A purple-tinted photograph of five people sitting on a grassy bank, looking towards a pond. The background shows a line of trees under a clear sky. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

A HANDBOOK ON POWER AND ACTIVISM

- By Tyfon

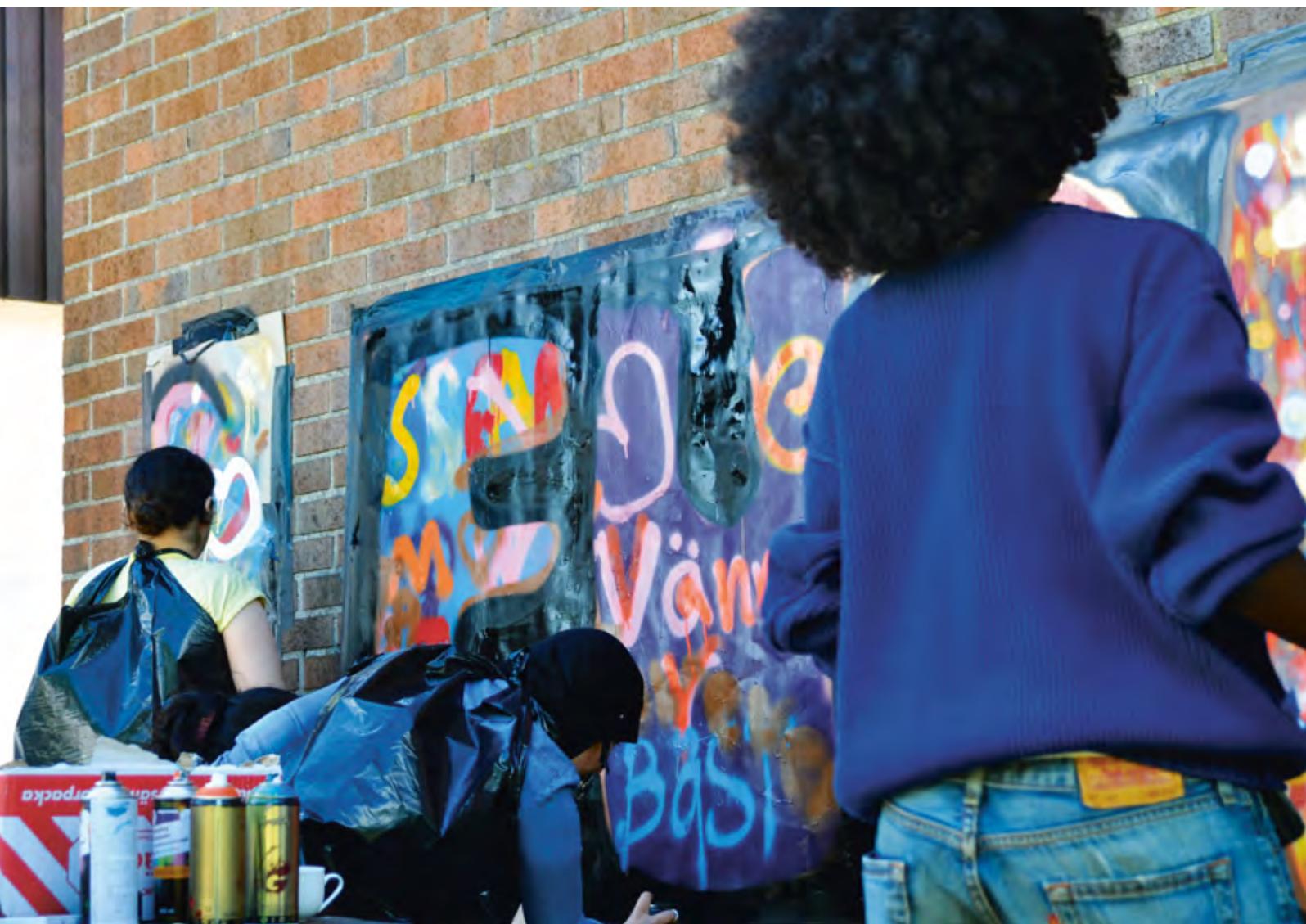
Objective and background

Tyfon has written this handbook as a tool for organisation. We want to share and spread the knowledge we have built so that as many people as possible can get interested in activist and political organisation. We have therefore summarized our suggestions and advice regarding what is important to remember when we work together towards a common goal. This is a shortened version of a longer handbook which Tyfon has used with participants who have driven their own projects in cooperation with Tyfon.

You can read the complete handbook at:

<https://tyfoniskane.wordpress.com>

We hope you find this handbook useful!



CORE VALUES AND GUIDELINES

Core values are ideas and principles which a group or organisation has decided should guide their work. It is important that these core values are decided on together, so that everyone can stand behind them, The point of having core values is that you and your group will feel that you are working towards the same thing and work together in similar ways. Core values and guidelines* can help the group make decisions and know how you will focus your work.

Tyfon's core values have been central in everything we have done. They have helped us know the ideas that we support and how we have wanted to work. Our guidelines are important in our work for a better world in which no one is above anyone else.

Following is a list of our guidelines, which can serve as inspiration:

Distribution of responsibility

It is important that we all help one another and that we rotate our responsibilities. Our experience shows that if we do not make a clear rotation system, the same people will always take responsibility for cleaning, cooking, planning, etc. When we help one another, participation and equality increase.

Here it is important to talk about how much time and which conditions we have to bring to our group's work. We must be honest with one another and ourselves so that what we can plan based upon what we actually can do. We need to take care of one another so that we don't work more than what we can.

Participation

In order for everyone to feel themselves active and and in the center of our activities, it is important to use methods* that increase participation*. By using different methods that increase participation, we want to facilitate democratic work routines. We want to make it possible to feel that all voices are heard and that all experiences are important.

Normative criticism

Tyfon wants to challenge the structures* and norms which result in some people having more power than others. A norm is something that is often seen as neutral, something that is just there, and that we do not think about. Norms can be described as invisible rules, ideas and ideals that control how we are supposed to be, live and look like. Norms are not truths. They build upon society's power structures and they can limit who we want to be and where we want to go. Normative criticism means that we criticise the fact that some people have more power than others just because they fall within these norms.

An example of this is that white cis* men usually work as bosses or managers or other well-paid jobs while women of color usually have jobs with bad pay.

We at Tyfon want everyone, humans and animals, to be met with respect. We criticize all existing oppressive norms and we want to contribute to creating a new society.

No meat

We work actively against all forms of oppression. In the same way that we are against racism and sexism* we are also against oppression of animals. The reason that we do not eat meat during Tyfon's activities is that we want to visibilize the similarity between how some people oppress other people and the way in which people oppress animals, and also the environmental and climatic consequences eating meat entails.

Conflict resolution

When working in groups, unexpected and difficult situations are bound to come up. It can be a situation where we have different opinions, or a person feels insulted or aggravated, or where misunderstandings occur. Conflicts are always difficult and can be stressful for everyone involved but this does not mean that conflict is always negative. It is important to see that we will not always agree, depending on our experiences. In order to create more equal spaces, we must be able to talk about what we think, even when we do not agree. The most important thing is that we take the time to about conflicts and sort them out so that the annoying feelings disappear. In order to move on, it is important that we listen to one another and that we let everyone speak. If we decide to speak, a conflict can become a strong force that drives us forwards, in terms of thoughts and strategies. There are several methods that make it easy for us to speak about things that feel difficult, *read more under the headline called Tools.*



Drug Policy*

No alcohol and drugs are allowed during Tyfon's activities. If we realize that someone is under the influence of alcohol or drugs during a Tyfon activity, we will make sure that the person gets home safely. The responsible members of Tyfon will be responsible for a follow up in order to see if the person needs further support, always with the person's consent and with a focus on what is best for them.

We have this drug policy because many people around us have problems with alcohol and drugs. Many people have difficult past experiences with people in their near circles or families abusing drugs and alcohol and this influences their feeling of safety and comfort when others around them are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

In solidarity with one another, and in order to build safer spaces, we choose to forbid drugs and alcohol in all Tyfon activities.

Security and safety

We at Tyfon think it is very important for everyone to feel safe. This means that we in our groups must talk about what can feel negative and unsafe when we do group activities. If we know what people around us find difficult, we can help one another. We can, for example avoid visiting certain places, be in small groups, etc. It is also important that we in our group are aware of the fact that not everyone has residence permits and that we therefore must have a plan in case the police should come. *Read more under Safety plan.*



Different types of political organization

To organize politically means that we get together with other people in order to achieve or change something. When we are many people working towards a same goal, we can make a difference. Depending on what one wants to change, organization* can be different. It can be temporary or last a long time, with few or many people. Sometimes organization can be spontaneous and focused on the short run, while other times it can have a longer time perspective. Here we can list some examples of political organization:

Specific actions

Demonstrations are a typical example of political organization. People meet at a certain time and place to protest against something they think is wrong. In some cases these demonstrations include a protest march and in other cases people gather and stay in one place. Other examples of specific, temporary actions are support parties, or events to gather money towards a specific goal, or to cast light upon an issue; giving out flyers on the streets, petitions, sign-ins, bill-posting or graffiti.

Need-based

Much of the existing political organization has started out of a certain need*. It can be that people have no money, home or residence permits. People work without profit* in organizations or networks in order to make the situation better for themselves and/or for others. Even if these organizations start from a specific need, there can also be political claims* for bigger change. Some examples of this type of organization in Sweden are Asylgruppen, Stadsmissionen, Svenska För Alla.

Projects

Many people organize through projects, that is to say, they work through an idea during a certain period of time. This can last from a couple of weeks to several years. Some examples of projects are festivals, films, theatre groups, sports or camps. Many work with projects nowadays in order to be able to get funding from foundations. *Read more under Project Plan*

Campaigns

In order to change something, people can choose to arrange campaigns that during a certain period of time will work for a specific situation, claim, or goal. The idea of a campaign is often to reach many people, neighbours, other organizations to support the same claim and therefore get more power in relation to politicians. Some examples of campaigns in Sweden are: Barnets bästa främst, Asylstaffetten and Folkkampanj för Asylrätt.

Associations

If you have a group with the same interests, you can start an association. This can help to cooperate with others and to obtain funding for your activities. Examples of this are sports associations, cultural associations and country associations. *Read more under www.forening.se*

Study circles

If you are a group of at least 3 people with a similar interest and meet regularly, you can start a study circle. You can do this together with what is called "Study Associations" in Sweden, such as ABF, Sensus, among others. If you have a study circle, you can receive a little amount of money for each meeting, but you get many contacts, partnerships and other types of support that you can need, such as materials, books, etc.



Quick reference guide for organizations

There are already several guides for organizations, so instead of doing one more, we would like to suggest you read the following ones which are very good:

- Sweden's Stadsmissioner has created one called "Social mobilization methods guide". You can order or download here:
<http://www.hkr.se/PageFiles/69904/Soc-mob-metodhandbok.pdf>
- Democracy collective Watch It! has lots of suggestions on methods and work routines. Check out their website: <http://www.watchit.nu/>
- RFSL's activist handbook Will and Rage contains lots of suggestions and thoughts from people who are politically organized. You can order it for 30 SEK at:
<http://www.rfslungdom.se>

Tools for political organization

Methods for participation (Source: RFSL's handbook, Will and Rage [Vilja och Vrede])

Every time we organize, it is important that everyone feels important and listened to, that they are an active part. Here are a few methods that RFSL has worked with and created based on conversations with activists, and we at Tyfon want to spread them.

Name and pronoun round

At the beginning of each meeting, it is a good idea to have a round where people can say their name and pronouns.

At the beginning of the meeting, it is a good idea to say to the group that common pronouns are for example, in Swedish, Hen, Hon, Han, Den. In English some common pronouns are singular They, He, She, Hir. Pronouns show the way you want people to talk about you. You can explain that Hen, Den, They, Hir are gender neutral pronouns*. Say that everyone can say the pronoun/s they want others to use when naming them, and that if someone does not want to mention their pronoun, they can say "pass".

Get to know one another

Do common activities in order to get to know one another. Working with social issues can be tough and difficult. Playing and having fun together can help us get the energy to keep on. Games can help us take challenges, can make the atmosphere a lot easier and we also get to rest our brains.

Make sure everyone gets to talk

The objective in your group can be that everyone must have said something during the first 5 minutes during a meeting. Using a round enables everyone to say something, **in turns and without being interrupted**. One way of doing this is by passing round an object and only

the person holding it can speak. Questions and comments can be made after the whole round has passed. Mix discussions in small groups and discussions where everyone participates to make sure as many as possible can say what they think.

Create common rules and rules of engagement

Decide together in the group how you want to meet one another, and which common rules you will have. Some important things to consider can be: how to make decisions, how to hold meetings, if you will turn off your mobile phones during the meeting, how long meetings will be, how you will communicate with one another outside meetings (e-mail, facebook, sms, etc).

Speak about your personal drives and needs

What makes people get involved in a group can be very different. Many people like to have small conversations before meetings, others want to start working fast. Discuss in your group how you all work, what you need and how you want the group to work like. Decide how you can meet everybody's needs as much as possible so that you can work in the best way possible.

Talk about your expectations and concerns

It is a good idea to talk about what you expect to achieve with your group, as this can vary among the group's members. Talk about what you are scared of and which obstacles can appear. This can help you understand each other and form a common picture of what you want and what you want to avoid.

Coffee pause

If a meeting or activity gets too long without pauses, people can get tired. Make always time for a coffee pause and move a little in order to recharge energy.

Documentation

Write down what you have talked about and decided in the group, partly to remember and also so that people who have now been present can read what you have talked about. If it is not secret information, you can save the files on the web so that everyone can read, such as dropbox, google drive. Make sure that everyone has access to information and that sometimes it is hard to understand notes when one has not been present at a meeting. A piece of advice is to rotate responsibility so that someone calls and reminds those who have not been present to check the meeting notes and if necessary tell them orally what has been said. Write down all roles in the notes so that you can always come back and double check who will do what.

Celebrate your success

To reward yourselves when you have achieved something is important in order to recharge energy and enthusiasm in order to continue with your struggle.

Unburden each other so that you can withstand more

Share your knowledge with one another so that knowledge does not disappear when someone needs to take a break or leave the group. Ask one another about which amount of energy and enthusiasm they have and support one another if someone needs support or a pause. It is almost always easier to do things together!

Project Plan

If you want to do a project, it is good to have a project plan. In it you can write down why and in which way you want to conduct the project. It is also a good way of knowing from the beginning how much time, money and resources the project will require. In this way, the project plan makes it easier to have a general overview and makes it easier to understand what will happen. You can add a time plan so that you know what needs to be done and what the next step is.

. If you decide to apply for funding, that is, money needed to work with and idea, a project plan is always needed. Often, all project plans look quite similar. Here's an example:

- 1) Name of the project.
- 2) What do you want to do? (**Summary**)
- 3) Why? (**Objective, background**)
- 4) How? (**Method**)
- 5) What do you need? (**Material**)
- 6) How long will it take? (**Time plan**)
- 7) What will be the costs (**Budget**)

Reports:

If you have applied for funding, it is usually a requirement that you provide a report where you explain how the project has gone. You also need to include a report regarding economy and budget. There you describe what you have done, which target group you have worked with and whether you have achieved what you wanted to.

It is a good idea to use evaluations. It can be good for you as a group to know how the work and the group has functioned, in order to improve future cooperations, but also to be able to report to funders about the success of your project and what participants have experienced.

Safety plan

During our work in Tyfon, we have thought a lot about our participants' safety. To an asylum-seeking or an undocumented person, it can be difficult to feel safe and move safely in the city. That is why we need safe places where everyone feels included and welcome.

Have always in mind that people without residence permits (or for other reasons) do not want to be found by the police and other institutions. Here are some suggestions to think about:

If the police calls and asks about specific persons, do not ever provide information such as name, personal number, person's description or adress. Just answer that you do not have that information.

If the police comes to a place where you are meeting, ask the police not to enter the place but to wait outside. Ask them why they are there and ask them to respect that many people feel fear and get worried in the presence of police and persons with uniforms or people from institutions. You can also ask the police to identify themselves in order to make some time.

If the police wait outside, go inside and ask everyone to meet up. Explain that the police are outside. If the police have explained why they are there, tell this to everyone. Ask everyone who has legitimate ID and who can tolerate to meet the police to stay in the room. Ask if there is someone in the room who does not have an ID or are in other ways at risk if they meet the police. If so, decide who will help them out of the room/ place safely. When you are sure that everyone who does not have papers has left, inform everyone that you will talk to the police and that they might come in the room.

Plan and prepare together with the activity leadrers what you will do in case the police or other state servants should appear. Be careful to take or publish photographs or videos of participants without asking first.

If someone needs emergency treatment

If you need to call an ambulance, make sure that this is done first. Describe what has happened and in case you are not sure if the person has residence permits or not, do not ever say the name or personal number, neither to the ambulance staff not to any healthcare provider. You will receive many questions, but you can always say that you cannot reply and that the most important thing is that the person receives the care they need. Contact a friend or relative of the person in need as soon as possible.

Photo and film ethics

Everyone has to be aware of the fact that the activities are being filmed and pictures taken. Make sure you inform why you are doing it, where the pictures or films will be shown. It is always ok if participants do not want to be visible.

Always ask the group: If someone does not want to be in the picture, please say it now or else come to us after the activity and inform us!

Bustcard

A bustcard is a little instruction book with laws that can help us know our rights when we work politically. When we are in demonstrations, it is a good idea to have a bustcard so that everyone knows which laws are applicable in case someone is arrested by the police. It is important to remember that we have a common responsibility to take care of each other in these situations. Remember that for someone who does not have residence permit or European passport, some actions can be more risky because the police can decide to arrest demonstrators. Always stay in group or in pairs or smaller groups (sometimes called friend groups), when you go to the demonstration or action, as well as during and after.

Here you can find printable bustcards in Swedish and Danish about your legal rights in Sweden and Denmark:

<http://vansterjuristerna.kadermaskinen.se/haffakort/>

Tools for conflict resolution

In all conflict resolutions, listening and humbleness are central. We must listen to each other and ourselves in order to move on when a conflict or a bad atmosphere has occurred. We need to be humble with one another and ourselves, because it is otherwise difficult to move on from bad feelings and discussions.

Conflicts can be painful, but we can also use them as training to practice our arguments and learn of others', and to try different ways in which we have discussions.

It is important to name here that an offense is not a conflict. It is never OK to offend or insult anyone. If this happens, it is important that the person who has been offended is listened to and that the one responsible apologizes.



Suggestions on methods for conflict resolution:

Exchange opinions

This is a method that helps understand one another better. In the discussion you will together see what the different opinions in the group are. Try later on to exchange opinions, if you have supported something now you will be against, if you have doubted you can be sure of something, etc. Find reliable arguments for your new opinion, which reasons lead to such opinion and how you can defend it. By taking another person's point of view, we can better understand one another.

Do not contradict

This is a method by which one can say what they think without meeting negative critique, which sometimes can lead to a conversation reaching a dead end. When someone expresses an opinion you will try to meet it by saying I understand and then repeat what the person has said.

For example:

"I understand, so what you are saying is that it would be good if the meetings were changed from the morning till the afternoon?"

The other person has now a chance to reply if what was said was what they had meant from the beginning.

This is a way to move away from a negative atmosphere and to train to listen to what is actually being said. By repeating what someone has said we can avoid misunderstandings.



Word list

Here you can find a list of some words used in this handbook that can be difficult to understand:

Guidelines: an explanation of the ways in which we will work, sometimes the same as rules.

Conditions: different situations that affect us and what we can do.

Methods: tell us how to do something

Participation: can be described as being a part of a group, a discussion, etc.

Structure: an order, a pattern, it shows how something works or is built.

Cis: a person who identifies with the sex and gender established at birth

Heterosexual: refers to the sexuality of a person who exclusively or mainly feels attraction to someone of another sex.

Offense: To offend someone means to treat someone badly with words or actions

Sexism: to have power over someone else due to the person's sex. It is usually women who suffer sexism

Drug policy: a policy is a group of rules and in this case we mean policies regarding the use of alcohol or drugs.

Organisation: to get together in order to plan and do something

Without profit: Work for which you do not get payment, and which is done in groups, organisations and associations

Needs: something that is important for someone

Political claims: It is what a group of people request of politicians or other persons/neighbours/ citizens.

Neutral pronouns: Hen, den, Hir, singular They are gender neutral pronouns which are used in the same way as He, She, Hon, Han. These words are used when a person's sex/gender is unknown or when a person wishes to make it unknown.