

FEARLESS CITIES

BRUSSELS - SEPT 2018

REPORT

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SUMMARY

CITIZENS ARE BAPTISED BY FIRE, AND COME OUT BRAVE

They say that the city never sleeps. With the noise and lights from cars and advertising, the city forces you to rush along. We rush to work. We rush home. We rush to get what we need, to cook and clean and save time and save money. We rush to forget the problems we see. We rush past hundreds of people on the street each day, until they look like a blur, and we forget they are human too.

We cannot go on this way. We need cities, where we can live close enough to organise, to learn, to share resources. And we need to recognise ourselves and others as human. On the other side of the street, on the other side of the wall

s of our apartments, are other humans, each with ideas and concerns waiting for someone to listen. When they are heard, their thoughts can grow into action, and their actions can rebuild the city as a quiet and open place where we can listen deeply to each other - a nurturing city, where we don't have to rush.

Bringing a city into an international movement is no small task. For the team that organised the Fearless Cities summit in Brussels it took bravery to believe they could get citizens excited about municipal participation. Up to the day before the summit, they worried no one would come.

You have to know Brussels to understand just how brave this is. One of the organisers, Laura Sullivan, told of a moment during the summit when one woman described Brussels as grey, bureaucratic, and with a lot of inequality. Laura was struck by this comment: she also had this first impression when she arrived in Brussels many years ago.

For newcomers, Brussels seems like an abandoned child. As a region that is deeply divided, (for example, by 19 communes to start) care and responsibility are victims of bureaucracy and borders.

But people did come. The summit brought together 360 participants, including activists working on all social and environmental issues. The presence of these people proved Brussels was already brave, fearless citizens were already there, empowering people and transforming relationships.

The summit served to connect them around their common focuses in order to give them the opportunity to build networks of resources. It also brought municipalists from across Europe to meet with Brussels civil society, and share stories that demonstrated the potential of this political concept. In the workshops, participants exchanged strategies of resistance and implementation of alternatives.

This summit was only possible because the team believed it was. An original organising group of 12 people committed with such enthusiasm that it was infectious to volunteers that joined.

They practiced the values of municipalism from the very conceptualization of the summit, relying on feminist organising methods (which are discussed in greater detail later in the report), respecting self-autonomy, and encouraging new initiatives. Among themselves they created the kind of community they hoped would one day be reflected throughout the city. It was a true manifestation of vision.

The myriad of diverse and amazing efforts to transform Brussels from the bottom up are disconnected and disorganised.

This baptism could mark the begin of greater connection and much needed organising towards an overhaul of urban governance, led by and for citizens.

WHAT IS A FEARLESS CITY?

SOME ANSWERS FROM THE TEAM

It's easy to use a big word like fearless, but behind the word is a vision, a process, a set of values and demands that are shaped by courageous citizens. Here is how the team that organized the Brussels summit described their idea of a fearless city.

For Anna Rispoli,, a fearless city is a place which would not promote fear politics, hostility or selfishness based on the idea of scarcity. Instead the fearless city is one where we prioritise abundance - abundance of accessibility, solidarity. People must feel that there is enough, in order to feel they can give freely to each other, that they don't have to compete with others and be hostile and selfish. Anna also said a fearless city is one where tenderness is key to the way we relate to others. Having others there to support you is a tremendous resource. Members of a collective can bring together diverse knowledge to adapt to adverse situations and try new things. A citizen who can access and participate in a community of action, that citizen can do more than they once thought possible.

Manuel "Manu" Pueyo,, expressed it as such: "A fearless citizen is one that is aware of transformation power she holds if she gets organised and participates." Similar to the idea of abundance, Manu described a mentality of possibility.

Guilherme Serodio described this as the freedom to question the status quo and imagine and experiment with new ways of life, "we have the courage to dream it and take it in our hands and run with it."

For Christophe Meierhans and Shanthuru Premkumar, this possibility is indivisible from taking the initiative and leaving behind passivity, making the commitment to act based on our values. For Christophe, a lot of people in Brussels are already fearless citizens - by asking the question of municipalism, there is a demand for institutions to adapt to civil society. A fearless citizen is a citizen who knows that they have a role to play. Sabine Frank described it as having the courage to discover you care about something, and then act.

Ana Adzersen envisioned the fearless city as a place of independence through mutual aid. Citizens recognize their interdependence on each other and the land. Producers and consumers can self-govern to make the bio-region self-sufficient in terms of use of natural resources, rather than irresponsibly taking resources from other regions via global trade.

PROLOGUE

THE REVOLUTION IS POSSIBLE FROM BARCELONA TO BRUSSELS

In Brussels in 2016, a bunch of citizens were weaving a vision. They wanted to nurture a change and disrupt the status quo of politics as usual. They wanted to give the city back to the people.

Their theoretical discussions needed to be grounded in reality. Disappointed with the lack of response from the local ministries to their efforts to gather feedback from citizens, they found hope when they looked in the direction of Barcelona, the new-born poster-child of municipalism.

Barcelona had gone through a radical change. When Ada Colau - an activist and community organiser who was arrested for protesting evictions of people - was elected mayor in 2015 it was on the promise to listen deeply to citizens.

The new party she represented, Barcelona en Comú, was offering something never done before: local structures of participatory democracy in a big city. Citizens could now gather in assemblies across neighbourhoods, thematic



“THE BRUSSELS SUMMIT NEEDED TO INTRODUCE MUNICIPALISM TO BRUSSELS, AND CONNECT PEOPLE TO CARRY IT FORWARD”

areas, coordination, logistics, media, communication, etc., and participate via online platforms for communicating, voting, and working together.

The election was news across the world, and Barcelona en Comú received a flood of letters asking how they had won the city and how they planned to implement participatory democracy. Unable to respond to all, they organised a summit for everyone to talk first-hand about municipalism with those who were making it happen. The summit was called Fearless Cities. It inaugurated a movement and network of municipal governments across the world pushing to radicalise democracy, feminise politics and stand up to the far right.

The Brussels citizens who attended the summit brought home the faith and the tools to do the impossible. They founded WeBrussels, a platform for promoting this new approach to democracy in local political structures in Brussels. When Barcelona en Comú learned about this new platform, they read the minds of the WeBrussels

team and proposed a Fearless Cities summit in Brussels.

But the Barcelona summit was designed to empower people around the world who were already eager to take municipalism to their cities.

If WeBrussels could make the summit a participatory experience, they could give citizens a sneak peek into a direct democratic process, and begin the discussions that precede action.

When they began to plan the summit, the team had no funds and nowhere near enough volunteers. They had no reason to think Brussels was ready for radical democracy. Social cohesion is a distant dream for Brussels, far from the current reality of gross inequalities across neighbourhoods, a bureaucratic maze in three languages, and one of the most diverse urban populations in the world. What perilous social landscape awaited our protagonists?



ORGANISATION

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH THE HUMAN ELECTRICAL GRID

There is a magic secret at the heart of the Brussels summit, a pulse of energy that moved everyone to push the possible. The secret can be found in the space in between those who organised the conference, in the potential they saw and celebrated in each other. The 12 core organisers who committed to organising a Fearless Cities summit in Brussels. Their commitment and enthusiasm was infectious for volunteers that came on board, a spark that lit a whole virtuous circle of action, kindness and solidarity.

Having few volunteers at the conception of the event, the core organising team knew they had to encourage anyone and everyone to jump on board by empowering them with support and inclusion in horizontal decision-making, a form of feminist organising. They enabled the municipalist value of self-governance by respecting the agency of each person, enabling the volunteers to lead on their ideas by supporting them in their initiative.

Volunteers or newcomers who approached the organisers with an idea or a criticism felt heard, as the team practiced deep listening: a form of listening to others where the listener focuses on what is being said, rather than beginning to formulate conclusions based on assumptions or judgments before the speaker has finished.

This reception inspired trust in volunteers, allowing them to speak more frankly and share their most creative and critical thoughts, as well as being honest about their level of expertise and uncertainty in trying something new.

Guilherme explains that “people were not afraid because they had this safe space, this supportive space where they could say what their problem was and they would be heard, and others would respond with volunteer and



can-do attitudes, and a solution would be found together. People would jump on board because the support was there, people would feel safe to make the effort themselves because they did not feel alone in it, but a spearhead of it”.

Volunteers owned the tasks they chose to take upon themselves. Rather than being given formal rules on how to carry out a task, volunteers would execute tasks in their own way. Working groups were created whenever a few felt it necessary. Because of the sense of trust, volunteers could admit to the working group when they felt weak or confused about how to proceed with a task, and they were given support and suggestions on how to proceed. Solutions could then be improvised on a collective level to any individual’s issue.

On different occasions, one organiser, Sabine said the emotional generosity of the team showed her that it is ‘important to discover your own humanity and dare your own humanity’. This is an experience shared by the other members, whereby they felt supported in abandoning their reserve and daring to open up to the rest of the group.

This loose structure made it difficult to ensure continuous commitment from some volunteers who would drop in and out, which motivated one organiser to set up a list of roles to which volunteers should commit. The decentralised nature of tasks also meant that there was not enough overview to see and correct gaps in organising, such as for the follow up after the event.

The few structures that were set in place were used to correct potential power imbalances. For example, by rotating coordination or through the facilitation guidelines for workshop coordinators.

The rotation of coordination allowed for different team members to empathise with the difficulty of the work of coordinating, and for the team to benefit from the different coordinating skills of each team member. The guiding principles for facilitators of the workshops ensured that deep listening, respect and inclusion continued in the workshop discussions at the summit, giving participants the same sense of empowerment as the volunteers.

This gave everyone a sneak peak into participating in a municipalist city, what it would be like to have your opinions heard and to be given the opportunity to take the initiative on projects for the city.

When citizens can reach out to those around them and know they will find hands willing to help, then they will feel safe, then they will not be afraid anymore. The only way to have a fearless city is to have a caring city.



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ‘FEMINIST’?

Feminism has a particular meaning within the municipalist movement and to the WeBrussels team. It goes beyond the quest for equal rights for women and men and beyond their balanced representation in roles.

Feminist organising represents a more open form of collaboration that encourages participation and tries to correct for power imbalances. On a longer time scale, feminist organising is a focus on process over outcomes, to act in order to learn collectively from the experience more than to achieve a concrete goal.

Since the emphasis is on learning more than producing an outcome, this learning must be open to doubt and reflection throughout the experience. This reflection also lends itself to evaluating if values are still being honored during actions.

In the Brussels context, “redistribution of power” has been proposed as a more direct formulation of what is being called feminist organising in the municipalist movement. This demonstrates how feminism and municipalism go hand in hand, spousing similar value perspective results in specific political propositions as it considers different parts of the societal reinvention.

Feminism is apt at analysing the inequitable distribution of power specifically on micro-scales, while municipalism is specifically concerned with the effects of power being invested in political institutions that are too removed from the citizens’ everyday experience and therefore unable to resolve conflicts in ways that represent the citizens’ expert perspective on their local reality.

A WORD ABOUT FINANCIALS

FEARLESS CITIES can be expensive events. Between finding a large enough space, catering, bringing in speakers, running communication campaigns and renting out, paying for, and reimbursing all the hundreds of small charges incurred for the event, the total cost can easily add up to tens of thousands of euro.

FEARLESS CITIES Brussels was fortunate enough to be able to apply three major levers that allowed the organization's costs to be kept at a low, while reinforcing community bonds and empowering all involved.

A big help was having a free venue. Having scanned the Brussels' "cityscape" for a venue, we were immediately offered one, for two 2 days, absolutely for free, from KaaiTheater. An historical venue in the centre of Brussels, its director Guy Gypens immediately embraced the spirit and the challenge of the event, and invited us to host it in his venue, offering staff, material and as many rooms as we needed. It was a blessing and we are all profoundly thankful to have called the KaaiTheater our FEARLESS HOME.

Another fantastic contribution came from our volunteers.

AS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE GATHERED AROUND THE BELIEF THAT A NEW DEMOCRACY IS NOT ONLY NEEDED BUT POSSIBLE, THE SKILLS, GIFTS AND TIME DONATIONS STARTED POURING IN.

As mentioned, each of these "offerings" was empowered from the beginning, and each was given the creative freedom – and basic financial resources, gathered from an initial common pool – to advance whatever they thought was important to bring to the festival.

The value of this engagement and generous dedication to the event is hard to estimate, as it was done during the core of the organizing, and counting on financial returns of the festival to be reimbursed.

Crowdfunding was also important, not only to raise some funds, but to build visibility through it. We raised €476, which is not much but covered the initial expenses – fuelling the creativity and empowerment of the volunteers!

Another important element about the financials of this event were the people who came to the festival, which so generously embraced our suggested "pay-it-forward" free-donation tickets.

Basically, we offered three choices of ticket self-pricing, no questions asked:

- If you have no money and still want to come, you don't need to pay;
- If you want to attend and can pay a ticket, the suggested cost is €10;
- If you want to attend and can pay more than what is suggested, please do, as it will help cover for those who cannot afford it.

We got €2,189 in total through festival tickets.

On top of this, FEARLESS CITIES benefited from the generous contribution of foundations, non-profit organizations and even city halls which embrace the practices of Municipalism, and jumped on board to contribute indispensable resources.

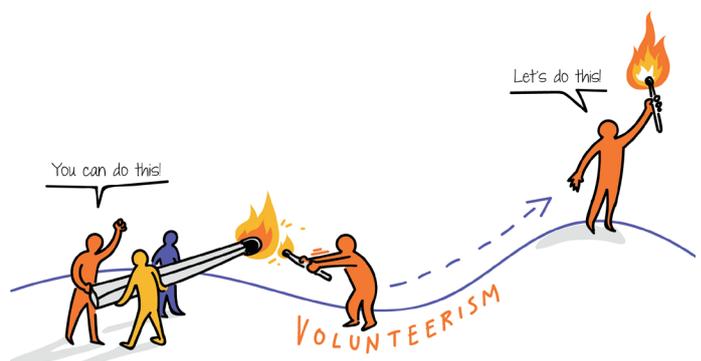
These were [WeBrussels](#), [Commonspolis](#), [Mouvement Utopia](#), [Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le Progrès de l'Homme \(FPH\)](#) and the [Amsterdam City Hall](#). In total, they have contributed €8.500, which meant the world for the entire team and secured the payments to all our partners.

Finally, a mention of the wonderful tool that was adopted for the event from the beginning: OpenCollective provides fantastic support for any collective that wants to launch projects that involves both money and non-profit status (on the basis of which a collective can receive funds, allocate expenses legally, etc).

Open Collective enables groups to quickly set up a collective, raise funds and manage them transparently – you can check the festival budget transparency page by following this link:

<https://opencollective.com/fearlesscitiesbrussels>

Also, a full description of expenses can be checked in **ANNEX I**.



FEARLESS FACILITATION

FOR A BRAVE BRUSSELS

The values of feminism and municipalism were the genetic design of the Fearless Cities Brussels summit, from the organisational structure to the facilitation of workshops. This was meant to be a place that brought together all voices.

The facilitators of the workshops were guardians and gardeners: guardians of the process who would oversee that the core values of municipalism were practiced in the way people exchanged, and gardeners of fruitful knowledge to be shared widely with the participants of other workshops.

They were given guidelines for ensuring they walked the talk of municipalism: to empower everyone to participate. “Municipalism is concerned as much with how outcomes are achieved as with the outcomes themselves,” read the guidelines. Every perspective must be valued for its capacity to contribute.

At the same time, the guidelines asked for the workshops to come to some form of conclusion to one primary question:

“IF PEOPLE AND PLANET WERE AT THE CENTRE OF DECISION MAKING, IF INCLUSION, EQUALITY, SOLIDARITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND JUSTICE WERE AT THE TOP OF THE BRUSSELS AGENDA, WHAT WOULD THIS POLICY OR PRACTICE LOOK LIKE?”

The 8-page facilitation guidelines included not only ethical principles, but examples of formats for exchanging to practice these. The practical suggestions were meant to be optional - one of the ethical principles was ‘creativity’: for facilitators to try new methodologies.

This interactive reflection of municipalist values was meant to show participants in the event what it could feel and look like to be citizens in a municipality city, where they could express their political opinions much more thoroughly than just voting every 6 years in municipal elections. It is possible to debate the future of society as a society, to reach effective decisions while considering all perspectives.

Hierarchy is a construction, not a necessity, and there are other ways to organise groups that are just as effective.

FEARLESS FACILITATION

AVERILL ROY & ESRA TAT (WS 1)

OLIVIA WELKE & ANNA RISPOLI (WS 2)

GRÉGORI BOON & JO CRETEN (WS 3)

ANA ADZERSEN & SHANTHURU PREMKUMAR (WS 4)

ANN LEMAIRE & SOFIE CORNET (WS 5)

VALERIE MOUTON & NIKA KRAVETZ (WS 6)

RIA BAECK & SABINE FRANK (WS 7)

ANGÉLIQUE DE LANNOY & ELISA PAIS (PARTICIPATORY MASSAGE WORKSHOP)

VALERIE MOUTON & OLIVIA WELKE (WS 8)

FRANÇOIS XAVIER LEFEBVRE (WS 9)

ANITA SHEEHAN & TIMOTHÉE BRES (WS 10)

RIA BAECK & SABINE FRANK (WS 11)

ANA ESCARPENTER (WS 12)

JOANNA MAYCOCK (WS 13)

ELISA PAIS (WS 14)

SPEAKERS

A MAP OF CHANGEMAKERS

During the summit, the Kaai Theatre became a powerhouse of committed and resourceful citizens, each of them a knowledge bank with a personal expertise on how to make change.

COOPERATIVES AND DECENTRALISED ORGANISING

Esra Tat: coordinates the European network of Zero Waste cities. works on governance and decentralised organising matters within international networks at Ouishare.

Averill Roy: Coordinator of various international networks on social, economic and ecological transition.

Hanne van Reusel: action-researcher that aims at unraveling, developing and empowering collective tactical and grassroots city-making processes within Commons Josephat.

Timothée Brès: Co-founder at Civic Innovation Network, explorative lab and a platform to prototype and implement collaborative economy solutions.

Natalia Lombardo: Helping groups grow collaborative and cooperative cultures through @thehum_team Member of @loomio coop. Contributor at @enspiral.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT

Sarah de Heusch: Works with SMart freelance cooperative: she develops knowledge with academics on social protection and labor market evolutions and builds partnerships and collaborations.

Jean-François De Hertogh: Works with Growfunding to create new crowdsourcing tools and programs for social entrepreneurs and social initiatives.

Xavier Damman: co-founder Open Collective: a crowdfunding platform with transparent accounting of how crowdfunded money is spent. Also works with BrusselsTogether: an official association that jointly deals with administration for Brussels initiatives.

Charlaine Provost: Researcher and head of (É)Change at the Financité network, which stimulates and accompanies collective initiatives, conducts research and raises awareness on responsible and supportive finance.

PHILOSOPHERS AND ARTISTS

Lieven de Caeter: writer and editor of numerous books on contemporary art, architecture, politics, and the city.

Toha De Brant: urban anthropologist and photographer on social issues in cities and how people relate to urban space. Working with Commons Josaphat

MOBILITY

Frederic Bonus: WheelsAngels an institute offering training on using gyro-stabilizers, thus promoting alternative mobility in the city.

Tobias Troll: activist with Café Filtré, a movement of concerned parents blocking traffic near schools to protest air pollution.

Steyn Van Assche: Urban planner at BRAL Citizen Action Brussels, which organises actions, lobbies, supports citizens' initiatives and provides advice to the authorities on urban sustainability.

FOOD

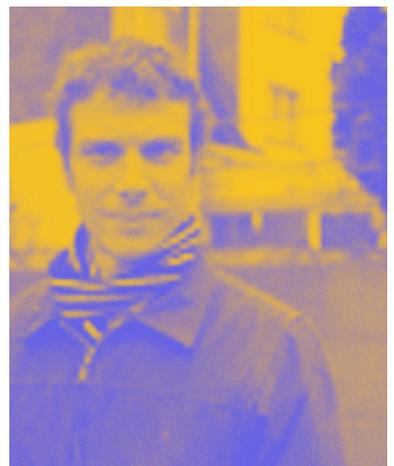
Pascale Zoetaert: Engaged in Beescoop Collaborative supermarkets, owned and run by citizens who both are shareholders, consumers and workers.

Laura Pinault: general support to FoodWIN (Food Waste Innovation Network)

Cyriaque Kemp: Project manager in banking environment, promoting, launching and running cooperative vegetable gardens as a volunteer.

Elodie d'Halluweyn: Vice-President of Végétik – NGO which sensibilise about plant-based diet and all topics linked to this subject, activist for animal rights and development cooperation.

Nihal Yildirim: President and coordinator DierAnimal Brussels - a new Belgian political party DierAnimal for animals, for people and for the environment. Vegan food activist.



SPEAKERS

A MAP OF CHANGEMAKERS

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Elodie Vandenplas: worked for CNCD-11.11.11, the NGO platform on the 'Communes Hospitalières' campaign, which pressures local municipalities to officially declare themselves "hospitable".

Barbara Winn-Hagelstam: founder of Welcome Home International running projects to integrate newcomers.

HOUSING

Andrej Holm: urban sociologist of gentrification and housing policy in Berlin.

Josep Maria Montaner: Councillor for Housing and Urbanism in the Barcelona City Hall.

Véronique Gérard: coordinator for Fédération Bruxelloise des Unions pour le Logement.

Thomas Dawance: Project manager at Community Land Trust Brussels.

Aurelia van Gucht: Coordinator of housing at the Maison de Quartier Bonnevie and Groupe Alarm.

Maxime Zait: founder of Communa, network of co-housing units.

Steven Guermeur: squatter at Woningen123Logements.

FEMINIST POLITICS

Joanna Maycock: General Secretary of the European Women's Lobby.

Assita Kanko: Author, politician & freelance sustainability Consultant, Founder of #Polin, the political incubator.

Fatima Zibouh: Expert/analyst on diversity policy @Actiris – Doctor of Political and Social Sciences.

Elena Tarifa: from Barcelona en Comu, Journalist.

Zaida Muxí: activist from Barcelona en Comú, Co-director of the Master Laboratory of the House of the 21st century.

EUROPEAN MUNICIPALISM

Tristan Réchid: Démocratie participative de Saillans.

Marta Junqué: Coordinator of the International commission of Barcelona En Comú.

Menno Grootveld: Free Amsterdam.

Elena Tarifa: expert on Public Gender Equality Policies and interest in European policy and New Economies. Feminist and social activist in Barcelona en Comú.

Eleanora de Majo: councillor from Naples, responsible for the Commons.

Florian Schmidt: Head of the municipal building and planning control office Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg.

Josep Maria Montaner: Councilor for Housing and Urbanism in the Barcelona City Hall.

Dimitri Lemaire: founder of Particitiz, European Participation and Citizenship Association.

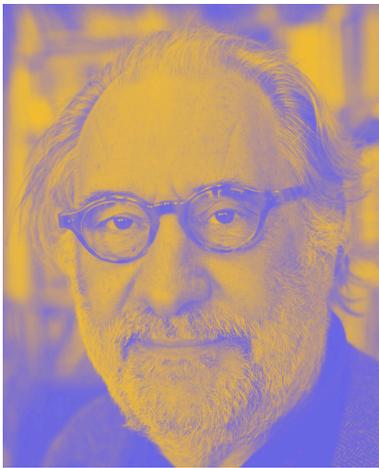
Rutger Groot Wassink: vice mayor and councillor for Social Affairs, Democratization and Diversity of the City of Amsterdam.

Frans Bieckmann: Strategic advisor of Amsterdam Councillor Rutger Groot Wassink for the Fearless City Project.

ALTERNATIVE CITY POLITICS

Kewan Mertens: Agora Brussels - gathers randomly sampled citizens into temporary parliaments with true legislative power, allowing for regularly shifting opportunities for participation in decision-making.

Leen Scheflhout: Member of Burgerlijst Antwerp - a new political movement, list of independent candidates for municipal elections, focused on improving citizen participation and initiatives.



CONTENT OF EVENT

PLENARY WRITE-UPS & WORKSHOP BLURBS

OPENING PLENARY

“WHY ARE WE HERE”

The opening plenary of the Fearless Cities Summit in Brussels was the moment for us to walk the talk of creative democracy. It was crucial for us that everybody present would experience directly what WeBrussels, municipalism and our dream for Brussels is essentially about – spaces where everybody’s voice can be heard and which thereby expand everybody’s perception of local reality, enabling everyone who participates to take better decisions and act (together) upon a more comprehensive knowledge of the actual situation.

For this purpose we started by bringing everybody on stage to form a circle with almonds to symbolise seeds being planted for a new beginning. This set the stage for a conversation where everybody got to encounter three people to exchange about when they feel fearless, about how power can be shared equally and what Brussels as a just city would look like.

These individual conversations served as the nurturing ground for 4 speakers to offer their insights on the significance of municipalism and local organising for a renewal of democracy.

We heard Esra Tat from an ecofeminism perspective, Nihal Yildirim from a EU institutions perspective, Tristan Réchid from the perspective of Saillans as a living municipalist example and Eric Corijn from a philosopher of city-driven change perspective.



FIRST DAY WORKSHOPS

“THE WORKSHOPS WERE THE SPACES FOR PARTICIPANTS TO DIVE INTO ONE TOPIC RELEVANT TO BRUSSELS AND MUNICIPALISM. WITH A DURATION OF 4 HOURS EACH, THE WORKSHOPS WERE DESIGNED TO ENABLE PEOPLE TO REALLY ENGAGE WITH EACH OTHER, THE TOPIC AT HAND AND THE BRUSSELS REALITY RELATED TO IT”.

WORKSHOP 1: HOW TO CREATE MEANINGFUL JOBS IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY?

This workshop brought together citizens and actors of the new economy. Moments of participation and facilitations were intertwined with speaking contributions from people who work in the new economy:

Natalia Lombardo from Loomio / Enspiral / The Hum came all the way from New Zealand to share her experience with the Enspiral network, a network of freelancers and Loomio.org, a startup that is a cooperative and that is developing an online decision making tool.

Sarah de Heusch presented the SMart (<https://smartbe.be>). It's a cooperative of freelancers. It enables them to have the benefits of being employee while keeping the flexibility of being freelancers. They already have 12 offices in Belgium and more than 85.000 membres. They are expanding into other European countries.

Pascale Zoetaert presented us Bees Coop (<http://beescoop.be>), a supermarket cooperative in Schaerbeek. Every cooperator has to work there 3h per month. They offer local and organic products and their goal is not to optimize profits for a small set of shareholders, but to keep prices low for all cooperators.

Jean-François De Hertogh presented Growfunding (<https://growfunding.be>) which helps citizen initiatives and social businesses raise money using crowdfunding in Brussels. Xavier Damman from Open Collective talked about BrusselsTogether ASBL which is a non profit that acts as an umbrella for citizen initiatives. The goal is to mutualize the administrative overhead of creating and maintaining non profits so that citizens can focus on their initiatives and not worry about accounting.

Together, we came up with a couple of ways to create meaningful work in our society:

- redefine work and jobs and how our contribution to society is valued
- make paternity and maternity leave equivalent in terms of length and payment
- new legal structures for horizontal organizations
- paid sabbaticals for meaningful contributions to society
- education in school and workplaces to advance skills and intelligence
- collective decision making
- bring and share your other passions at work
- proposing experimentations for participation and decision making



FIRST DAY WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 2: THE CITY AS A COMMON. CLAIMING FOR A MIXED AND INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACE

This workshop brought together activists from different linguistic communities and citizens involved on various projects in the Brussels territory to advance towards a convergence of struggles against the silent privatization of public space.

After sharing the experiences of Les marches des Acteurs du temps présent (Mathieu Verhagen), the Committee of inhabitants of the Leopold Quarter (Marco Schmidt), Commons Josaphat (Toha De Brant and Hanne van Reusel) and the intervention of the philosopher and activist Lieven de Caeter.

Three working groups set to work to propose concrete actions, to claim the need to repoliticise the urban and to denounce the dangers of gentrification, the ‘tourist-ification’ of the cities, and the irresponsibility of administration when it serves the interests of the private sector rather than the community.

In particular, a petition against the privatization of the public space was conceived at this workshop and it was the subject of a concerted work in the weeks that followed Fearless Cities.

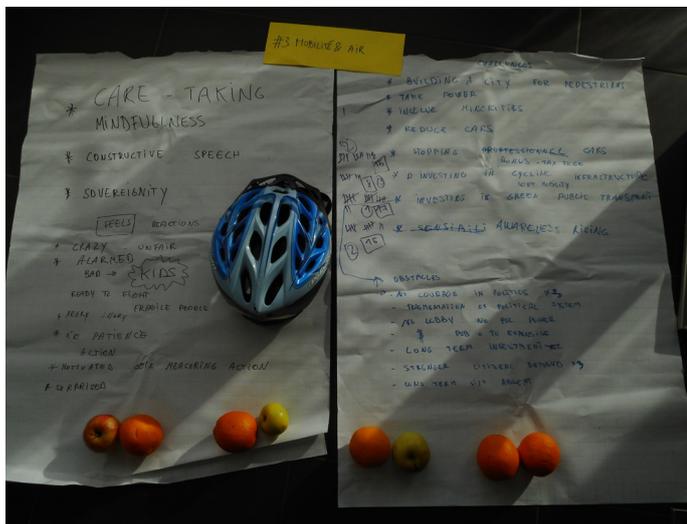
WORKSHOP 3: CHANGING MOBILITY HABITS IN THE CITY FOR THE BETTER & FIGHTING FOR CLEAN AIR

(This workshop will remain in its participants’ memory only - a written report did not materialise)

WORKSHOP 4: FOOD SOVEREIGNTY - CONNECTING TO NATURE IN THE CITY

A city-wide, sharing community! This is the vision Fearless Cities inspired in us for food culture in Brussels. Acting carefully and respectfully, so that food is offered by nature, instead of being coercively extracted. Oriented along the lines of permaculture - earthcare, fairshare, people care - strengthening urban resilience through local resources and skills.

This food sharing community would initiate many food creation possibilities locally: foodforests, vertical gardens, aquaponics, even aromatic walls and playgardens! Always aiming for healthy food from healthy soil. Importantly, it would offer chances to learn urban food production and promote vegan habits and places. Overall, we recognised that food is power. It has the potential to re-educate us about sharing, about love and health, about wealth and redistribution. It can empower us to rewild and offers an opportunity every day for celebrating life and nature.



FIRST DAY WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 5: PUTTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY IN THE SERVICE OF THE COMMON GOOD

Local currencies are part of a given territory, with a variable scale. They are linked to the activities that are developing there. They allow us to relocate the economy and to facilitate its vision across the territory. They encourage local production and consumption, by promoting short circuits, enabling a more sustainable economy that responds to environmental and social challenges by creating more humane communities.

Participants in this workshop imagined that a more just Brussels would have a new currency ‘ The Citizen Coin ‘, which would promote a more participatory Brussels and contribute to more citizen initiatives, to the development of the community, to voluntary work, etc.

The workshop ended with a slogan conveying hope: “Citizen coin, the currency that incites a more just city.”

WORKSHOP 6: PRACTICING SOLIDARITY WITH REFUGEES & MIGRANTS

Our guest speakers shared three admirable examples of practicing solidarity: Communes Hospitalières, an advocacy campaign by the umbrella NGO CNCD-11.11.11; Welcome Home International, a nonprofit facilitating integration of newcomers in Brussels; and Amsterdam City Rights, a think tank empowering refugees and undocumented persons.

Their presentations inspired a thoughtful, frank discussion in the fishbowl format, after which the participants formed two groups to focus on each of these questions:

- What can we do (as inhabitants, citizen movements, NGOs or politicians) to make the City more inclusive and participatory, and to influence policy at local, national and EU level?
- How to bridge the divide between those who are welcoming or tolerant of refugees and migrants, and those who are fearful or hostile?
-

Each group presented their conclusions, followed by a final round of discussion. The takeaway keywords were: start small – perseverance – responsibility – visibility - education – listening.

WORKSHOP 7: MUNICIPALISING EUROPE - EUROPEANISING MUNICIPALISM: CONNECTED EFFORTS FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

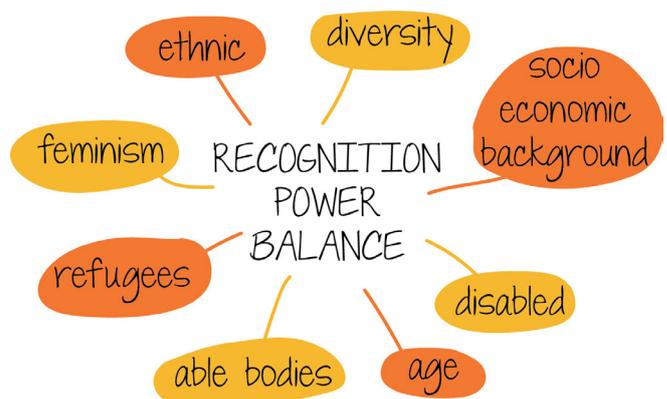
In this workshop activists from across Europe explored why and how people increasingly take politics back into their own hands at local level. The participants first mapped their activities in a spectrum of thematic engagements and territorial levels.

After an input from Jean-Philippe Steeger, DiEM25, about horizontal and vertical integration of municipalist initiatives, representatives of Saillans (Tristan Réchid), Berlin (Julia Förster), Amsterdam (Menno Grootveld) and Barcelona (Marta Junqué) recounted their municipalist adventures.

The common threads of their stories were that municipalism is about creating counter power, rescuing the commons, and being grounded and pragmatic rather than ideological; it stems from the realization that something has been lost and needs to be recuperated or reclaimed.

In all four municipalist stories, a sense of collective outrage about a development in the locality was the starting point.

This left us with a question for Brussels: Will incidents of outrage (about city planning, for example) ever transcend the communes in which they happen and become a unifying wake-up call? Perhaps if we continue to nurture civil society so that collective empathy can come to the fore, etc.



SECOND DAY WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 8: HOUSING FOR ALL: A RIGHT OR A CONQUEST? DIFFERENT EMANCIPATION STRATEGIES

The axis of this workshop revolves around empowerment - not assistance. It is by discussing the tools of temporary occupation (Pierre-Henri Dutron - Woningen123Housing and Maxime Zait - Communa), housing cooperatives (Victoria Uzor - Coopérative l'Espoir), and possible regulation of speculation (Berlin-based urban sociologist of gentrification and housing policy), and the long-term home ownership strategy proposed by the Community Land Trust (Thomas Dawance), or citizen initiatives such as Groupe Alarme (Christian Boone). and Claude Geysken) supported by MQ Bonnevie (Aurelia van Gucht) that the discussion tried to confront different approaches to the process of emancipation.

The municipalist approach, both international and very Brussels-oriented, allowed a hybridization of knowledge between the participants who invite to continue this exchange by highlighting the role played by the citizens in the imagination of common alternatives.

WORKSHOP 9: BRINGING TRANSPARENCY AND MEANINGFUL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TO CITY POLITICS

(This workshop will remain in its participants' memory only - a written report did not materialise)

WORKSHOP 10: HOW TO IMPLEMENT MUNICIPALISM VALUES IN YOUR DAILY ACTIONS

About 10 people timidly entered the space, not really knowing what to expect and how to connect. That was quickly changed with the first exercise during which we asked people to pair up and tell each other a story about a moment in their lives when they had overcome some kind of fear.

The room was getting a lot more animated after that. We then explained that this exercise was the first step in a series that would eventually lead to concrete actions for citizens to take matters that are important to them into their own hands. Topics like food waste and production, clean air, cohousing and connection came up.

In a second step, we asked participants to draw their dream Brussels, specific to a theme that was important to them. These individual dreams were then captured in image and key words by two participants.

Looking at the common dream, we started to reflect which practices could lead to achieving that dream. Many suggestions were made and, in the end,, participants identified individual practices that were close to their hearts and which they were motivated to carry out. Some of these were then captured by our final video.



SECOND DAY WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 11: INSTITUTIONALIZING MUNICIPALISM: COOPERATION BETWEEN MUNICIPALISTS IN POWER

This workshop focused on how municipalists in office can cooperate in countering obstacles which are national or imposed by neoliberal European institutions.

After an introduction by Frans Bieckmann (Fearless Amsterdam), four European city councillors presented. Josep Maria Montaner (Barcelona) characterised the fight against gentrification and Airbnb as a movement towards the communitarian use and management of housing.

Rutger Groot Wassink described the fight of the Faircity Amsterdam platform against the sell-out and commercialization of the city. He said that cooperation between cities on the issue of “commonising” needed to happen outside established city networks.

Eleanora de Majo described how the situation in Naples exacerbated the hatred against the ruling classes and led to citizens’ mobilization that disobeyed national government rules and relied on inter-city solidarity.

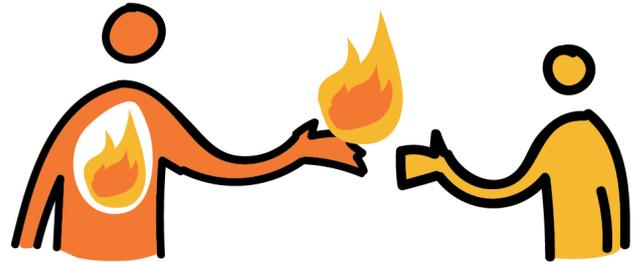
Florian Schmidt (Berlin-Kreuzberg/Friedrichshain) described how he uses the tool of expropriation in order to bring buildings back into public ownership and counteract gentrification.

A noteworthy difference between the showcased cities is that municipalism is carried by pre-existing parties in the “Northern” ones, whereas in the “Southern” ones, the crisis of the political system had become so deep and traditional political parties so distrusted that citizens lists entered the political competition (and won). ‘Which will be the way in Brussels?’, is the question we were left with.

WORKSHOP 12: RETHINKING THE TOOLS FOR DEMOCRACY

This workshop discussed different initiatives proposing radical changes to the manner in which collective discussions and decisions are made at the institutional level. Key to all of them is implementing different degrees and kinds of citizen participation.

After a brief overview of the different existing methods of collective decision-making given by David Talkuder, the Burgerlijst, Antwerp and Agora, Brussels each presented their strategy to initiate a restructuring of local government by running for the upcoming local elections (October 2019).



Particitiz talked about their experience of gradually implementing new democratic modalities in existing institutions by advising and running pilot projects.

Barcelona en Comú testified about the workings of their online citizen participation platform. After discussing the risks of appropriation of citizen participation by populist political players, such as testified by Jessica Sciarne, joining on skype from Napoli about the way in which the Movimento 5 Stelle managed to co-opt participation into a propaganda tool, the workshop attempted to draft a roadmap for a possible transition towards participatory politics in Brussels.

WORKSHOP 13: WHAT HAS FEMINISM GOT TO DO WITH IT?

In its essence this session was a big and deep group reflection on questions of power, patriarchy, self-awareness, connecting with the self, care, the role of women, the role of men, the issue of intersectionality, the personal as political and how all of this figures or could figure both in principle and in practice in the governing of Brussels.

We learned a lot about the feminist approach to governance from the speakers from Barcelona en Comú who had contributed to a wonderful book called ‘Ciudades Sin Miedo’ (Fearless Cities, soon to be published in English) where they have documented their feminist experiences in changing how politics is done.

The reflection circle of about 50 people spoke of how feminism often gets reduced to discussions of parity, which is an important part of the story, but only one. The group went deeper into questions of how unequal power relations hold back the potential of governance.

What really stood out in this session was the impact of patriarchy as a system that has existed for 10,000 years on women and on men. Participants shared with great honesty and courage and trust their experiences of this system and their great will to join forces to end it.

SECOND DAY WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 14: WHAT MAKES US MOVE. A WORKSHOP FOR BODY AND MIND

This workshop was an experiential moment to work on the ecology of relationships. The Kaaitheatre's home was transformed into our body and human gathering space.

The participants, who did not know each other, took the power to create and cooperate together as a group through simple gestures and actions in movement. A process of research to restore in us: the importance of trust, sharing, belonging, tolerance in our daily lives.

This opportunity, in the ephemeral and therefore precious time of the workshop, can it transform the way we interact with those around us? Can we change our future by stimulating social imaginations to dream of a city that would be different. Then we finally begin to grasp the true potential of art in terms of innovation and resilience. The energy and the power to act as a collective was contaminating.

It was a workshop that gave the possibility and the right to the participants to create a "safety space" where they could live, share their fears and transform them through a bodily processus. Dance reconnects us.



CLOSING PLENARY

FOR A JUST BRUSSELS

The only way this lively and buzzing summit could end was with another session dedicated to the garnering of collective intelligence.

The closing plenary began with a video impression of the two summit days, thankfully edited by Xavier Damman during the afternoon. This was a wonderfully motivating way to get the people into an action mood one more time, before completing the long and intense co-creative weekend.

After the video viewing everybody was invited on stage one more time to fill 14 tables prepared for crystallising the insights from the 14 workshops.

In three rounds of changing constellations around the tables we analysed the workshop processes according to these questions: What is the essence for Brussels? What is missing? And what are the next steps to make this happen? Finally each working group had to come up with one sentence to summarise their insights:

- 1. BRUSSELS, RECOGNISE EXISTENCE OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS, REALISE HUMAN RIGHTS, BE FEARLESS, GIVE OUT A CITY-PASSPORT.**
- 2. WE BRUSSELS ARE ALL DANCING AGAINST FEAR, WE DANCE AND CHANGE TOGETHER.**
- 3. MUNICIPALISTS IN POWER SHOULD LISTEN, CONNECT, CREATE VALUES WITH AND FOR CITIZENS, AND JOIN FORCES AT NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVELS.**
- 4. CREATE INCLUSIVE METHODS FOR TRANSPARENCY AND CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION TO EMPOWER ALL PEOPLE.**
- 5. EDUCATE PEOPLE TO RECONNECT THEM WITH WHAT FOOD IS.**
- 6. BRUSSELS, FOCUS ON AND RECOGNIZE ALL OF THE HUMANS AND OUR DIVERSITY IN OUR CITY.**
- 7. ONE ZINNE LOCAL CURRENCY IS SO MUCH MORE THAN 1 EURO.**
- 8. LESS AIR POLLUTION, WITH MORE VELOCITY, WITH GOOD REGULATION AND SMART APPLICATION.**
- 9. VALUES IN ACTION CREATE A COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT AND SHARE PRACTICES TO TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE.**
- 10. SMASH THE PATRIARCHY, FEMINIZE POLITICS!**
- 11. FACILITATE ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE HOUSING, NEW WAYS OF LIVING TOGETHER AND CITIZENS CONNECT WITH YOUR NEIGHBOURS!**

A FEARLESS CITIES SUMMIT

A FIREWORK EXPERIENCE

“THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF FEARS. THE FIRST ONE IS ONE THAT PARALYSES, THAT PREVENTS YOU FROM MOVING. THE SECOND FEAR IS ONE THAT MAKES YOU JUMP, ONE THAT MAKES YOU RUN AND THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO HANDLE THAT FEAR, WHICH IS THROUGH MOVEMENT”.

For the WeBrussels organising team, the experience of organising Fearless Cities remains unique and deeply transformative. The feminist values (like collaboration, dialogue, horizontality, learning-by-doing, trial & error, process-before-outcomes, allowing doubts, focus on the concrete & practical, etc) and operational methodology created what team members described as a “weird membrane”: a safe mental and social space. Individuals that entered this space could jump in, become fearless, and take on ambitious new experiences.

One organiser and facilitator, Ana, describes the experience of the event using the analogy of ‘being on the edge of a cliff, and having simply to jump off, without knowing whether I could fly’. It was because of this feeling that she impulsively decided to illustrate one of the sessions, a form of visual facilitation which she’d always wanted to try but hadn’t had the courage or opportunity before.

It was through this deeply organic process that the team learned to trust themselves and trust each other. The result was infectious. Participants came forward on their own, proposing to help in many ways. And it is in this environment of kindness and mutual respect that one of the Dutch-speaking participants offered to translate when the organisers realised that they were lacking translators, another participant started making coffee for everyone and generally, the organising team received unexpected help from the participants for the final clean-up.

Shanthuru, who joined the organising team a few weeks before the summit, also felt empowered and welcomed in taking the initiative to organise cruelty-free, organic catering at the summit. For him, animal rights are central to his values, and he was grateful that the team recognised that they had not paid attention to their values regarding food - thus they let him act upon his own initiative. Like many others, he could put his values into practice and was appreciated for that.

For Manu, this is also one thing that moved him deeply - the creativity born out of confronting challenges together. He explains: “I remember one moment when we really

needed a flipchart, a big flipchart for collecting notes in a visual way but didn’t have any. Shanthuru had the idea of bringing one of these clothes-hangers and wrap it around with paper so we turned it into a flipchart with paper. I think this represents the vibe of the event. We have a problem and we are going to solve it in a creative way. People had the perspective of ‘We are going to do it anyway, we are going to make it happen’, that state of mind makes you always find a solution to problems”.

Similarly, a collective can also challenge each other to try new things. A decentralised organisation and without leadership allows for experimentation, exchanging roles and taking risks.

For instance, Christophe Meierhans describes a strong experience of being pushed out of his comfort zone when other organisers agreed to do a 15-minute guided meditation at the start of each day of the summit, before beginning organising activities. “It was really hard for me to engage in 15-minute-long meditation when I knew we were under time pressure and in a way we are approaching things differently. In these kinds of moments, I could feel a lot of inner resistance, because I had a huge list of things to be done, and there I was, asked to empty my mind and not do anything. That was a way to confront myself with what I know. On the one hand, I was boiling inside, and on the other hand it felt exhilarating”.

The organising team sensed that, despite no certainty of what to expect from the event, a deeper process was at hand, working on them and on the participants. In addition to intellectual discussions on the problems in the city, layers of emotional knowledge were awakened. In the moment of the event itself, people did not directly realise it but towards the end magic seemed to operate.

Shanthuru explained: “Participants felt the process working on them, a subtle shift in thought. They felt that they came out as different people, changed. It was difficult for some participants to stop working rationally, so the process worked differently on them.”

A 'RITE OF PASSAGE'

FOR A MUNICIPALIST BRUSSELS



The Fearless Cities Brussels summit was experienced as an intense and important undertaking, like a 'baptism by fire' marking the opening of a new path in local governance, an event from which there is no "coming-back, only going forward more profoundly into the ideas of municipalism".

When referring to the summit as a rite of passage, the organisers referred to the fact that this was the first public event around municipalism that they organised together – without having much time nor many resources – and it marked the beginning of a longer-term commitment to sharing their experience and engaging with citizens of Brussels.

For the team, this summit was like planting the seed of ideas and ideals, and provoke a spark in participants. The summit instilled energy and hope in participants about fearlessness the same way a fire would spread out.

This summit was meant to be a firework – a series of sparks that would spread out in a network pattern, marking the moment and leaving a trace. However, those sparks now need to be fanned to create a more incisive impact with a slower modality.

POSITIVE TAKEAWAYS & BEST PRACTICES

THE FEARLESS CITIES SUMMITS ARE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO DISCOVER THEIR FEARLESSNESS AND LEARN ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES. SOME OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS HAVE PROVEN TO BE SUCCESSFUL INGREDIENTS IN THE MAKING OF SUCH AN EVENT. THESE COULD SERVE AS INSPIRATION FOR OTHER ASPIRING FEARLESS TEAMS WISHING TO UNDERTAKE A SIMILAR COLLECTIVE PROJECT.

MAKE IT FEMINIST FROM THE BASE

Feminist facilitation was used as a method to put more focus on the collective learning process rather than aiming for specific and measurable outcomes. This type of facilitation entailed that no one was truly there to 'teach' or praise, but the co-learning process was about collective engagement whereby participants could become their own teachers.

It is not about the facilitator teaching something, but about facilitating a reflective process whereby participants feel that they can learn from each other and from themselves.

To support this methodology, different elements of action were put in place all throughout the organisational process for the team as well as the participants in the final event.

1. Create a safe membrane: a safe space which welcomes vulnerability so that anyone feels that they can learn something while being respected by the rest of the group.
2. Deep listening - this safe membrane is for people to feel that they can voice anything that they would like to contribute, and it is the role of the facilitator to ensure that this contribution feels welcome and heard
3. Appreciate each other & their input - The organising team worked on the basis of expression of gratitude, acknowledgement and recognition of efforts. This was helped through a meditative sequence of 15-30 minutes before the start of every meeting, where people also took the time to recognise their own effort and everyone's efforts injected into the process.
4. Prioritise process over outcomes - the feminist facilitation approach focuses more on the changes and transformation that can operate at the individual and collective level, while letting go of specific targets or results at the end of the day. It is more about checking-in with the surroundings, creating connections, and going with the flow of whatever is emerging from the group's energy.
5. Recognise power imbalances - Recognizing that some participants have a tendency to be more forthcoming with their contributions, and thereby feel more entitled or confident, with the result that they inadvertently-

ly dominate the conversation, facilitators then call in contributions from less forthcoming participants to try and ensure a balance. Ruthless limitations of speaking time also ensured everyone had an opportunity to speak.

For this type of facilitation, the team was lucky to have highly competent facilitators trained with these values. It is thus important to acknowledge, when one is organising their own event, that facilitators play a key role, as they are the ones who can make each and everyone feel that what they say is equally important as the others'.



AGREEMENT ON A SPECIFIC SET OF VALUES THAT ARE GOING TO GUIDE THE PROCESS

This was implicit from the start. The feminist framework already set certain values as mentioned previously. The team talked about the following values and emotions that seemed to be there all along and to facilitate their organisation. Most of them mentioned a certain tenderness and trust in each other.

Anna explains that it was like a 'well-intentioned machine', which works both cohesively and independently, but with a certain respect for each other. The 'well-intentioned machine' is a representation of the fact that despite not knowing each other well, nor having time to meet-up on a regular basis, the organisers still managed to find their place within the bigger workings of the group.

It was as though, they all managed to fit in, best in the grand ensemble of the summit organisation, such as well-placed cogs in a bug and complex machine. And one part of this effectiveness came from the fact that everyone still managed to conserve deep values of respect and well-meaning for each other, despite time pressure and other sources of stress.

Additionally, the core team did not know each other so deeply but they still decided to trust each other, based on the principle that they had a common goal to reach - which was to give birth to the two Fearless days and support Brussels citizens in their process of self-organisation.

Ultimately, each coordinator and facilitator from the organising team acknowledged that their peers were passionate and engaged, which was key to a successful event. People's positive mindsets provided energy to the whole group whereby everyone injected their own capacities and positive energy into the team - through constructive feedbacks and an open structure of empowerment.

DECENTRALIZED COLLABORATION & HORIZONTAL ORGANISATION

The team made it a point to not have a leader - they did not want to organise themselves hierarchically. This aligned with their municipalist vision of fostering collective intelligence and organically distributing capacities. Through horizontal organisation, the team organised themselves in several working groups.

The working group members would then rotate who was the key organiser that week. Every week someone different would take over supervising the next team meeting and chairing the process. This kind of horizontal, decentralised organisation pushed people out of their comfort zones as they all had to take and share responsibilities.

Although not easy to maintain, this method proved helpful as it facilitated trust and consolidated collaborative efforts in a way that prevented the risk of burnout for everyone.

These flexible techniques and methodology also proved positive when it came to mapping of different concerned actors (members of civil society), and eased the load of reaching out to the wider network.



IMPROVEMENT LEARNINGS

BEING FEARLESS IS ALSO ABOUT CONSTANTLY REFLECTING UPON ONE'S ACTIONS AND DECISIONS - AND WHETHER THOSE MEET PREVIOUSLY FORMED EXPECTATIONS. IN PARALLEL TO THE POSITIVE TAKEAWAYS AND BEST PRACTICES, HERE ARE SOME LEARNINGS THAT MAY SERVE TO INFORM FUTURE FEARLESS CITIES EVENTS ORGANISATION.

TALK TOGETHER ABOUT THE DEEPER QUESTIONS

Most of the core team agreed that they could have spent more time together to discuss their own personal visions of municipalism and their political views, and in this way to further take advantage of the summit as an opportunity for the team to deepen their knowledge of municipalism.

The team also wished they had taken more time for value sharing, meditating together as a group, and generally get to know each other better on a personal level. Two months after the event, the team organised a retreat, but most of them voiced their opinions that this retreat should in fact also take place before the event for the team to meet each other, deepen their relationships and their knowledge together.

ALLOW FOR MORE CAPACITY-MAKING

Everyone from the core team acknowledged that more resources in terms of time and financing would have made the organisation more efficient and less stressful. Ideally, the event should be planned 6 months in advance (for the Brussels summit, the team only had 3 months).

Additionally, some of the core members mentioned that the decentralised way of working sometimes slowed them down. Especially if external volunteers (like volunteer interpreters) are involved during the summit, information like languages needed, schedule, name and organizations of participants need to be disseminated much earlier. As a solution, they had the idea to employ someone part-time as a 'project manager', a way for someone to have the full overview of the working groups' fragmented undertakings, while being fully embedded in the horizontal leadership structure.

INVITE DIVERSITY WITHIN THE CORE TEAM & IN THE PARTICIPANTS

Though the core team was already diverse in terms of nationalities, some of them mentioned the importance of welcoming even more diversity - across ages, minorities, socio-economic backgrounds - not only within the team, but also at the event itself. The crowdfunding of tickets, whereby when purchasing a ticket, attendees could also offer to purchase a ticket for someone else to get in for free, ensured that people from less advantaged backgrounds could also participate. A good practice which will be continued in future events.



DURING THE EVENT, ALLOW FOR FUN TO TAKE PLACE

The event was deemed to have been quite intense for the audience as some perceived the schedule as being too packed with workshops and plenary sessions. Although participants seemed invigorated with renewed energy from the event, the core members suggested that for future endeavors, more space should be given for fun activities for participants: they suggested music and meditation together, games, yoga, dance and mingling are other ideas. Additionally, as a way to lighten the facilitators' work, they themselves should be able to rotate between participating & facilitating.

HAVE A PLAN C FOR POLITICAL IMPLEMENTATION

Initially, Fearless Cities was also meant to inform the municipal elections taking place in Belgium. The citizen list, Plan B, had been contacted because the concept of municipalism is part of their political program and they hold similar values as WeBrussels.

They were invited to take part in the organisation before the event and actively participate during the event in the hope that they would gain deeper insights, and then be able to use the outcomes of the event to strengthen their program, right before the elections. Representatives from Plan B came to the event, but communication was not clear, and ultimately Plan B did not integrate the outcomes in their electoral programs. Additionally, the core team reflected on the fact that it would have been better to in fact invite and challenge several other political parties, engage with them openly about municipalism and feminism.

PLAN FOR POST-EVENT FOLLOW UP

Additionally, it is important to exploit the good energy flowing out of the event right after it and use the momentum to create an official communication campaign that includes the outcomes from the event and key learnings, such as this report. This only happened to a certain extent within the WeBrussels team - but it is a key take-away for future undertaking.

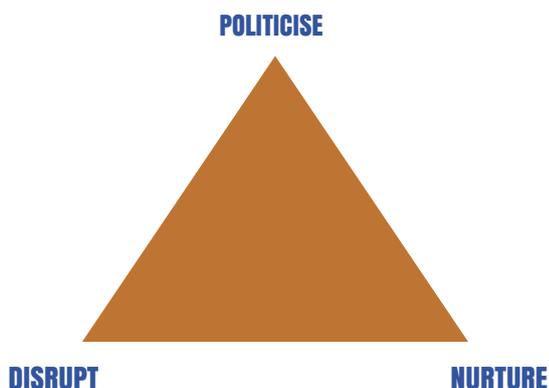
FINAL EXERCISE & CALL TO ACTION

“NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD; INDEED, IT’S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS.”

MARGARET MEAD

Though there was no specific objective agreed upon before the event, the summit gave birth to various concrete outcomes. It was agreed that since the WeBrussels team showed such successful teamwork during this ‘incubation phase’, they would want to keep organising learning experiences on how to improve their capacities as citizens, build consensus and take collective decisions.

Following the retreat that took place two months after the Summit, the team agreed on 3 dimensions they would like to work on:



The WeBrussels team’s aim is to find an appropriate balance within those three dimensions, and this over the course of bi-weekly meetings per month.

One meeting will be about nurturing – this refers to nurturing and accompanying other movements, associations, organisations and individuals and to strengthening the bonds and experience sharing within the WeBrussels movement itself.

The second monthly meeting about disrupting is about finding opportunities to open a public conversation and to effect change. It is open to the public. In both meetings, the idea remains to politicise issues being discussed, all the while inviting people to share their experiences – and this can only be done through nurturing, reinforcing the community, offering support to each other in their own actions, as well as becoming inspirational forces for others and for themselves.

The team recognised that they still need to clarify some details, such as looking at themselves critically, asking themselves the questions where they would like to go with these, how to diversify the target public and how they can continue in the trajectory set by the first Fearless Summit.

And of course, to organise the next one!

For the next steps, who WeBrussels really needs is you. The Fearless Cities Brussels summit and the experiences shared there demonstrate the potential of municipalism but there is a very long way to go. A group of self-organized people with the same core values and vision who support each other can push the boundaries of what we consider possible.

We have provided here the list of participants in the summit, to share with all readers the human resources available in Brussels, the initiatives that are already going on, and that are there to support whatever idea you have to make this a better city. We welcome you to become a fearless citizen with us.

ANNEX I

ESTIMATION OF COSTS FOR THE BRUSSELS FEARLESS CITY EVENT

22-23 SEPTEMBER 2018

KAAITHEATRE

	Item	Description/Assumption	Detail	Costs
Expenses	Venue	KaaïTheatre	venue rental	€ -
			cleaning saturday	€200.00
	Tech support	Sound, light, translation	sound	€100.00
			light	€30.00
			walkie talkies	€20.00
			translation support	€1,465.00
	Logistics material	Chairs, tables, drawing papers, markers, post-its, stickers, walkie-talkies, etc	transport	€20.00
			facilitation material	€300.00
			Van (Friday + Monday)	€150.00
	Child Care	Offer children care for parents to be able to freely participate in the conference	2 people x 2 days	€800.00
	Facilitators	5-7 professional facilitators to help design and set up the workshops, supporting civil society organizations and other volunteers in reaching the objectives they set for their interventions	volunteers	€ -
	Interpreters	FR - EN - FL	volunteers	€ -
	Volunteers	Insurance	liability	€80.00
	Catering (coffee breaks & lunch)	Kaai Cafe	food	€1,967.50
	Speakers	Flights and accomodation (if solidarity accomodation is not found)	Florian Schmidt	€ -
			Tristan	€187.00
			Jessica Sciarnè	€122.00
Eleonora de Majo			€228.93	
Andrej Holm			-	
Culture	Music Exhibition		€350.00	
		Voies de la democracie	€50.00	
Comm	Printing	brochures, signals, etc	€260.00	
	Social media	FB boosts, website	€40.00	
Promotional materials	Video Deliverables, tshirts, pins, stickers, Municipalism DIY guides, etc?	video	€253.42	
	Total			€6,623.85
Income	FEARLESS CITIES	Crowdfunding		€476.00
		Tickets		€2,189.00
		WeBrussels		€1,000.00
	Foundations	Commonspolis		€1,000.00
		Utopia		€1,000.00
		FPH		€2,500.00
	Amsterdam City Hall		€3,000.00	
	Total			€11,165.00
			Balance	€4,541

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