Information

Objectives of the Session
• To allow space and tools for organisational self-reflection; • To show how democracy works in practice; • To introduce the concept of the RMSOS star.

Participants' Learning Objectives
• To reflect on their own organisation; • To learn how participatory and democratic their own organisation is; • To develop an understanding of how the organisation can be improved.

Risks
The participants need to have knowledge of their organisation. It would be a possibility to give them preparation questions before the workshop / seminar to make sure they inform themselves about their own organisation beforehand.

Background information
Chapter about the RMSOS star in the “Have your Say” manual by the Council of Europe (pp. 37-43).

Tips / things to take into consideration
As a facilitator, familiarize yourself with the concept of the RMSOS star before and reflect on how it reflects to democracy. If possible, find out about the participants’ backgrounds before so you can adapt the questions to suit their needs.

Requirements

Time required
90 minutes

Space required
Plenary room and space where people can work in smaller groups, a big wall for the RSMOS star.

Group Size
Not specified

Group Info
Participants need to have experience and knowledge of an NGO to be able to reflect on its function. This session can work better if participants have various organisational backgrounds.

Materials required
A prepared RSMOS star on the wall; Printouts and pens for each participant; Post-its in green, yellow and red.

Preparation needed before starting
Activities step by step

Step 1: Speed dating
15 Minutes

Split the participants into two circles (one inner, and one outer) so that each participant is facing someone. Explain to them that they are on a speed date and will have 90 seconds to discuss a topic that you tell them. After every one and a half minute ask the outer circle to move one step to the right so that the discussion partners change. This activity will make the participants reflect on the topic in a dynamic way. The discussion topics can be adapted to fit the group.

Suggestions for speed date topics:
- Is your organisation democratic?
- Is your organisations’ General Assembly representative?
- How do elections work in your organisation?
- How are decisions made in your organisation?
- Who would represent your organisation if a newspaper called for an interview?
- Who decides on how money is used in the organisation?

Step 2: Present the RMSOS star
10 Minutes

Present the concept of the RMSOS star, the democracy tool from the “Have your say!” manual by the Council of Europe (read pages 37 – 43). RMSOS stands for Rights, Means, Space, Opportunities and Support.

The RMSOS star will help make the participants understand the holistic picture of what it means to be a democratic organisation. An organisation that is fully representative and accessible should fulfil all the different elements. Present the star by referring to a huge star that has been prepared on the wall before the session. Give concrete examples. Allow for questions and clarifications.

Step 3: Reflection
30 Minutes

Hand out an RMSOS star to each participant, so that they can take notes. Divide the group according with the organisations (individually, in pairs, etc.). Ask participants to identify whether the different aspects are fulfilled in their own organisation by asking themselves the RMSOS questions. Do they have the right to exist and do what they do? Do they have the means to fulfil their objectives? Do they have the space to act and involve people? Do people in the organisation have the opportunity to engage full? Is the organisation and its cause supported by external actors? Let the participants reflect on this in silence. After a while; show them a flip-chart with questions with additional reflection questions that they can further reflect on.

- Do you have the rights, means, space, opportunity and support?
- If not, what is missing?
- If yes, do they help to enhance democracy within the organisation?
- What does it give young people in the organisation? Can the procedures still improve?
- Are there any democratic issues in the organisation?
- Does the organisation represent who they claim to?

Don’t interrupt the participants in their reflection. If they have questions, answer them without interrupting other groups. Play
relaxing music in the background.

Step 4: Revisit RMSOS star
15 Minutes

Ask everyone to join you in front of the big RMSOS star that you have on the wall. Hand out post-its in green, yellow and red colours. Ask participants to place the post-its on the star according to what elements they see in their own organisations, green on elements they have, red on elements they are missing and yellow for the elements that they have partially. Let them do this without any discussion or comment. Make sure the star is in a visible place so it can be looked at during the reflection that follows.

Step 5: Reflection in plenary
20 Minutes

Questions for reflection e.g.:

- Did you realize anything new about how your organisation works?
- What makes an organisation democratic?
- Why do you think it happens that a lot of organisations are not fully democratic?
- Is it important to you that the students you represent are fully heard?