have different “languages” – jargon, expressions, and ways of thinking – aim to speak their language to bridge understanding.

Having a plan is important, even crucial, but it is equally important to “read” the mood of the group and sometimes, just to go with the flow, eg. if an important discussion arises, let it take its course.

In group learning context, people often need a combination of personal reflection as well as small group exchange and shared group learning.