

d@w Study Groups - Guidelines & Expectations

Democracy at Work (d@w) is a non-profit media creator and curator which advocates for worker cooperatives as a means to achieving a more equitable society. Our educational focus is reflected in our Study Groups, where we encourage willing volunteers to forum and run self-sufficient and self-organizing groups to educate and engage with their community to discuss (1) what is wrong with capitalism as an economic system and its impacts on our society, (2) how and why transition to an economic system based instead on worker co-ops is part of the solution needed, and (3) how and why d@w local groups are themselves means to achieve that transition.

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Attached at the end of this document:

Ethical Guidelines document
Terms of Participation document

Overview of d@w Study Groups...

- Study groups are self-organized and self-sufficient groups of volunteers.
- They meet to study our current society and a potential future one. “Study” is used somewhat loosely and can include group discussion, invited guest speakers, workshops, presentations, etc.
- We encourage study groups to use d@w media as the focus or starting blocks for their study sessions (*Economic Update with Richard D. Wolff, Global Capitalism Live Economic Update with Richard D. Wolff, David Harvey’s Anti-Capitalist Chronicles, Capitalism Hits Home with Dr. Harriet Fraad, Puerto Rico Forward with Andrew Mercado-Vazquez, and more to come*).
- We encourage Study Groups to meet monthly, but some groups meet more or less frequently. We also encourage that the meetings be advertised publicly.
- Groups are responsible for all organization and promotion of their meetings. Groups are listed on our website, and anyone wishing to join a listed group will email a designated d@w staff member who will connect them to the group.
- **Study Groups must sign our Terms of Participation document** which outlines their requirement to follow our **Ethical Guidelines** and follow some basic rules of conduct. The Terms of Participation document can be signed by 1 or multiple “Point People” for the group. Group meetings must have at least 1 signee of this document present.
- A Loomio and/or Facebook group connects the point people from all the Study Groups. There, they can ask for and share advice from each other, and even organize group calls amongst themselves if they choose to. These group pages are admin-ed and monitored by d@w staff.
- We encourage members of Study Groups to submit pitches for podcasts, articles & graphics for publishing, etc.

Mission Statement...

As a d@w Study Group, you will work under the following mission statement.

At Democracy at Work - XYZcity (d@w-XYZcity), we endeavor to further our parent organization’s purpose, that is to look at capitalism through a critical lens, and advocate for greater power for workers and communities. Our activities and discussions focus on building a stronger, democratic economic system through the principles of collaboration and emancipatory leadership inside enterprises, within radical movements, and throughout the entire social system. Through education, promotion, and connection with local organizations, we aim to be a hub in XYZcity that advocates for and facilitates the transformation of our economic system.

Our parent organization is the national non-profit, Democracy at Work, a media creator and curator which advocates for worker cooperatives. d@w expanded its activities in 2016 by supporting the formation of groups such as d@w-XYZ.

Study Group Goals...

We encourage the following goals:

- 1) **Educate.** You'll be providing a service to help people learn by holding public monthly meetings that are education based: discussions on d@w media or other materials, workshops, guest speakers, etc. These meetings can become community hubs for people meet, talk, learn, get inspired, build networks, and self-start to create meaningful collaborations.

If you want to go farther, you can think about giving presentations yourselves, either to your own group or to other groups, orgs, schools, churches, etc. Or, you can create something (a flyer, video, memes, etc.). As long as you aren't engaging in lobbying or electioneering, the sky is the limit! Do what excites and inspires you!

- 2) **Help to build / participate in a network in your communities** of orgs with related goals. This happens from introducing yourself to other groups, caring about their issues, asking them to care about yours, and then promoting and supporting each other's efforts, particularly when interests collide.
 - a. For example, co-ops have many intersectional effects. Find where co-ops fit into other org's goals (ex. Public banking, re-entry community)/
 - b. If you want people to show up to your events, show up to theirs, either as individuals, or representing your d@w group where appropriate.
 - c. Document your connections along the way! Photos, blogs, videos, etc.
- 3) **Be a part of the "cultural shift"**. Help us normalize the ideas that are presented in our media: Marxism is cool, socialism isn't scary, and co-ops are amazing! Help us do this through:
 - a. All the education efforts mentioned above
 - b. All the networking efforts mentioned above
 - c. The creation of media that spreads your thoughts, opinions, and efforts even farther: Podcasts, Videos, Photos, Essays, Memes, Infographics, Pamphlets, Flyers, etc.

Support from d@w...

As a Study Group, you will receive the following support from d@w:

- 1) We will list your group on the national d@w website.
- 2) We will provide meeting guidelines / lesson plans / educational tools in digital form as available.
- 3) We will provide personalized group logo.
- 4) We will provide advice and coordination from Public Engagement Manager (PEM).
- 5) We will promote your groups and share your projects (photos/videos of groups in action, etc) per PEM approval.

Ideas for your meetings...

What should you do in your meetings?

These are educational in nature. We encourage you to make them open to the public and hold them at least monthly. You can follow provided lesson plans or use them as guidelines to develop your own. They could be like the following:

- a. Share articles / videos ahead of time and discuss them. The “Materials” section of our website has some articles from Prof. Wolff that you can use or get inspired by.
- b. Watch videos in the meeting and then discuss them.
- c. Build and give presentations: types of co-ops, history of co-ops, co-op case study, co-ops in other countries, etc.
- d. Invite a guest speaker to present / host workshop such as:
 - Someone from a co-op in your area.
 - A co-op incubator, developer in your area.
 - Someone who can teach skills necessary to worker co-op owner-members: financial literacy, horizontal hierarchies.
 - Someone from a fellow activist group that also works towards social / economic justice.
- e. Get interactive from time to time:
 - Have a cooperative board game playing session.
 - Create / Lead exercises in horizontal hierarchies

How should you hold your meetings?

We encourage you to hold these meetings in spaces that can welcome as many people as possible. For example, a meeting in a bar could prevent an underage person from attending, so would not be advised for all your meetings.

We encourage you to also keep these social. Help people feel welcome by allowing time for people to socialize, organize to have snacks available such as coffee and cookies, and to have a literature table for people to peruse. Make sure to greet folks as they come in to help them feel welcome. Reading aloud the ethical guidelines also helps set a good respectful tone for the rest of the meeting.

Here is a simple example of a meeting format that you could use:

2:00pm	Welcome period
2:15pm	Discussion based on readings / current episode of a d@w media project
3:00pm	Break
3:15pm	Guest speaker presents (always plan for Q&A time!)
4:00pm	Thank yous and ending social time

How do you get people to your meetings?

Plan your meetings so that you have something to advertise. People are much more likely to attend something when they know what's happening: talking about a specific subject based on a specific reading, or hearing from specific guest speaker.

Advertise your meeting on Facebook, Meetup, or any other social media that you like to use. Advertise through like-minded groups. Make an announcement at their meetings or on their social media pages (with their permission of course).

Build an email list as you go so that you can email details of upcoming meetings to interested people. As per the Ethical Guidelines, never share or use this email list for anything other than d@w study group activities and communications.

Recommendations for your group...

d@w is known for its focus on worker cooperatives. Thus, you are likely to get asked about what you can do for co-ops in your community. Reminder, d@w is a media creator that advocates for co-ops but does not provide legal or financial advice to co-ops. The same goes for our groups. Unless you're an individual who can already provide these kinds of services, it will serve you well if you under make efforts to find and know who your local Incubators, Developers, co-op specific attorneys, financial planners, etc are. People will ask you for these connections so be as ready as possible to help them. Unless you yourself are someone who is equipped to

Organize and run your group with cooperative principles. Your meetings will be open to people who are interested in learning and not participating, but they will be run and developed by your "core leadership": you and the people you start this group with. We encourage you to run this cooperatively.

We discourage the hierarchical model of traditional groups and titles (President, Vice President...) in favor of one that promotes horizontal decision making and functional roles to members. Roles and titles should be fitted to the skills and interest of groups members, as well as the necessity of the group.

We encourage rotating facilitators for meetings, to the degree each person is comfortable. This provides opportunities for everyone to take part in visible leadership and develop a stronger understanding of the subject matter by leading a group discussion.

We encourage you to keep space open for new people to take leadership roles. Many people who attend meetings will not be interested in taking larger roles, but for those who want to do more within your group, we encourage you to help them find a space to do so. We have noticed more success and stability from groups with more people in their "core leadership".

Boundaries of d@w Study Groups...

Due to a few different reasons (lack of resources, legal restrictions, etc) there are some realities that Local Groups must work around. There are also some boundaries that we have decided to draw based on our experiences with these groups and our desires for them to succeed in their previously stated goals.

1) Study Groups will not receive funding from d@w.

- We hope to be able to provide printed materials in the future, but as of yet there is no foreseeable date that that could begin

2) Study Groups cannot engage in lobbying / electioneering.

- Lobbying is the act of attempting to influence the actions, policies, or decisions of officials in their daily life, most often legislators, members or regulatory agencies.
- Electioneering is advocating for an individual candidate to be elected into an office.
- Due to d@w's 501c3 status, we cannot lobby for specific legislation, but can only promote general policies, and electioneering is strictly prohibited. Local groups are also beholden to these restrictions.
- You as an individual can still do as you please by yourself or with another group, but you cannot engage in lobbying work as a d@w group.
- If lobbying is what you are interested in doing, we can recommend working with Democratize the Enterprise (democratizetheenterprise.org), and we can put you in touch with them.

3) We ask that you work locally.

- We strongly believe that local efforts are what will give the lasting strength to this movement. Focus on your city first, and your state second.
- If opportunities for collaborations across state lines arise, please confer to the PEM before moving forward.

4) We ask that you always be clear about what you are.

- You are a proud assemblage of volunteers who work to further your parent organization's purpose to promote worker co-ops.
- You represent d@w-XYZ. Besides support of worker cooperatives, you cannot speak on behalf of the national org, but only for your own volunteer group.
- The local group does not share the national org's non-profit status. If someone wants to donate to your group be clear that it will go to your group and not the national org, and that you do not share the national org's 501c3 status so their donation to your group is not tax deductible.

Terms of Participation & Ethical Guidelines for d@w Local Groups...

To become an officially recognized d@w Study Group, you must sign d@w's **Terms of Participation** document which outlines the relationship between the group and d@w.

As a d@w Study Group, you must follow and enforce the **Ethical Guidelines** (listed below).

Group status can be rescinded at any time should ethical guidelines be broken or required expectations not be met.

Questions?

Don't hesitate to reach out to the Public Engagement Manager: Liz Phillips - liz@democracyatwork.info

Thank you...

for your interest in taking a larger responsibility to push for a more equitable society in your city!



d@w Study Groups - Ethical Guidelines

The goals of d@w are based in equality and justice, and thus we require all leadership of d@w Study Groups to follow and enforce the following ethical guidelines. We ask that you stay aware that your words and actions will represent the ideals of 'economic justice for all', and Democracy at Work as a whole.

In order to preserve the integrity of our goals and honor the relationships we build, we do not tolerate:

- Sexism
- Racism
- Ageism
- Ableism
- Homophobia
- Transphobia
- Religious bigotry
- Verbal or physical abuse
- Any other forms of hate speech, condescension, harassment, intimidation or discrimination.

Instead, we would like to emphasize the following principles of behavior:

- Active listening.
- The welcoming of different viewpoints.
- Prioritizing the voices of people who have not spoken yet.
- Recognizing that no one knows everything, not even you.

Because your meetings will be public and often attended by people who have not been there before, we recommend that you read through the Ethical Guidelines at the beginning of your meetings.

Should a problem arise in your meeting, do your best to calmly tell the person that their words or actions are in conflict with these guidelines and give them the chance to cease and or apologize. If that doesn't resolve the issue, you can calmly ask the person to leave the meeting. Should the issue expand from the meeting, you can always reach out to the designated d@w staff member for advice or assistance.

Have any thoughts or suggestions for this document? Please send to liz@democracyatwork.info

d@w Study Groups - Terms of Participation

Group Name: _____

This is an agreement between Democracy at Work (d@w) and the undersigned leaders of the above d@w Study Group, who agree to the following Terms of Participation and understand that failing to meet these terms could result in the dismissal of members of the group from d@w activities, or closure of the group as a whole.

General...

- 1) We / I, the leadership of this d@w Study Group, agree to the terms listed below.
- 2) For the purposes of this document, we / I agree that anyone in a Study Group given the responsibility to publicly speak on behalf of the group (including but not limited to at an event, on social media, in email) will be defined as a Point Person in the leadership of that group.
- 3) We / I agree to notify the appointed d@w staff member should our leadership members change or acquire new such members, and that they will also need to sign this document.
- 4) We / I agree that should the group close for any reason, we will act in good faith to provide the appointed d@w staff member with notification, and collaboration to close any related websites, social media accounts, etc.

Communications...

- 1) We / I agree to communicate to the public that we are volunteers of our d@w Study Group and do not speak directly for d@w as a whole.
- 2) We / I agree to notify the appointed d@w staff member of any changes to group leadership, contact information, or group status.

Privacy...

- 1) We / I understand that our increased participation with d@w means that we / I may be given the responsibility of keeping sensitive information contained to group leadership and will do so when asked.
- 2) We / I agree that any mailing list collected on behalf of the d@w Study Group will be retained only for our / my d@w StudyGroup's purposes and will not be shared with any other organization or entity.

Group Activities...

- 1) We / I agree to follow the **Ethical Guidelines** document in all group related meetings, activities, social media posts, etc.
- 2) We / I agree not to engage in lobbying or electioneering through as a d@w Study Group activity.
- 3) We / I understand that we / I will not receive funding from d@w, and that any fundraising efforts we / I decide to undertake are our own responsibility.

Social Media...

- 1) We / I agree to notify the appointed d@w staff member of the creation of any group social media account.
- 2) We / I agree to make the appointed d@w staff member an admin of the group's Facebook page.
- 3) We / I agree to cooperate in the deletion of a group social media account if deemed necessary by the appointed d@w staff member.
- 4) We / I agree that any social media accounts created for our / my d@w Local Group will not be converted into a new and/or different social media account connected in any way to an organization different from d@w.

Name (Printed): _____ Date: _____

Name (Signed): _____

Name (Printed): _____ Date: _____

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Name (Printed): _____ Date: _____

Name (Signed): _____

Name (Printed): _____ Date: _____

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