

# A democratic platform

## Purpose

Letting the participants:

- decide on a joint, democratic platform
- compare their platform with the criteria for democracy
- assess the degree to which their own decision-making process was democratic

## 1. Deliberations and decisions in committees

Divide the participants into committees with 4–5 in each group. Give each committee three A5 sheets, preferably with a different colour for each group, and issue the following instructions: “What would you require for your own organisation to make decisions in a democratic way? Each committee is to agree on 2–3 rules. Write each rule on a separate sheet, using large letters so that the text can be read from a distance of several metres.”

While the committees are at work, the facilitator of the session draws the Lifebuoy on a flipchart, which is then hung on a wall. There should be plenty of space on either side so that later the committees’ A5 sheets with rules for democracy can be taped up.

## 2. Re-assembly and background

The facilitator uses the Lifebuoy to explain the phases of the decision-making process.

## 3. Presentation of the democratic platforms

Each committee appoints a representative, who attaches each rule sheet next to the most relevant phase of the process.

- Assigning a rule to a particular phase may be difficult. Perhaps the rule has more to do with one of the fundamental values. Perhaps it concerns the criterion of *Enlightened understanding*, in which case it should be attached in the Lifebuoy’s centre.
- Are there any phases of the process to which no rules have been assigned?

## 4. Review of the criteria for democracy

Signs with the criteria for democracy have been prepared in advance by the facilitator. They are now placed at the relevant phase of the decision-making process and briefly explained. The committees’ democratic platforms are compared with the criteria. The platforms are usually worded so generally that they are compatible with the criteria.

## 5. Assessment: each group’s decision-making process and criteria for democracy

Each committee has jointly decided on its rules. That process is now assessed in the light of the criteria for democracy:

- Give an *Assessment form* to each group to make a separate assessment.
- Examine whether any group considered it controlled the agenda (it was actually set by the facilitator). Was there a group in which everyone considered they had an equal influence on the group’s decisions? How can one tell without voting?

## 6. Concluding Line

Make a ‘*Line*’ (see Method Bank) where each participant adopts a position on the following statements:

- I understand what is needed to make a decision-making process democratic
- I have been able to participate effectively
- I have enjoyed myself