

# Sustainability in courses and study groups



## A guide for planners and organisers of training sessions

A programme of sustainable development is implemented at Citizen's Forum that takes into account ecological, financial, social, and cultural sustainability. It is important that the courses and study groups sponsored by Citizens' Forum also work in a sustainable manner. The instructors, group leaders and event organisers at Citizens' Forum and its member organisations play a key part in promoting the sustainable ways of working of their respective organisations. Below are some examples on how to address sustainability issues when planning and holding training sessions.

### Ecological sustainability

Matters that affect ecological sustainability are the everyday practices of the course, such as offered food, waste management, paper usage, and travel methods. The sustainable use of natural resources is also financially sustainable.

Take care of at least these things:

- the training session is in a place as easily accessible as possible via public transport
- all purchases and foods offered should be Finnish and produced ethically and locally if possible
- if possible, recycled materials should be used and buying new things avoided
- waste recycling is handled correctly
- printing and copying should be kept to a minimum, and materials should be made available and stored electronically
- electricity and water usage should be kept to a minimum

We also encourage to:

- favour vegetarian foods instead of meat
- with new purchases, products with ecolabeling and sustainability certifications should be favoured

### Financial sustainability

A financially responsible training session is prudently budgeted both regarding personnel as well as other expenses. The training should not cause surprising or excessive strain on the organisation's budget, personnel, or volunteers, to keep the organisation viable in the future.

Take care of at least these things:

- estimates of expenses should be accurate and all expenses considered
- inexpensive locations and materials should be favoured
- follow up on the budget and react to additional expenses in time

## **Social sustainability**

A socially sustainable training session supports the participants' inclusion, a sense of community, and agency. In addition, the session should be accessible and unobstructed – all kinds of people are welcome. When planning and holding the session, a culture should be promoted that enables dialogue and promotes equality. The wellbeing of the instructor is an important part of a socially sustainable training session.

Take care of at least these things:

- the location is physically accessible and easily reached
- in online courses, the working environment should be as intuitive as possible
- the space is safe, the atmosphere open, and educational methods inclusive – also in online courses
- the participants can affect the process and content of the session, and they can give feedback
- the needs of special groups, minorities, and different learners are considered (location, language, food, varying methods, clear and accessible materials)
- do not hesitate to ask for help or guidance from the course coordinators at Citizens' Forum in all questions or problems related to the planning and execution of the course

We also encourage to:

- collaborate with organisations that already reach out to special groups and minorities
- include content that inspires people to participate and promote sustainability in various courses
- include participants in the planning of the course
- get to know equality and equity related materials provided by Citizens' Forum:  
<https://peda.net/kansalaisfoorumi/kouluttajille/tjy>

## **Cultural sustainability**

Culturally sustainable training sessions consider the diversity of cultures and the fact that participants are active producers of their own culture. The wish is to get participants who have diverse cultural backgrounds. This way we can promote a rich and multifaceted cultural development.

Take care of at least these things:

- consider what kinds of obstacles there can be for the training session (e.g., language, location, communication channels, pictures used in communication, assumptions on what the participants are like, content) and how to make it easier to participate
- consider the possible cultural specifics of participants when planning the content, methods, materials, and marketing of the course
- aim the marketing of the course also directly to people from culturally diverse backgrounds

We also encourage to:

- plan the sessions together with people from cultural minorities
- participate in courses that support understanding of cultural diversity