CITIES IN ACTION:
DEMOCRATISING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

A RESOURCE FOR CAMPAIGNERS

CONTENTS

The project

Key Findings

Implications

**Cities in Action Appendix - how to
host a co-learning conversation**

"*ARE WE LIVING IN A DEMOCRACY HERE? I HAVEN'T REALLY EXPERIENCED IT. WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO MAKE OURSELVES BE NOTICED AND WHAT DO WE HAVE TO GIVE UP OF OURSELVES TO BE PART OF THIS POWER STRUCTURE?*"

THE PROJECT

'Democratising Local Governance' focused on the relationships between local campaigns and democracy and governance in two cities: Glasgow and Sheffield. In the project, we spoke to local campaigners and community groups working on a diverse range of issues. We explored to what extent they share common experiences of local democracy and governance and articulate demands for change. We also investigated the strategies and tactics used by campaigners to further these demands, and the potential for more collectivised action.

Overall, we heard widely shared concerns about local democracy and governance in both cities. These included wide-ranging issues of access to local democracy and governance, the multiplier effect of cuts, challenges for campaigners having meaningful voice and influence, and the de-prioritisation of the public interest in the face of private and corporate capture. Councils do not often prioritise the issues and agendas that campaigners find important, and this mismatch makes campaign work harder.

We believe this is a crucial moment for improving our democracy. There is widespread democratic disengagement and polarisation, and a loss of public trust. This is true on all levels but we have chosen to look at local government, because it is closest to people's everyday lives, but often overlooked. When local democracy is mentioned, these discussions focus on the actions of local governments themselves, or central government policies about local government. Much less attention is paid to the action of residents to secure greater power, agency and democratic control. The findings from our conversations have wide implications for how the voices of ordinary people could be better heard and how local democracy might be rethought and reframed.

The work of the project revolved around a series of 'co-learning conversations' which we recorded and analysed. The findings are available in a longer report. This resource provides campaigners with some of the key findings which may help with their work, and acts as a guide for hosting a co-learning conversation with local democracy and governance as its focus. We invited people from a wide range of groups: from local branches of national campaigns to community groups and grassroots activists (although we refer to them all as 'campaigners' here for the sake of simplicity). In addition to providing us with insights, the participants also found the conversations very useful for learning from each other.

KEY FINDINGS

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

There is an active landscape of campaigners and community groups in both Sheffield and Glasgow who are operating in a significant democratic deficit. Our findings show it is nearly impossible for residents to engage with councils' decision-making structures— especially on their own terms—to the extent that they question whether they are democratic at all.

This is a summary of our findings about local governance:

Access to local democracy

Council structures are complex and inaccessible. It requires significant knowledge and social capital to access and participate in local democracy – people have to know the 'rules of the game'. Even when they have learned them, it is time and energy-consuming to work with the council. For example, any information is hard to get. The barriers are systemic, not incidental. Councils say they want participation but this is not the experience of campaigners. Turnout in local elections is very low, which erodes the legitimacy of democratic structures.

The multiplier effect of cuts

Local government funding has been decimated over recent years, and councils are cutting back on everything. This creates more need, and some campaigners provide care in their communities, even where they feel conflicted about the growth of the charity sector as part of the replacement to the public sector. Councils simply do not do what they say they do. There is also striking incompetence. This is due partly to the loss of resources and expertise as a result of staff cuts, but lack of capacity does not fully explain the many examples of poor governance and entitlement to power we have witnessed.

Voice and influence

There are no mechanisms for campaigners or residents to have real influence on council decision-making. This is true for both cities, although this happens in different ways in each context. In Glasgow, the council is seen as a more remote machinery with a managerial approach and there is often a complete lack of response to campaigners' concerns. In Sheffield, there is more exchange between campaigners and the council. This is partly due to large recent campaigns (against cutting down half of the city's trees and to change the governance model). But these conversations still mainly happen within the council's control: they often want to fit campaigners in certain boxes, reject challenges, or they favour some groups which can cause tensions with local campaigners.

Private and corporate capture

In both cities, the public sector is shrinking and private interests are prioritised. This looks like: councils selling off land and assets, the privatisation of public services, increasing commercialisation of parks and buildings, and public-private partnerships. This has practical implications, but it also changes the model of thinking in councils. For example, we heard that campaigners now have to go in with a business case to get the council to listen, and councils prioritise private and business interests over community concerns. Some campaigns choose to target corporations because councils no longer hold real power. This shift in power is seen as a fundamental challenge to democracy.

CAMPAIGN APPROACHES

Campaigners had many different ways of relating to council structures, and often it was not straightforward to decide what approach to adopt. Although all were very critical of governance arrangements, campaigners had different views on why this was the case and what solutions there might be to this shortfall of democracy. This meant they took different decisions on how to relate to existing power structures, and had different views on how much they could and should be reformed, or whether they needed more fundamental transformations.

This is a summary of our findings about approaches to campaigning and the considerations behind them:

Dilemmas of engagement and strategy

Campaigners' relationship to the council depends on many different considerations, including the capacity and resources of the group. How they chose to relate to local government was strategic, tactical, contingent, opportunistic, and flexible.

Although we heard some positive examples from engagement with the council, campaigners often described being kept at a distance from the council. Working together was energy-consuming. Some also felt it compromised their radical agendas: for example, some groups would not take funding from the council even when that was possible.

Building power outside the council

In both cities, campaigners draw on their cities' extensive radical histories. They also recognise the importance of international links. In practice, the groups we spoke to gain their strength from networks of volunteers and activists, as well as listening to their communities. They often provide an important public education function. This shows that there is more going on for democracy than councils' actions: campaigners are creating democracy through their actions and in their communities. Diversity of voices and challenges, not simply fitting in with councils' priorities, are particularly important.
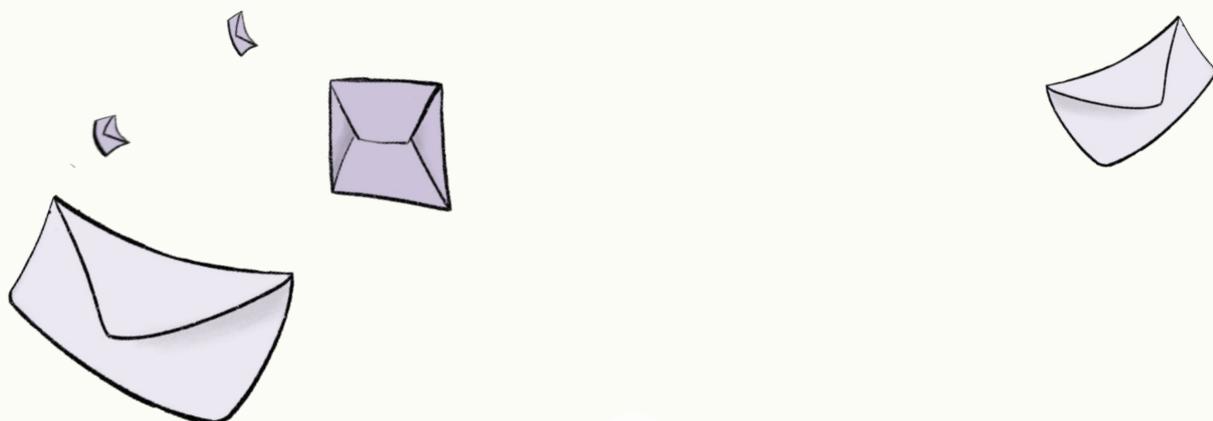
Campaigner collectivising

Despite campaigners recognising that working together is important, the infrastructure to enable that does not exist. In Glasgow, there have been attempts to bring different campaigns together, such as the *People's Plan for Glasgow.*[1] However, there have not been enough resources for this work, and people wonder why the council are not doing more to listen to residents, as this could be done with relatively little time and money. In Sheffield, campaigners were somewhat connected (or knew of each other) in part thanks to two recent, big campaigns: the campaign against felling the city's trees, and for a referendum to change the council's governance model. But there has not been an attempt for a city-wide network, and better-resourced voluntary sector organisations are not active in their support of local campaigners. At the same time, better connections between the campaigners who participated in the co-learning conversations were welcomed, solidarity expressed, and diversity across campaigns celebrated.

1   The People's Plan for Glasgow is a common platform and process for drawing together Glasgow's groundswell of campaign and community groups and organisations for mutual support and solidarity, co-learning, and re-imagining Glasgow's democratic future.

IMPLICATIONS

The participants considered the conversations very useful for learning about each other's work and thinking. We all reflected that campaigners have very few opportunities to come together and share common concerns about the nature of local democracy, and what it means for their work. In both Sheffield and Glasgow, ideas about better collaboration and campaigning infrastructure began to develop. It is clear that there is a will to move this forward. We recognise we have only made a start, but we have drawn some broad implications on:

A. Campaigners' relationships to power structures and contributions to local democracy
B. Creating alternative and extended forms of democracy
C. Cities' potential for new democratic futures

Campaigners' relationships to power structures and contributions to local democracy

Local government is in dire straits. Despite this, examples of vibrant, diverse democracy are already happening within the campaigning landscape. We recognise at least four ways in which groups are contributing to local democracy and the distribution of power.

1. The existence of campaigners is a sign of a democracy in action. They build power (in and) against the local state, and act as checks and balances more actively than via the ballot box every few years. But councils are not embracing the democratic possibilities campaigners offer through their scrutiny, challenge, and diversity of voices – and the groups we spoke to were very aware of their limits to influence council policies or practices.

2. Campaigns can play an important role in creating changes in council structures and governance. Many of the campaigners had started from an immediate, local issue. When campaigning on it, they had found themselves in conflict or tension with council institutions. This led to different balancing acts – making demands of a council does not exclude positive engagement with it. There were multiple examples of groups working together with a council to try and do things differently; and others using current structures to achieve some change or reform.

3. Councils need campaigners to act as a check on the power of the local state and actively seek and demand accountability. Privatisation and austerity cuts have meant that many projects and services traditionally provided by councils are now delivered (at least partly) by charities. This has led to their depoliticisation, such as their ability to speak out and in public through fear of losing funding. In contrast, campaigners are actively and vocally challenging examples of inequalities and poor governance.

4. Neither Sheffield nor Glasgow have a social justice agenda, even though they speak as if they did. Powerful interests often hold sway, which can be seen in the way resources, control and power are distributed. Campaigners have a different set of values and try to nurture these: they pay close attention to equality and the distribution of power. They create solidarity in action.

COUNCILS ARE NOT EMBRACING THE DEMOCRATIC POSSIBILITIES CAMPAIGNERS OFFER.
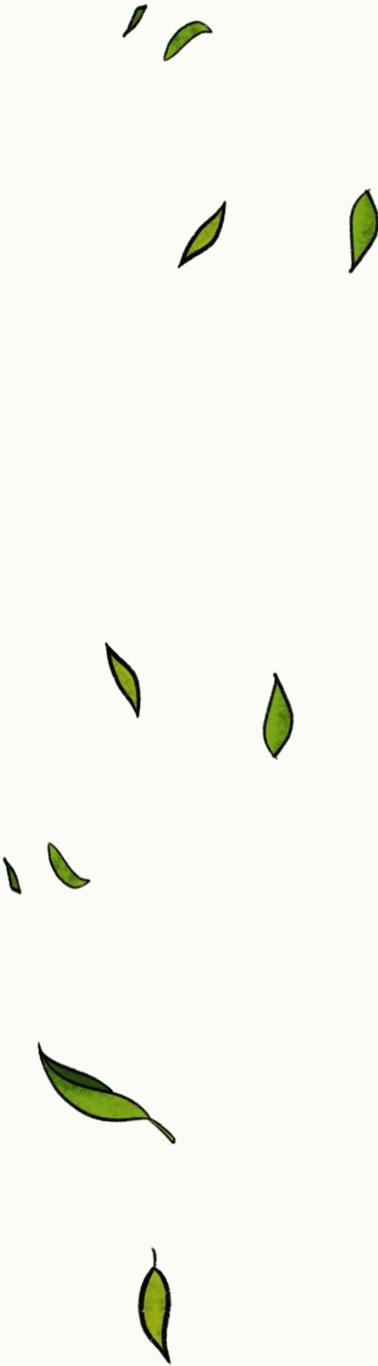
Local democracy would benefit greatly from councils showing less hostility and a more collaborative attitude to campaigners and community groups. They could learn from the ways that people organise themselves outside of state structures and invite participation – even challenge – on residents' own terms. This would improve our local democracy.

Creating alternative and extended forms of democracy

Campaigners' focus on working together shows a real democracy in action – outside the council and its structures. Groups are either already connected, or recognise the importance of working together. However, they are constantly battling a lack of resources, hostility or unresponsiveness from councils, a risk of co-option, and weak democratic accountability as a result of privatisation.

Many of the groups we spoke to were dealing with the immediate impacts of the cost of living crisis as well as long-standing inequalities. In some cases, they were providing a substitute for a safety net that had been ripped apart by decades of austerity, privatisation and racist policies. Councils have very little capacity to provide services, and in some cases no longer have to as a result of racist central government policy that excludes some migrant groups. Importantly, when campaigners provide services that are otherwise absent, this is seen as an act of solidarity and resistance, rather than charity. It involves giving power to those they work alongside, creating a dynamic of care with a basis in solidarity, mutuality and interdependence.

We believe grassroots groups are best placed to respond to residents' needs and understand them better than large charities, NGOs, large funders and councils. They need to be better resourced. It is clear that campaign groups would benefit from more discussion among themselves about collective action, campaign strategies and goals. These co-learning conversations have provided one such model for this.

Cities' potential for democratic futures

England and Scotland have different legislations, which makes the situations in Sheffield and Glasgow different in some ways. However, there are many similarities in the shortcomings of each city's governance. Both councils largely operate in a closed and technocratic manner, failing to engage people. Consultations happen on council terms and power is not given to those who respond or try to get involved.

These two cities are not unique. Cities are at the heart of a market-oriented (neoliberal) vision of economic development and growth. Inequality is rife, and a push to maximise profit from land and housing developments has created a housing crisis in most major cities in the world. But for most of us, cities are first and foremost places where we live our lives. This means that our needs as residents are often in conflict with those whose primary objective is to make money, and councils that are too often on the side of developers and private companies.

CITIES ARE OFTEN HUBS OF RESISTANCE, OF DIVERSE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND GRASSROOTS OR COMMUNITY ORGANISING.

But as we have seen in Sheffield and Glasgow, cities are often hubs of resistance, of diverse social movements and grassroots or community organising. Some of these make demands of those in power and others focus on building more directly democratic alternatives outside the local state. This is sometimes referred to under the umbrella term of 'dual power' (and closely linked to ideas of building 'counter-power' in relation to existing power structures). A dual power approach has been an important building block in many recent cases around the world, where activists and campaigners have started electoral platforms and successfully entered positions of power in cities, examples of this can be seen in Cooperation Jackson in Mississippi, US to Barcelona and many other cities in the Spanish state. In other contexts citizens have shaped city governance and legislation to become more democratic, for example the urban commons of Naples or the housing commons in Berlin.

Municipalism is a useful umbrella term for this kind of local politics which puts direct democracy, care and democratising the economy at its heart. Even though most of the groups we spoke to would not call themselves municipalist, their experiences have a lot in common with other groups building local power across the world. Just as it is important to collectivise the experiences in Sheffield or Glasgow, seeing these trans-local connections can bring the democratic horizons in those and other cities a little closer.
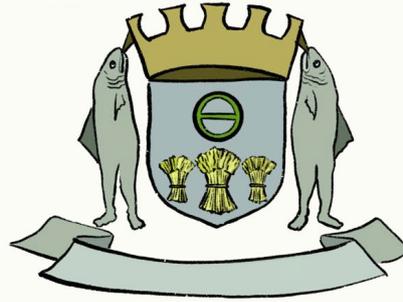
Cities in Action Appendix

How to host
a co-learning
conversation

PURPOSE

We have included this appendix to help other local campaigners to host similar Co-Learning Conversations in their area. We found these conversations to be a healthy and positive means of encouraging campaigners, community groups and local activists to think about the commonalities between their experiences, and their implications for local activism, democracy, and the organisation of power in their councils (governance). Of our questions, which are listed below, discussions 1 and 2 are more designed to map the landscape and culture of resistance within a city or area. The third discussion has the potential to spark movements that fulfil important democratic functions, counter barriers to exercising power, and strengthen voices that re-vision and reshape local governance and democratic participation.

We are curious to see whether campaigners elsewhere have similar insights and experiences to those in Glasgow and Sheffield. Our research is exploratory and ongoing, and insights from other cities or regions can make a valuable contribution to our overall picture. If you plan to use this guide to host a Co-Learning Conversation, we would love to hear from you!

PRACTICALITIES

Timing your conversation

You should consider how to time your Co-Learning Conversation around the availability of your participants. Groups and organisations working for change are commonly under-resourced and overstretched, and many people's ability to participate in the Co-Learning conversation may rely on its timing. We hosted each of our conversations on weekends to avoid participants' weekday commitments, but of course the timing of participants' other commitments will depend on their group. It also makes sense to be mindful of other activities in the city that may draw participants away from your conversation – for example it is wise to avoid the days of mass demonstrations, elections, or popular public meetings. The duration of your Co-Learning Conversation will determine the depth with which you are able to explore the questions, but you should also be mindful of meeting fatigue and accessibility, so we recommend having breaks. Each of our conversations lasted 3.5 hours, including a break.

Choosing a venue

Ideally you want to use a space that feels neutral and welcoming for your participants. If you are not hosting a Co-Learning Conversation on behalf of a group or organisation who has their own space, you may need to book a space. We do not recommend hosting the conversations in a public space, as this can interfere with people's sense of ease, or with any recordings you choose to make.

We recognise that there may be budgetary limitations to hosting conversations – rooms in libraries and community centres are often more neutral and affordable than conference centres, corporate spaces, or educational establishments. We hosted our pilot event online, and while this is certainly a low-cost option, we recommend trying to meet in person if possible, to help participants better connect with one another. It may be wise to have an idea of your participants in advance so that you can give special consideration to any necessary accessibility requirements for your venue. In Glasgow and Sheffield, the conversations were held at community centres in or near the city centre.

Selecting participants

The number of participants determines how many perspectives are included in the conversation, and how in depth the conversations may go. Each of our conversations hosted between 6 and 8 people. Participants should be people with an active stake in local campaigning or community activism. Most people will likely be working or volunteering within campaign or community groups, though you may also find participants who operate individually. We wanted to include a range of participants working on different issues. If you want to include multiple participants working on the same cause or issue, you may want to select people from groups that use different tactics and strategies, to ensure a diversity of opinions and experiences. If you have multiple participants from the same group or organisation, hosting them in separate conversations is an option.

As these conversations are designed to investigate relationships with a particular local authority, the campaigners you invite should all be active within the same city or region. Some of our participants were representatives of groups and organisations operating nationally, but we asked that their contributions focussed on creating change at the local level. We decided it would interfere with other participants' comfort and ease of honesty if we included representatives from the local authorities themselves or other state institutions (for example, people working closely with local authorities in 'arms-length' or 'partner' organisations), and we advise that you also approach this issue with consideration of overall group dynamics.

Inviting participants

As the host, you should already be familiar with some of your area's network of campaigns, community groups and other changemaking organisations – a direct connection is a good way to get people round the table. In Glasgow and Sheffield, most participants were already known to the hosts, and the others were reached through contacts within these networks. Campaigners were approached via email in the first instance, or in person where possible. If you wish to attract participants from a group or organisation you do not have an existing connection to, you can investigate whether the group has public meetings or opportunities to engage. Putting energy into the group's work may encourage their members to put energy into yours.

Supporting participants

Think about how you can support people to take part. As a funded project, we were able to offer a financial incentive. Participants were each given £100 to keep or donate to their group or organisation. On top of this, we provided travel expenses for people to attend, offered a financial contribution toward childcare costs and provided snacks and refreshments throughout the Co-Learning Conversation. If you are thinking about hosting a conversation but you do not have funds to offer a financial incentive, think about other ways you can support participants: for instance, by you or your group or organisation providing strategic or practical support to the participants' groups or organisations. You can also design your output / outcomes to provide a benefit to campaigners to incentivise participation.
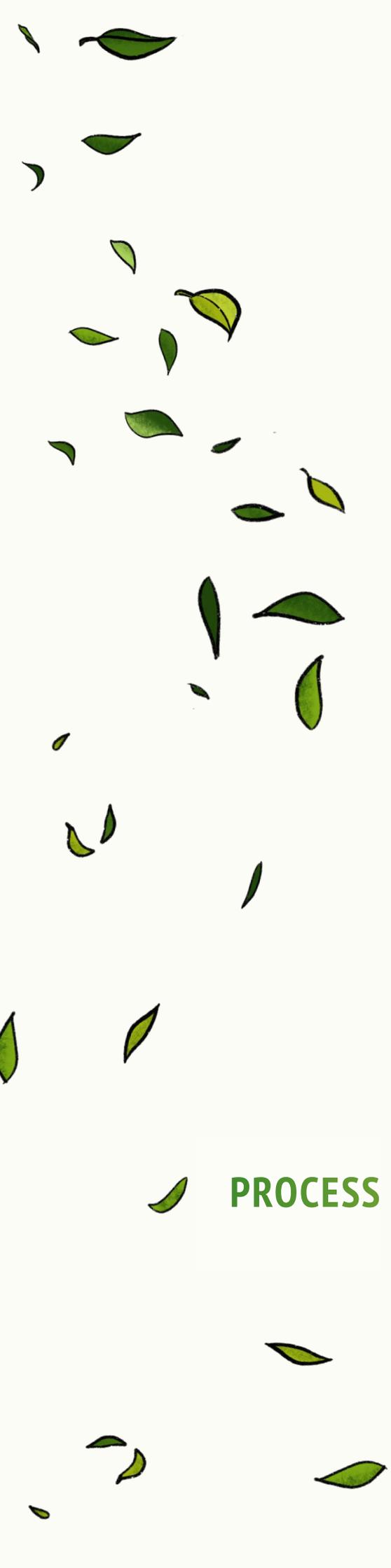
Safe participation

It is important that people understand what they are signing up to do, and why. Think about why you are hosting a Co-Learning Conversation, what you wish to get out of it, and how you plan to use the insights you uncover. Use this information to build an information sheet and consent form for participants to read in advance. Consider how you will be documenting the insights – whether recordings, or note-taking, and be sure to include information about how this will be stored, who will have access to it, and for how long. Depending on how you plan to use the insights, you should also consider options for participants to remain anonymous (either across the board or by individual choice). In our Co-Learning Conversations, we opted for complete anonymity for all participants and their groups or organisations, to encourage people to share freely without risk of repercussions.

Before beginning the conversation, consider sharing some guidelines for safe and inclusive participation, which we framed as 'Group Intentions.' The guidelines we used for our conversations are as follows:

There are no right or wrong answers.

Avoid making assumptions. Refrain from making assumptions about other people's identities, activities, or contexts. Practise speaking about your own experiences and context.

This is a space where we do not tolerate racist, sexist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, classist or oppressive behaviour or language of any kind. We strive to all feel able to call out such behaviour, also recognising that it is easier for those of us who are not directly affected.

Understand the difference between intent & impact: try to understand and acknowledge impact. Denying the impact of something said by focusing on intent is often more destructive than the initial interaction.

Move Up / Move Back: Encourage participation by all present. Notice who is speaking and who is not. If you tend to speak often, consider "moving back" and vice versa. Remember there are different ways of participating.

Practise mindful listening: Try to avoid planning what you will say as you listen to others. Practice listening with your whole self.

Confidentiality: Please be responsible for the confidentiality of the people you work with. Take home learnings, but do not identify anyone other than yourself. No names or pronouns or places and no distinguishing details. If you want to follow up with anyone regarding something they said during a session, ask first and respect their wishes.

PROCESS

Documenting the conversation

You will need to decide how you document the insights that will come out of the Co-Learning Conversation. As our conversations were designed as part of a research project, we needed in-depth documentation that we could return to in the later stages of the project. For this reason, we decided to use a voice recorder, as well as appointing a dedicated note-taker.

You may choose to do the same, depending on the planned outcome—just remember to ask for consent. We also decided that we wanted to publish a creative output, so we included an artist within our team who was present at all conversations to observe and take reference photographs. This is not a necessary part of the process, but can be helpful in making your output more engaging, if you have the resources for it.

Notes for hosting

As a host, it is helpful if you yourself are engaged in some way with changemaking in your area. This may be observation of, or familiarity with local authority strategies, activities or processes, or experience of trying to enact change through them, an awareness of localised activities related to democracy or governance, or awareness of the activities of your participants. This will help you to come up with your own prompt questions to tease out topics and themes, or direct questions more towards your participants areas of experience.

Participants can be energised by one another's contributions and drift off-topic. This can lead to insights you might not gain otherwise, but can also take up valuable time. You must find a balance between letting the discussion flow organically, and keeping everyone on track. For this, you will need a facilitator who is used to steering people to an intended direction and jumping in when participants get ahead to the next discussion ahead of time. We chose to not facilitate too rigidly, giving space for the flow of the conversation as our research agenda was not very fixed – this meant for instance that the length of the different rounds varied quite a bit between the different conversations. However, our facilitation technique was active in the sense that we made sure to pick up on relevant themes that came up and not leave too many open loops. Our prompt questions are below and can be helpful if you need to redirect the conversation back towards the intended discussion.

Opening the meeting

Some or all of your participants may already be familiar with one another, or they may be meeting for the first time. You may choose to include an 'icebreaker' exercise to get people comfortable speaking and interacting. We recommend that you begin with an explanation of the Co-Learning Conversation, why you are hosting it and what it will be used for in your context. Recap the main points of the information and consent form that participants will have read in advance, and offer to answer any questions your participants may have. You should also give participants an idea of the Co-Learning Conversation structure, the themes that will be explored and in what order. Once these have been covered you should introduce any guidelines for participation you plan to use (our guidelines are listed above).

Introducing participants

Now you are ready to begin the Co-Learning Conversation. Start with a go-round, asking people to briefly introduce themselves and describe the broad aims of the group, campaign, or organisation they work with (or, if participating as an individual, describe the change you are working towards). This will provide a baseline description in the participants' own words that you can use to characterise their activities in your output. We offered participants 3 minutes each. We recommend that a timekeeper is appointed to keep track.

The question we posed was "Can you introduce us to your campaign or group, and tell us what your purpose and aims are, what are the changes or improvements you want to see locally?"

Round 1: Strategies and Tactics

Our research question for this round was *"What strategies are campaigners using to challenge the way things (local governance) works and/or to create new or alternative spaces for democratic engagement?"*

Round 1 gets participants thinking about the different pathways they use to create change, in particular how different strategies and tactics inspire different results. This round should give an idea of each participants' experiences, which will inform the next two, more discursive rounds. Introduce the question and then give time for people to answer individually. In our Co-Learning Conversations, we dedicated 1 hour to this round, or sometimes even longer.

Question:

Can you tell us a bit more about the activities and strategies of your group in meeting your demands / creating the change you want to see?

If you feel that participants may need an extra nudge, we have identified some 'prompt questions' that might inspire more in-depth responses. Please also feel free to add your own prompt questions as you go along in response to the development of the conversation.

Prompt questions:

- *How do you work in practice? How do you reach people or mobilise people?*
- *In what ways have you engaged with the council? (For example, consultations, public enquiries, reaching out to them, finding information about their plans)*
- *What was the outcome of any such engagement? What did you achieve?*
- *Why do you think that was the case?*
- *Who holds power in [your local authority area] in your experience?*
- *What did you learn about the way the council works?*
- *What could the council have done differently to make this engagement easier / more fruitful?*

Round 2: Relationship with local governance

Our research question for this round was "To what extent, and in what ways, do local campaigning/community activist groups share common understandings and demands for more democratic local governance?"

Round 2 teases out how these strategies and tactics have played out in your local context. It may be that what has worked well for one participant has failed another, or it may be that there are common experiences among all groups. This round in particular will be rooted in your local context: the culture of creating change, mechanisms for engagement and participation with your local authority, and other localised factors. For this round we encourage all participants to contribute their insights, but also to interact with one another's contributions, ask one another questions and explore this territory together. In our Co-Learning Conversations, we dedicated between 45 minutes to an hour to this round.
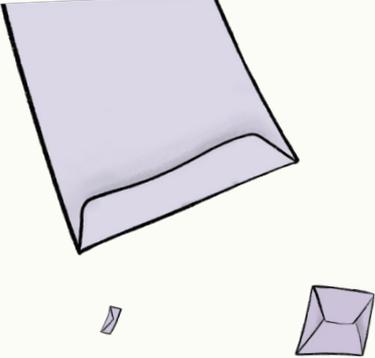
Question:

Based on the conversation this far, what common understandings do we have about local democracy? What shared experiences are there in this room? What struggles and efforts do you have in common?

Prompt questions:

- *Have you heard anything today that you have strongly identified with, or had a different experience with?*
- *How would you describe the general culture of campaigning in [your local authority area]?*
- *Why is your work necessary or important in [your local authority area]? What is the local context that makes your work important?*
- *What would need to change about the way power lies in Glasgow, in order for your campaign not to be necessary?*
- *What are the structural issues that create your cause?*
- *What does that tell you about who holds power?*

Round 3: Opportunities for connection

Our research question for this round is *"What are the possibilities or prospects for working better together/acting collectively/building solidarity and links for local democratic gains and spaces?"*

Round 3 is designed to build on the first two discussions, and explore possibilities for groups working together for common democratic claims. This discussion should be explorative and involve everyone. What this might look like may be particular to your city or region, or to the participant groups you involve. For example, in Glasgow, discussions centred around establishing a common platform for the network of grassroots and community activity in the city to connect and support one another, share information and resources, and explore alternative democratic mechanisms.
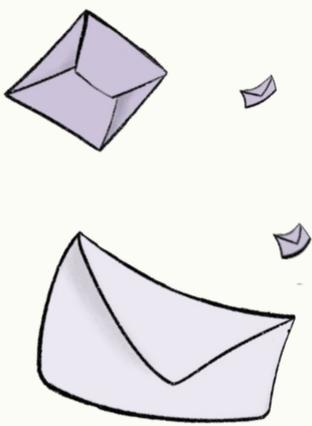
Question:

If we are part of something bigger/bigger than the sum of our parts, is there a shared territory we could/might/should be occupying more/collectivising etc?

Prompt questions:

- *What have you learned today? What have you learned or thought of doing more, or differently?*
- *How do groups support each other? Who and what helps or might help? What is the role of networks? Are they important here?*
- *What networks are you part of in your city or beyond it? Who do you work with? Who inspires you or who have you learned from?*
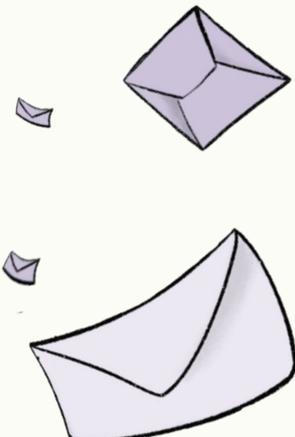
OUTPUT AND OUTCOMES

Output

The Co-Learning Conversations have intrinsic value and if you choose, you can leave it there! If you have the capacity, you may wish to produce some form of output based on your findings. Our initial output was a series of four posters created by our artist and inspired by the stories that came out of the conversations. We then turned to analysing the wealth of insights we had gathered to produce a report and a shorter summary of implications for use by activist or campaigner groups.

Outcomes

How you use the insights you have gained is your choice. Possible outcomes may be:

- Sharing these insights with your council to inform them about the impact of their operations
- Sharing these insights with other local campaigners to show solidarity with their experiences and encourage them to think about their struggles more systemically.
- Encouraging the creation of a common platform for local campaigners in your area to learn, share and work together
- Sharing insights with the Democratising Local Governance research team to add additional colour to our ongoing investigations

Research for Action is a worker co-operative producing research to support social, economic, and environmental justice. Our work aims to bring about change by identifying points of intervention, countering dominant narratives, making struggles and inequalities visible and disseminating alternatives.

Website: http://researchforaction.uk
Email: info@researchforaction.uk
Mastodon: https://mastodon.social/@researchforaction
Twitter/X: https://twitter.com/Research_Act

SANE is a collective working in different ways to challenge the dominant neoliberal direction of policy in Glasgow. Our central pursuit is to draw together the city's rich landscape of campaign and community activity into a *People's Plan for Glasgow*, a social movement that collectivises to resist the neoliberal distortion of the public sphere and explore alternative models.

Website: https://www.sanecollectiveglasgow.org/
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/sanecollective/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/SANEcollectiveGlasgow
Twitter/X: https://twitter.com/SANEGlasgow

It's Our City! mobilised communities and citizens across Sheffield to make common cause across our differences and for meaningful improvements in local democracy. We organised for impact, and coordinated the largest ever citizen-led campaign for a change of council governance, forcing a city-wide referendum in May 2021 that was won for change.

Website: https://itsoursheffield.co.uk
Email: contact@sos-sheffield.org.uk
Twitter/X: https://twitter.com/ItsOurCity1