

EUROPEAN CIVIC ACADEMY

2021

REBUILDING TRUST IN DEMOCRACY

SESSION III - CONVERGENCE:
ALL FOR A BETTER WORLD,
BUT ALL FRAGMENTED?

OCTOBER 27, 2021
3:00-6:00 PM CET
ONLINE

BREAKOUT GROUPS BRIEFINGS

*BREAKOUT TOPICS

16:05 – 17:25 CET

Each group is hosted by one academic who presents the findings of their research or by an activist who reflects on their experience (20 minutes) and then moderates a session of Q&A with the audience to discuss how the research and experience reflects (or not) the reality on the ground of other participants. The ECF will share previous research of the academics with registered participants ahead of the event to facilitate the preparation and discussion. One activist-rapporteur will follow the discussion and fill in a harvesting document collecting observations on areas of agreement, areas of disagreement, questions and insights for future research and action.

1

Towards a society of care: How are social movement across Europe approaching the need to build convergence among different democratic agendas amidst the COVID-19 crisis?

Host: **Anastasia Kavada**, University of Westminster

This breakout group will investigate how a focus on 'care' can be a point of convergence for the democratic agendas of civil society organisations. It will look at the relation between care and democracy at times of pandemic, and particularly how an emphasis on vulnerability and interdependence can be the basis of a new democratic politics. It will also identify the issues that arise when we attempt to organise the process of care in a democratic way and how these issues can unite disparate civil society agendas. This session will take a broad view of care, including care not only for humans, but also for nature and the environment.

2

Uniting all for a Just Transition: how to promote a unifying approach across diverse stakeholders to overcome the differences in methods to promote social justice?

Host: **Andrea Casamenti & Elisa Gambardella**, SOLIDAR Foundation

Taking inspiration from the European Alliance for a Just Transition, a recently launched SOLIDAR initiative that gathers 25 European social, environmental, climate and political organisations that have pledged to work together to ensure a Just Transition in Europe, the workshop will explore the whys, dos and don'ts of alliance-building and creating new forms of cooperation.

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3 **Towards an ecology of social movements: how can we build capacity for working across difference and diversity within our movements and civil society?**

Host: **G & Ilaj Zaremba**, ULEX project

This will be an interactive session exploring ways to develop the skills and understanding needed to support transversal approaches to building transformative power in our movements and civil society. Division and distrust can emerge along multiple axis: diverse social and political identities, different strategies for transformation, the multiplicity of roles, and contrasting organising cultures. What can help us to generate synergy between these elements and to change unproductive conflict and fragmentation into creative tension, cooperation, and collective agency? Ulex has been running an Ecology of Social Movement training for several years. We'll share some of the frameworks we use there and dive into an exploration of the challenges we all face and the kinds of strategic responses we can develop between us.

4 **Intersectionalism: How is the environmental movement approaching the integration of racial justice, social justice and gender equality in its narrative and action?**

Host: **Shenna Sanchez**, Friends of the Earth

In this session, Shenna will share the work on Friends of the Earth on intersectionality. Intersectionality is the understanding that the root of each power structure intersects and emerge from the same structural, dominative and violent roots. As a result, intersectionality requires that civil society, NGOs and individuals join forces to tackle the root, instead of single-handedly addressing the consequences of oppression.

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How has the health crisis catalysed and accelerated prior and deep-rooted mutations of civic engagement? Learning from the French case study

Host: **Floriant Covelli**, Institut français du Monde associatif

The Institut français du Monde associatif has been working on strengthening our collective understanding of how non-profit and voluntary organisations (NPOs) contribute to society and democracy since 2019.

Although research hasn't yet been able to provide in-depth analyses of the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the non-profit and voluntary sector, we already observe that this crisis has shed light on and accelerated several trends on engagement that existed beforehand.

At a time of democratic crisis that fuels on mutual distrust between the State and citizens, NPOs appears to be a lever of trust and convergence and should be better known and recognised as such.

NPOs' legal and administrative frameworks are increasingly constricting and in turn, challenge civic engagement. Such environment fosters the development of grassroots engagement outside of formal NPOs. A better understanding of these evolutions would benefit the sector and facilitate synergies between formal and informal engagement and organisations.

**Please REGISTER for the event
by Tuesday 26 October 2021**

For more information please contact:
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