

The Three Pillars

The three pillars of radical inclusivity, active listening and trust are a way to provide a safe space and support empathetic interaction, allowing all assembly attendees to share and to be listened to.

Radical Inclusivity

Effective assemblies achieve radical inclusivity, where the emphasis on all being heard and valued equally means no voices are dominating and the collective wisdom of the assembly can be reached. People can participate safely and openly, without fear of judgement or ridicule.

Radical Inclusivity also means being aware of potential barriers to engagement and working with those affected to enable participation. Think about disabled access, sign language, whisper interpretation for those for whom English isn't their first language and other possible means by which those barriers can be removed. Ask if there are any barriers to engagement that people need to identify and then request that the group works together to find ways to remove them.

"Diversity in opinion will pay you back in the long run socially... if we don't fix this problem to start with we are simply going to replicate existing power structures."

- Eleanor Saitta, hacker and designer

Active Listening

Active listening is focusing on hearing people before developing a response in your mind whilst someone is still talking. Active listening is vital as it enhances our capacity to empathise; when we fully listen to others, we gain more of an understanding of people, their views and their concerns.

Assemblies recognise that no one person or group holds all the answers. The collective wisdom of the crowd means we gain powerful intelligence about the issues we discuss.

"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."

- Aristotle

Trust

Once the process for a people's assembly has been agreed, it is essential that participants trust the process and trust the facilitators. The facilitators enable this trust by sticking to the agreed process and ensuring that everyone follows too.

It is not meant to be a perfect system and can only be effective if people trust that those involved have come together in humility, to work towards decisions and actions that are best for all.

"I see the 15M assemblies and neighbourhood organising in retrospective and I'm amazed how it could work and most importantly all the trust that it meant."

- Carolina, a founder of 15M and takethesquare.net
