

TOOLS AND METHODS

The Wheel of Collective Actions

France 2021



IFS FOSTERING SOCIAL JUSTICE

TOOL'S SUMMARY

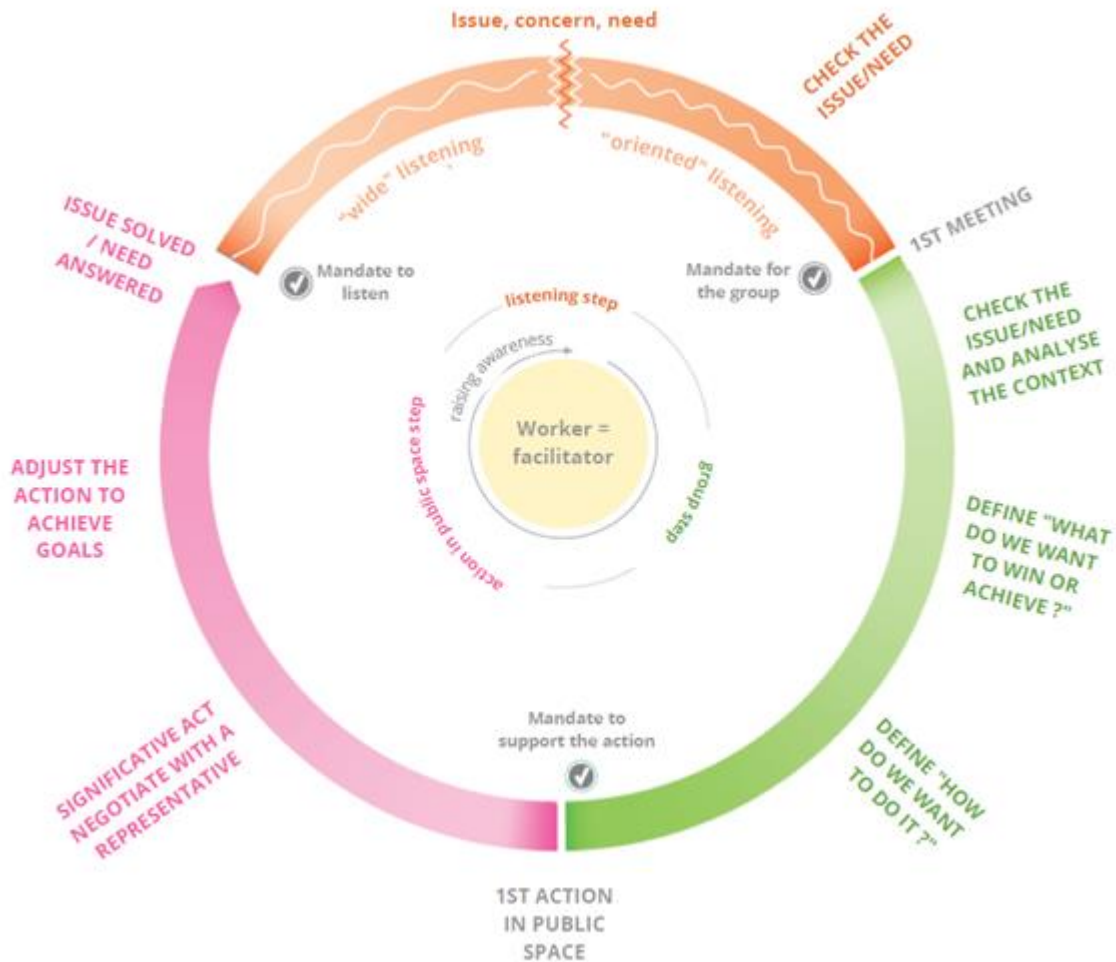
Tool/method name	The Wheel of Collective Action
Tool/method summary description	Turning individual concerns into collective projects. Traditionally citizens go to our centers to get services or activities. This method helps citizens to define social issues and work on solutions.
Country observed	France
Year observed	2021
Programme area	Active citizenship, social inclusion
Tool type	Methodology Facilitation technique
Specific topic	Democracy, solidarity, citizenship
Beneficiaries of tool:	Direct: Social workers Indirect: residents in the locality
Can this tool be applied to other beneficiaries: yes/no	yes
What type of beneficiaries: ALL, or specific ones?	yes, All citizens in the area
If specific ones, which?	

Tool full description

The process of collective action aiming for emancipation (summed up with this wheel) was built from an observation: in our structures we often know how to mobilize people who are already mobilizing! And we are often disappointed when, at our meeting, we find the same people.

We ask ourselves: “why don’t the people concerned come? »

The process that we propose aims to mobilize (or more precisely to support the mobilization) of people who have never participated in collective actions.



Context: The sources of inspiration contributing to the way of thinking about empowerment at the French federation.

Paolo Freire (1921 – 1997) and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Saul ALINSKY (1909 – 1972) and *Community Organizing*

Yann LE BOSSE and *Empowerment development*

Lyon’s Congress in 2013 and FCSF’s project, « La Fabrique des Possibles (The factory of possibilities) » adopted in 2014 during our General Assembly

See Full Context Sheet [Link here](#)

Could it be used in other contexts? If yes, which ones?

Yes, but with difficulties in countries where democratic values are not respected.

What is innovative about this method or tool?

- Gives the power directly to the people.
- Unconditional welcoming and validating the meaning for the participant after each visit or activity.
- Celebrating the result together is an aspect that contributes to the goals.
- After gathering individual issues, these must be put together to build a collective project, in which people use their own resources.

The vision is to turn anger or problems of people into something positive. People must use their own resources to change their situations (it starts from the people). People need to experience their own capabilities. Then people can be active in other contexts, too (outside of social centers). It is not just about acting autonomously, but also about developing new things and competencies (being aware of own skills).

The offer of services and activities is not sufficient, for a long-term perspective people must be empowered to help themselves

Together Everyone Achieves More

Detailed Methodology

Start by listening: the listening step.

This phase is necessary, even if it can be long.

It is based on a principle: people can develop their potential, their capacities, their resources, their know-how.

It's about starting by listening to people where they live, where they meet, to try to identify the problems they bring up, the problems that prevent them from living well: it's about "wide listening".

When you identify a potential problem/need, you must go and check it, see if it concerns other people and above all see if a group is ready to mobilize to try to act on it: this is about "oriented listening".

A problem/need on which we can engage a collective dynamic is:

- Defined by people, in their words
- Concrete, it describes facts experienced by people
- Current, it takes place here and now
- For which people are ready to act (if this is not the case, then the action is condemned to failure!)

Group step

The group meets to discuss, analyze and verify the problem/need. It is then a question of analyzing the context (who the allies are, what are the levers but also the brakes) to define the gains to be achieved and the "how to go about it" (the strategy, the choice of actions likely to improve or embellish the living conditions or environment of the inhabitants). In this phase, people learn about collective life (listening to everyone, the necessary rules, decision-making methods, etc.) and plan their project.

Action in public space step

Once the choices have been made, it is time to act! For this step, the group will act with the objective of solving the problem/need.

He can then, depending on the situation and his choices, act directly or go through a negotiation with decision-makers, or even take a significant action which aims to make those who can act on the situation react (elected officials, managers of companies or institutions, etc.).

During this step, we may need to mobilize residents more widely. We can propose citizen actions with – always – the objective of transforming the situation. For the people, it is about gain.

The mandate

Before engaging in a phase of wide/oriented listening, and before collective mobilization, it is essential that the facilitator checks with the structure if he has the authorization, the mandate, the means to act.

The facilitator's mandate must specify:

- The prioritized objective(s)
- The role or responsibilities of each party
- Procedures and means of implementation

The mandate should be checked regularly. We are in collective processes that are built as we go. But there are 3 key moments during which to check the mandate: at the start of the listening phase, before moving into a group, before acting in the public space.

If this collective action approach takes a significant place in the structure's ways of doing things, it is important that it appears in its social project, and that the project is discussed and negotiated with the various partners.

Specific advice for staff/volunteers/adult educators:

- Working together in the same level (balance between volunteers, staff). Everybody needs it.
- Talk tables: to prepare social project.
- Feast events: to bring people the message to belong center of the decision.
- Commissions/working groups: the official part of it ...
- Validating the meaning, the participations after acting.

- Keeping the values and self-respect.
- Challenges are to provide a different organization culture as well for the employees, professionals within the organization, their volunteers as the visitors of the center.
- The co-operation between the social center and other organizations working in the social field.
- Listen, understand, and act.
- Values are solidarity, human dignity, and democracy.
- Share the skills
- Don't forget that changing things takes time.
- Encourage active citizenship.



For more resources and information

(Online links in French)

<https://www.centres-sociaux.fr/fave-faire-emerger-et-animer-des-actions-collectives-a-visee-emancipatrice/>

<https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/content/download/197698/2365396>

<https://fabriquedespossibles.centres-sociaux.fr/les-ressources/le-pouvoir-dagir-cest-quoi/comprendre-le-pouvoir-dagir-avec-yann-le-bosse/>

Community Organising in English:

http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/epgpdata/uploads/epgp_content/S000573AE/P001814/M028420/ET/1522042781Content_SaulAI_inskysmodelofcommunityorganizationpractice.pdf

Contact Person



Sophie Michelena,

European projects Coordinator

sophie.michelena@centres-sociaux.fr

www.centres-sociaux.fr