Ethical Decision Making and Community Organizing

Facilitators: Kaeden and Joël

Today we will discuss

- How THIO has made decisions so far
- Some core values that inform our work
- Different ways similar organizations make decisions
- Different ways we can communicate
- Timeline for deciding how we will make decisions

THIO so far

Rika   Mikki

Beck   Kaeden

Joël

Serena

Talia

RJ

Main people involved and representing THIO in one way or another

THIO so far

Rika
Beck
Joël
Serena
Talia
RJ

Mikki
Kaeden

People who have access to main e-mail and website

THIO so far

Rika   Mikki
Beck   Kaeden
Joël
Serena
Talia
RJ

People who have been to meetings on behalf of THIO

ITOU so far

Rika
Beck
Joël
Serena
Talia
RJ

Mikki
Kaeden

The francophone
sister-collective (in
early stages!)

Decision making so far: challenges and strengths

Crisis leads decisions and few people are consulted (THIO operating in ambulance mode)

Fear of conflict and ethical dilemmas- frozen and can't move

Fewer people means decisions are made quicker and trust established within core

Larger community speak up at town halls but mostly "audience" and less participants

Different levels of interest, different kinds of knowledge, and different perspectives to take into account

To make today's conversation easier

We have more time than today to decide.

Let's do our best to be intentional and concise with what we say.

Everyone is here to do good.

Everyone here brings valuable experience and information.

We are stronger together.

Conflict is a natural part of being human; how we work with it is important.

There are power differences and noticing them is ok.

We are responsible for our own actions and words.

Core Values That Inform Our Work So Far

1. Self-determination and open mindedness
2. Trans community as stewards of trans information (we own our health info)
3. Anti-oppression
4. Anti-racism
5. Anti-transmisogyny
6. Economic justice
7. Authenticity and accountability
8. Critical hope * needs further explanation
9. Pro sex work
10. Pro sex positivity
11. Pro/support harm reduction

Any others we are missing that MUST be on here?

A Format for Ethical Decision Making by Michael Davis (IIT)

1. State problem (e.g. "Do I have a conflict of interest?" or even "This makes me uncomfortable")
2. Check facts (some problems disappear upon closer examination of situation; others change radically).
3. State specifications (limits and objectives)—laws, professional code, and corporate rules to be satisfied, cost constraints (e.g. under $200), children to feed, place in life plan (e.g. save company).
4. Develop list of at least five options (be imaginative, try to avoid "dilemma"—not "yes" or "no" but who to go to, what to say).

A Format for Ethical Decision Making by Michael Davis (IIT)

5. Test options, using such tests as the following:

• **Harm test**—does this option do less harm than any alternative?

• **Publicity test**—would I want my choice of this option published in the newspaper?

• **Defensibility test**—could I defend my choice of this option before a future employer, a committee of my peers, or my family?

• **Reversibility test**—would I still think the choice of this option good if I were one of those adversely affected by it?

• **Virtue test**—what would I become if I choose this option often?

• **Professional test**—what might my profession's ethics committee say about this option?

• **Colleague test**—what do my colleagues/fellow community members say when I describe my problem and suggest this option as my solution?

• **Organization test**—what does the organization's ethics say about this?

A Format for Ethical Decision Making by Michael Davis (IIT)

6. Make a tentative choice based on steps 1-5. Did you solve the problem with which you began?

7. Make final choice (after reviewing steps 1-6), act, and then ask: What could make it less likely you would have to make such a decision again?

• What precautions can you take as individual (announce policy on question, change job, etc.)?

• What can you do to have more support next time (e.g., seek future allies on this issue)?

• What can you do to change organization (e.g., suggest policy change at next meeting)?

• What can you do to change larger society (e.g. work for new policy or law)?

How to make decisions?

autocracy: one person makes the decisions for everyone

oligarchy: a few people make the decisions for everyone

representative democracy: a few people are elected to make the decisions for everyone

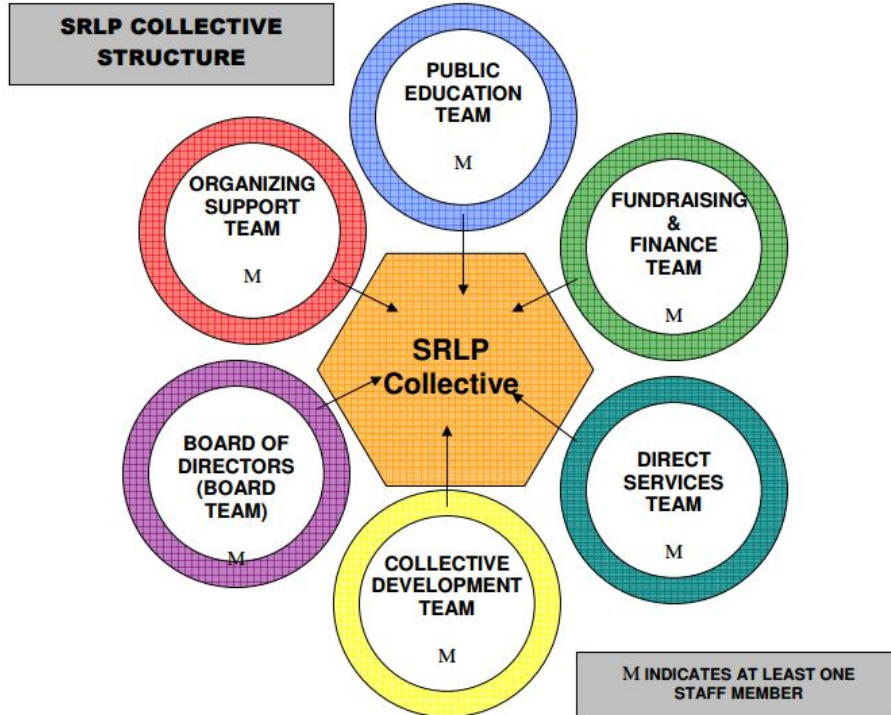**majority rule democracy**: the majority makes the decisions for everyone

consensus: everyone makes the decisions for everyone

Consensus

"A decision making process whereby decisions are reached when all members present consent to a proposal. This process does not assume everyone must be in complete agreement. When differences remain after discussion, individuals can agree to disagree, that is, give their consent by standing aside, and allow the proposal to be accepted by the group."
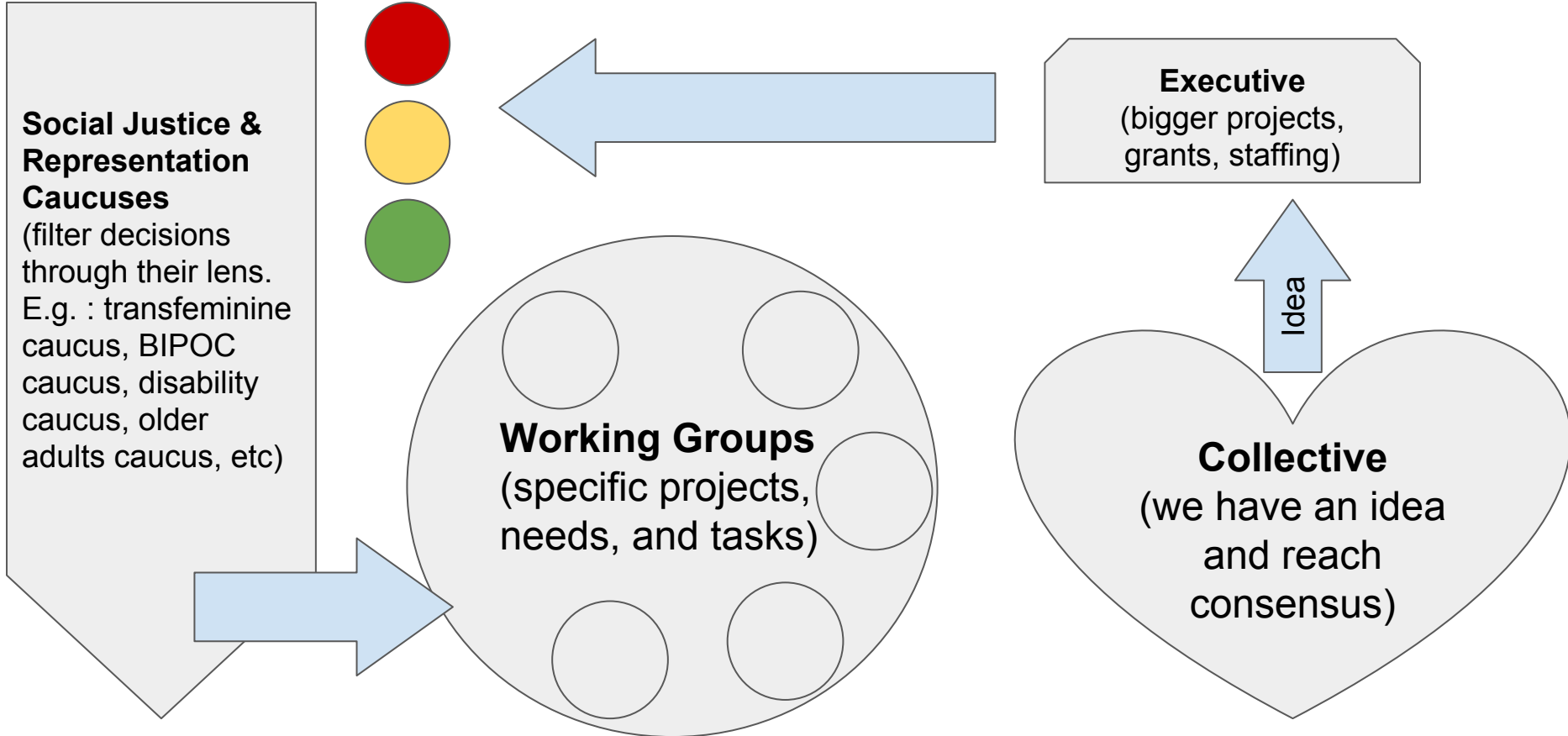
consent: Acceptance of the proposal, not necessarily agreement. Individuals are responsible for expressing their ideas, concerns and objections. Silence, in response to a call for consensus, signifies consent. Silence is not complete agreement; it is acceptance of the proposal.

http://consensus.net/pdf/consensus.pdf

Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP) as an example

THIO: Proposed Model (Joël)

Social Justice & Representation Caucuses
(filter decisions through their lens. E.g. : transfeminine caucus, BIPOC caucus, disability caucus, older adults caucus, etc)

Executive
(bigger projects, grants, staffing)

Idea

Working Groups
(specific projects, needs, and tasks)

Collective
(we have an idea and reach consensus)

THIO: proposed model

THIO: proposed model

THIO: proposed model

How can we better communication?

On the computer:

- email
- Apps
- newsletter
- website
- Facebook
- Google Calendar
- Google Groups
- Video notes
- Mailchimp

On the phone:

- Skype
- Facetime
- conference call
- 1-on-1 call

In person:

- Presentations
- Discussions
- Townhalls
- Meetings
- 1-on-1

Timeline for deciding on deciding?

We got a Trillium grant! That means we need to decide on this soon, so we can hire and start concrete work soon (next few weeks).

Priorities?

Challenges?

References

Consensus: http://consensus.net/pdf/consensus.pdf

SRLP (another trans organisation in the U.S.):
http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/SRLP_From_The_Bottom_Up.pdf

http://srlp.org/files/collective%20handbook%202009.pdf

Some decision making models:

http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/ethicsnetwork/downloads/model_C.pdf

http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/ethicsnetwork/downloads/model_B.pdf