



Sustaining All Life



# Meeting Guidelines

- 1) Discuss and agree to guidelines for inclusion and equity. Think together about meeting accessibility and inclusion, such as:
  - a) Ensure meeting schedules/times accommodate people's lives, attend to food needs with cultural awareness and sensitivity, ensure that the need for child care is not a limiting factor for full participation.
  - b) Use words and terms that everyone understands and speak slowly and clearly.
  - c) Have everyone check in or introduce themselves at the start of meeting - and leave space for connections and conversations during the meeting.
  - d) Get to know each other, share and ask about each other's lives but don't quiz people. Communicate that you care, but do not assume a personal relationship that has not yet been worked out and established.
  - e) Don't rush to fill air time. Notice where you feel urgent about the agenda.
  - f) Keep track so that no one dominates the air time. Think about seating, so that patterns of oppression are not being reinforced and relegating people to the back or side based on lines of oppression.
  - g) Apply a "speaking order" based on awareness of the lines of oppression encouraging who speaks first based on race, ethnicity, first language other than English, being a young person, class.
- 2) Use a **Think and Listen\*** format. Breakout in pairs to support people to formulate and prepare to communicate their ideas, rather than allowing those who speak more readily to dominate the conversation or make decisions without full discussion.
- 3) Do not explain what other people mean or speak over others. Do not take credit for others' ideas.
- 4) Use consensus to make decisions. If an impasse is reached, restate your position and underlying interests then try arguing for the other point of view.
- 5) If agreement is still unreached agree to temporarily institute one position and then really back that idea fully.
- 6) Give it a reasonable amount of time and then assess the effects. If it's not satisfactory, at that point consider trying the other position.
- 7) Be generous appreciating each other.

\*A Think and Listen format works well for drawing out good ideas:

- Take deliberate turns to think out loud your ideas or perspectives.
- Each one has an agreed upon amount of time to think out loud about the issue, problem or challenge at hand.
- The listener applies aware listening, shows interest, respect and does not evaluate and **does not question or comment**.