



# Civil Society in Dialogue

Self and collective care:  
a strategy for movements  
and civic organisations  
working on democracy,  
environment and  
social change

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2021  
10.00 - 11.30 AM CET  
ONLINE DISCUSSION

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The Youth Delegates of the  
Conference of INGOs invite you to  
take part in an online dialogue in the  
Conference of INGOs of the Council of  
Europe.

**We want to invite you to discuss together about how to take care of ourselves and each other in our civic organisations and movements at a time of great social, political and psychological turbulence.**

The COVID-19 pandemic put huge pressure on our societies and democracies with inequalities roaring and restrictions of fundamental rights multiplying. The health emergency quickly exposed and amplified the crisis of a system that is revealed to have been socially, politically and environmentally unsustainable. The disruption of our daily lives and the uncertainty and fears raised by the pandemic have great mental health repercussions on all of us.

Activists and civic organisations that are in the frontlines to tackle the consequences of the pandemic in the field of democracy, social justice and environmental protections are not immune from the psycho-social repercussions of the crisis. Already before the outbreak of the pandemic, research found that human rights advocates were at risk of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), depression and burnout.

Causes are numerous: shrinking civic space, precarious conditions of work, excessive workload and stress, direct contacts with survivors of abuses, fatigue due to lack of progress in the field of work... Findings also point to the fact that organisations often do not provide the support needed to tackle them.

Self and collective care are key components to a strategy to improve well-being inside our democratic civic organisations and movements. Additionally, this is a political issue because civic actors should be doing for themselves what they want to do for others. Civic organizations and movements should organise themselves to reflect the change we want to see in society. Social movements can also be spaces to address and heal collective trauma linked, for example, to systemic racism and gender discrimination.

The aim of the webinar is to provide a space for dialogue and exchange on these issues where all voices can feel welcomed. Some questions we would like to address are:

- How to ensure care and empathy are at the centre of our workplaces and social change strategies? Where do we start?
- What are the obstacles? What prevents us from talking about these issues in our workplaces?
- What examples of self and collective practices by civic actors and organizations working in democracy, social change and environmental protection do you know and can be replicated?

Participants are invited to share perspectives, ideas and experiences in small group facilitated discussions, for a duration of approximately 45 minutes.

We want to create a safe space for you. So, please come ready to share your experiences, and to hear the stories of others!

***[Register for the event here.](#)***

*For more information, contact us at [rares.craiut@ingo-coe.org](mailto:rares.craiut@ingo-coe.org)*

#### **About the Youth Delegates program**

In line with its "Roadmap for youth participation", the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe invites through a public call, each year, young persons, representing member INGOs, to take an active part in its working sessions, and throughout the year in activities of the Conference, as well as to propose activities and initiatives of their own choosing. Their activities and participation is made possible with the support of the Association OING-Service.