

# UP WE GO MZANSI

## TALK GROUP GUIDE

### BACKGROUND NOTES

#### What is Social Cohesion?

'Cohesion' means to stick together. ('Cohere' means to hold on, like glue).  
Social cohesion means ...



To bring people together

People come together and look out for each other – like brothers and sisters.

People from different backgrounds unite.



People agree and work together

People have a common cause

To make something better together

#### Why do we need social cohesion?

Social cohesion helps us to feel that we belong in South Africa – it makes us feel proud of our country. It increases our sense of identity and shared humanity, trust of and respect for one other, and it builds respect and diversity. It helps us create a society in which everyone is valued.

Where there is a high level of social cohesion, people help those who are marginalized. They care for one another.

**SOCIAL COHESION = UBUNTU!**

**“A cohesive society works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility” (OECD).**

#### What prevents social cohesion?

South Africa has huge inequalities and people still suffer from systemic racism. As a result, many people feel very angry and distrustful towards other South Africans. It's no use pretending that these problems—and our ugly history—don't exist. We must talk about them.

We have a shared humanity, and when we live in a broken system, all of us (even those with privilege) suffer and are less human. This is the essence of ubuntu – a person is a person through other people.

By fighting for social cohesion, all people who live in South Africa benefit because we are stronger together, which makes it possible to make more representative decisions and rebuild our economy. Working together does not mean that we forget the past, or that we expect people to suppress their pain, but it is essential for growing a strong, healthy nation.

**INEQUALITY** means that not all people have fair and equal opportunities (for work, education, healthcare, services, and so on) and access to the country's resources.

As a result of our past, many youth experience:

- Low self-esteem
- Lack of belonging
- Lack of hope

Their potential remains untapped and they stay 'stuck in a rut', not knowing how to move on, feeling overwhelmed by unemployment, crime and poverty.

We believe that there is a better future ahead for all people living in South Africa but we must persevere, putting in place positive, effective strategies for increasing social cohesion and rebuilding our nation. Youth can be a powerful force for good and, mobilized as agents of change, young people can offer solutions and set South Africa on a different path.

We have seen youth take a stand. The result of the #FeesMustFall protests were that university fees in 2016 weren't increased and, after the protests, a Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training considered providing free university education.



## OUTCOMES

In this Talk Group, we'll look at some of these strategies and we'll also get inspiration from well-known South Africans who work towards unity.

Our outcomes for this Talk Group are to increase:

- 1) Hope and excitement for the future based on concrete possibility
- 2) Social behaviour change education to mobilize young citizens to move us forwards and upwards
- 3) Practical actions each member of society can take to affect personal and collective change and upliftment (personal, group, societal change)

**UP WE GO MZANSI IS A MOVEMENT CALLING EVERY PERSON IN SOUTH AFRICA TO HARNESS OUR COLLECTIVE TALENTS AND STRENGTHS, AND TO MOVE SOUTH AFRICA UPWARDS TOGETHER.**

### What would a better future look like for South Africa?

- Young people need better education and more opportunities
- Safety – less violence and crime
- More access to meaningful work
- Equal access to health and services
- Faith in, and space for, young people to make a difference
- A government free of corruption who cares about and takes action on behalf of all people who live in the country
- Positive values and morals, driving new behaviours, unity and cohesion
- Inside ourselves – kindness, integrity, compassion, empathy, loyalty
- How we treat others – honesty, respect, equality, no discrimination, generosity
- A tangible experience of the freedom and democracy that has been promised and fought for

## WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE DO TO INCREASE OUR NATION'S SOCIAL COHESION?

1. Realise and act on the fact that young people can be agents of change.
2. Understand and live the principle of 'you can't change others but you can change yourself'.
3. Mobilise those around you to join you in changing your society.
4. Make it your mission to bring hope.
5. Be a role model and an example to those around you.
6. Understand how we impact each other.
7. Build self-esteem and identity in yourself and those around you. To do this, cherish your culture and promote all its positive aspects; also be willing to learn about and enjoy other cultures.
8. Celebrate all the aspects of your personality that show your creativity, warmth and willingness to build connections and accommodate others – be light and life in your community.
9. Increase cohesion in spaces where people gather, such as church, theatre, sport, social programmes (these are often good places to start).
10. Look for programmes to get involved in that will increase skills, such as those that teach financial literacy.
11. Have a healthy lifestyle and encourage other youth to also reduce risk: stay in school, reduce teen pregnancy, reduce substance abuse; reduce risk of HIV-, TB- and COVID-19 infection.
12. Stand up against violence, crime and fear – do not normalize things that break down trust and unity in your community.
13. Help others to help themselves; encourage other youth to make changes to benefit their lives without waiting for someone else to do it. Start something good yourself.
14. Help and support one another.
15. Channel your energy to build rather than break (keep a watch on your stress levels and find constructive ways to let off steam, for example, exercise or creative arts.)
16. Build a community where people can use their talents (music/art/sport). Share your gifts with your community and with people outside your community.
17. Help improve what your area looks like, so people can feel proud.
18. Remember: ubuntu is unity in our humanity—I am because you are—and we are growing together. We cannot succeed alone.

Overall we want the same thing—connection, being and growing, a common cause for all involved.



## WHAT THESE ACTIONS MIGHT LOOK LIKE FOR A YOUNG PERSON...SOME EXAMPLES

We stated that good places to start increasing social cohesion are in spaces where people gather, such as church, theatre, sport and social programmes, so let's look at some examples to inspire you.

### 1. Inspiration: Imagine starting a community garden

Valentino De Klerk and his brother Geronimo started a community garden at the Trinity Place flats in Elsies River with the hope of feeding their community.

*"De Klerk hopes that the newly-planted garden will be the first of many in the area. They have planted potatoes, cacti, beetroot, beans, and a small lemon tree. They get some seeds from the Cape Town Together Food Initiative. The garden uses greywater, collected in five-litre bottles, from the nearby flats. While the garden is still developing, the De Klerk brothers hope to give the vegetables they grow to feeding schemes in the area.*

*Their garden grows in the shadow of a newly-built three-metre-high wall. The wall was erected by the City of Cape Town earlier this year, after years of resistance by the community. Geronimo and Valentino were part of the Elsies River chapter of #UniteBehind, led by June Esau Lang, until December 2019. This community initiative was succeeded by two groups, Vorentoe, and Geronimo and Valentino's group, HopeGodsGiftForAll.*

*Prior to the wall, gangsters would use the Trinity Place flats as a thoroughfare. While gang violence is still rife in Elsies River, De Klerk says the wall has helped reduce violent incidents.*

*In 2018, the Elsies River chapter of #UniteBehind demanded that the City refurbish the council-owned flats. They also campaigned for more community safety after a spate of gang murders last year. Now, many of the floodlights are operating, and the troublesome drains on the flats are working as they should.*

*De Klerk said that they have been given permission to start a second garden on a larger plot by ward councillor Chris Jordaan, who also donated spades for them to garden. He says they still need more safety equipment like gloves to clear the second plot.*

*The De Klerk brothers say that youth unemployment in the area is extremely high and has deepened during the lockdown. Valentino works in the film industry and Geronimo helps to educate youth on the effects of climate change."*

**Source:** <https://www.goodthingsguy.com/people/elsies-rive-garden/>



## 2. Inspiration: Imagine getting involved in a community/school project

BottomUp is an NGO that runs projects with youth in schools, for example:

- SPEAK UP: Speak Up is a public speaking skills programme; students explore relevant community and school issues and learn to craft better speeches.
- Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs)
- Chess

Student Councils (RCLs): in practice, many schools view RCLs only as symbolic student leadership or as 'model students'. Little opportunity is therefore afforded for students to use RCLs to express genuine student interests. BottomUp's RCL work aims to reignite genuine student participation, representation and an orientation toward social justice in schools. They offer (free of charge to schools): Workshops, Residential Camps and Mobile Classroom Experiences.

## 3. Inspiration: Imagine starting a special-interest club, for example, dancing

Some community dance clubs start with just a couple of like-minded people who find a space to work on dancing and choreography—without even having a teacher—and then become much bigger as more people show interest. 'Moving into Dance' is an example. It started in Sylvia 'Magogo' Glasser's garage and grew into a professional dance company.

Moving into Dance, Katlehong: Since it started, MID has had a major impact on socio-cultural transformation as well as the economic empowerment of South African youth. Sylvia 'Magogo' Glasser started her life's work training youth from disadvantaged communities and equipping them with skills which could be used to overcome their socio-economic circumstances. MID's motto 'Nyakaze o Fetohe – Making a Difference Through Dance' – embodies its underlying philosophy and practice of transforming lives, one student, one dancer, one family, and one community at a time.

## 4. Inspiration: Imagine connecting with diverse people at your place of worship

Does your place of worship welcome youth and, if so, are young people able to express themselves and bond together by sharing ideas and experiences, regardless of background, race, gender or physical ability? If you see room for improvement, you can be the one to make a change. Get involved and be someone who respectfully engages other young people in this space to create social cohesion.

It can be hard for young people to stay in religious groups because they sometimes feel judged because of their lifestyle. But places of worship can offer opportunities for young people to welcome one another and build deep relationships across social barriers.

## 5. Inspiration: Using social media to connect people

Earlier on, we referred to #FeesMustFall, a campaign run by young people for social change. A big part of this was the social media messaging that ensured that many more people understood what the campaign was about and joined in. Think of creative ways that you get a positive, nation-building idea out there! Social media is a great tool that you can use for social cohesion.



What do you need to hear, see or experience to start making a change and start hoping for change? What are the small ideas or areas of change that unlock hope and that trigger the beginning of this journey?

## REMEMBER

Change starts within but it reaches out.  
Everybody needs somebody to reach out to them.  
Somebody has to take the first step.  
"Whatever you water will grow."  
When people see the desire for connection and unity in you, they can more easily respond.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR INSPIRATIONAL PERSON

As we think of ways in which to bring social cohesion to our communities, we can take inspiration from South Africans who were very successful in driving home a strong message of hope and change. These leaders made a difference by using their platforms to raise their voices and they motivated others to build a better future.



**Thabo Mbeki** fought for political and economic freedom for all and in 1996, when our new Constitution was brought into being, he made a unifying speech called 'I am an African'. In this speech, he spoke about all the differences that have together shaped each of us as Africans. He ends with 'Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that assertions, I shall claim that I am an African'. Mbeki's poetic speech had a big influence and made people feel proud to be part of Africa.



**Zozibini Tunzi**, born in the Eastern Cape, was crowned Miss Universe in 2019. She used the platform the pageant allowed her, as well as her subsequent fame, to advocate for gender equality and inclusion of women. She is still very active on social media.

Please note: It's important to remember that even though we may not agree with everything someone does or says, does not mean that we disregard them completely. We can still learn from them and be inspired by their lives. Tolerance builds unity.



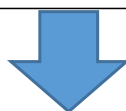
## TALK GROUP OUTLINE: SOCIAL COHESION

We know how great talk groups can be for getting peers TALKING about some of the big issues in their lives and their communities.

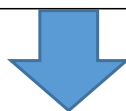
**Use this outline to help you plan a Talk Group on Social Cohesion.** Remember to go back to your background notes on this topic so you can have all the information fresh in your mind!

### HOW TO PLAN A TALK GROUP ON SOCIAL COHESION:

1. Think of a fun and interesting way to introduce the topic and get people thinking about the issue.

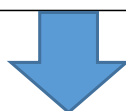


2. Think of some questions or statements to guide the discussion.



3. Make sure you communicate some of the key points on the issue.

- Social cohesion helps us to feel that we belong in South Africa – it makes us feel proud of our country.
- It increases our sense of identity and shared humanity, trust of and respect for one other, and it builds diversity. It helps us create a society in which everyone is valued.
- Where there is a high level of social cohesion, people help those who are marginalized. They care for one another.
- We believe that there is a better future ahead for all people in South Africa but we must persevere, putting in place positive, effective strategies for increasing social cohesion and rebuilding our nation.
- Youth can be a powerful force for good and, mobilized as agents of change, young people can offer solutions and set South Africa on a different path.
- Overall we want the same thing—connection, being and growing, a common cause for all involved.
- Young people can be agents of change, mobilize those around them and make it their mission to bring hope.
- Young people can role model social cohesion to those around them.



4. Wrap up by summarising the discussion and encouraging the group to think about their success in creating social cohesion.

**To help you with Step 1 and 2 from the Talk Group Plan, here are a few ideas to get your Talk Group going, and questions to shape your discussion.**

But remember, it's up to YOU how your talk group turns out. You can be creative and make the group fun for other participants – this way they will want to keep coming back to more talk groups.

Also remember, a Talk Group is a chance for you to learn from your peers, and for them to learn from each other – there are no experts in a talk group, just lots of peers getting together and saying how it IS ...

## **SOCIAL COHESION TALK GROUP STARTER IDEAS ...**

Begin this Talk Group by watching the videos representing Thabo Mbeki and Zozibini Tunzi's speeches, from our "Speeches that changed the World" series.

<http://www.upwegomzansi.org.za/get-talking/>

Discussion activities are described below: Choose one or more (A-E) of the below discussion starters to use in your Talk Group



**(A)** Discuss: **Let's launch ... Tell me how you feel?**

- What is your first thought/reaction to the following statement/s:

*"South Africa belongs to all."*

*"I'm still dreaming of a better tomorrow".*

*"People long for behaviour and value changes in their communities."*

*[Note to Facilitator: If workshop is held in-person, then write these statements at the top of 3 flipcharts and put them up around the room. Give participants pens/kokis and ask them to write a comment [gut-feel, anonymous] in response to each statement. Afterwards, you can read all the statements aloud to set the mood of the workshop. It's also okay to only read selected statements. Consider choosing only 1 statement as an introductory activity, keeping in mind which speech will accompany this Talk Group. (This depends on time available.) ]*



**(B)** Discuss: **A diverse nation with common, intertwined goals (when SA wins, we all win!)**

- What does everyone living in South Africa have in common?
- Are there spaces where we connect with one another as a diverse nation? Do you think these connections deep or superficial/fake?
- Do all people living in South Africa have shared challenges? If your answer is 'yes' then list some issues that concern all people.



**(C)** Discuss: **What is social cohesion?**

*[Draw from your background notes here.]*

- What is social cohesion?
- Why do we need it?
- Which members of society benefit from social cohesion?



 **(D)** Discuss: **Getting ourselves unstuck**

Youth have managed to mobilize change successfully in the past (think, for example, of #FeesMustFall). What trigger do we need NOW to start mobilizing for social change?



 **(E)** Discuss: **Inspiration**

- Think of a person – living or dead, famous or not, family or historical figure, or perhaps someone from your community—who inspires you to work towards creating unity and social cohesion.
- Explain why this person inspires you.

**AND** . . . Now that you've completed the discussion starters, move on to the below

**After watching the I Am an African videos (part 1 and 2) and discuss:**

*Note: Thabo Mbeki made his famous 'I Am an African' speech on 8 May 1996, when South Africa passed its new Constitution. At the time, he was Deputy President and Nelson Mandela was South Africa's President. Many people thought that the speech 'defined the political mood of the moment in post-Apartheid South Africa'.*

- In the video, Thabo Mbeki mentions the great pains South Africa has gone to for our democratic freedom. What are these 'great pains' that he's referring to?
- What do you think Thabo Mbeki hoped at the time—in 1996—the future would look like for people living in South Africa?
- Do you believe that we can still reach Thabo Mbeki's dream for all people living in South Africa?
- In the video, Thabo Mbeki's wife—Zanele Dlamini Mbeki—says that his speech "needs to bring hope and light". What do you think she means by that?
- How can you spread a message that 'brings hope and light' and works towards social cohesion in South Africa?

**After watching the video representing Zozibini Tunzi's speech, discuss:**

*Note: Zozibini Tunzi was born in the Eastern Cape and won Miss South Africa in 2018 and Miss Universe in 2019. Her message during the Miss Universe crowning was that African women are beautiful naturally, and that women should be given more leadership opportunities. When asked what we should be teaching young girls today, she answered, "Leadership. It's something that has been lacking in young girls and women for a very long time - not because we don't want to, but because of what society has labelled women to be. I think we are the most powerful beings in the world, and that*

*we should be given every opportunity. And that is what we should be teaching these young girls - to take up space." She is a passionate activist and engaged in the fight against gender-based violence.*

- What do you think Zozibini Tunzi means by 'taking up space'?
- Why is the message that women should take up space a powerful one in our goal for social cohesion?
- How can you encourage girls and women in your community to 'take up space' in leadership positions?
- How can women in South Africa benefit from and participate in the drive for social cohesion?
- Discuss how men, women, boys and girls all have a role to play in society. Gender equality means that one's gender does not make you more or less valuable than anyone else. What could this equality look like?

**OR**

**How did it make you feel to watch these videos?**

- What do you think were the key messages coming across? Are they successful?
- What is your/our reaction to these videos? What can we do differently as a result of what is said in the speeches?



**(F)** Discuss: **ACTION! What can we do?**

**Discuss practical steps youth can take to ...**

1. Take responsibility as agents of change.
2. Mobilize those around you.
3. Be a bringer of hope and a role model.
4. Build self-esteem.

*[Note to Facilitator: If workshop is held in-person, then this section of the Talk Group should be done as a group activity (divide participants into 4 groups and give each group an action to discuss].*

*Give each group a flipchart and kokis/markers and ask them to brainstorm ways in which they can act to create social cohesion. After about 10 minutes of discussion, ask groups to provide feedback.*

*You might also ask each group to rate activities according to difficulty to implement, and ask them to choose 2 or 3 easy-to-implement actions that they commit to putting into action.]*

**Remember: The idea behind talk groups is that your peers can TALK about an issue, DECIDE what they think about it, and then MAKE A CHANGE for the better in their lives! By running a talk group, you have the power to MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

**Remember to use the TALK Group Tool to help you plan and review your talk group!**



# TOOLS: Talk Group



## BACKGROUND NOTES

## All you ever wanted to know about ... TALK GROUPS

### What is a TALK GROUP?

A Talk Group is a space in which you can explore the ideas and opinions of your peers about a big issue in their community. They are small discussion groups led by Peer Educators, to encourage debate and sharing of views on big youth issues. It is more relaxed and flexible than a Lesson Delivery.

### What is the Purpose of a TALK GROUP?

A Talk Group is another way to educate your peers and other learners about big issues facing youth in the community. They are created by you, and run by you. This is time for youth to get together and discuss THEIR IDEAS, THEIR OPINIONS and THEIR STORIES!

Having a chance to talk about issues that are affecting young people is a good opportunity for you to talk about positive lifestyle choices as well as pass on the right info.

Let's look at an example – during a Talk Group on HIV Prevention, someone might say that using a condom means that you don't love the person you're having sex with. This comment would allow you to:

- Respectfully challenge an unhelpful or unhealthy opinion: e.g. "I hear what you're saying, but I don't agree. Do you really think that if you love someone you should be prepared to put their health at risk?"
- Give correct information when information is wrong. e.g. "If you're HIV positive, have an STI or are concerned about pregnancy, it is important that you use a condom if you care about your health and the health of your partner."



### Multimedia...



Watch the Talk Group Training Video to learn more.

### How Many TALK GROUPS Must You be Involved with in a Year?

A group of 3-4 Peer Educators must run 2 Talk Groups a year with the same group of 5 peers. The same groups of Peer Educators must deliver the 2 Talk Groups to the same group of 5 peers twice in the year. In this way peers are reached twice.

### What is the TALK GROUP Tool used for?

It is used to PLAN and REVIEW the Talk Group by asking a number of questions that get you to think about how you will present the Talk Group and how it went once it is over. This reflection allows you to prepare well for facilitating the Talk Group and helps you to learn from the experience.

### Think about it

Think about it: gold is all about youth giving youth important information so they can make changes in their lives. This means we don't just talk about change and what we want for the future; we MAKE change and DECIDE our OWN FUTURE!

### Planning a Talk Group

You can use the following steps to plan your Talk Group

# 1

**STEP 1. Divide into teams:** 3-4 Peer Educators in each team

# 2

**STEP 2. Know your target:** Who are you running this Talk Group with? How old are they? Where do they come from? What else do we know about them? Identify the 5 peers you will deliver 2 Talk Groups to in the year.



# 3

## STEP 3. Choose a topic:

- Decide what topic/theme you want to discuss with your peers.
- Either: use the Talk Group Outlines.  
OR choose a topic you know is a big concern amongst your target group. This could be from a Skills Training Session, or an issue that you have recognised around your school or community.
- Read through the background notes in your portfolio OR do further research on the issue. Also check for additional content in your You're **gold** Supplement
- Decide what the KEY MESSAGE is that you want pass on to your peers in this Talk Group.

# 4

## STEP 4. Introduce your topic:

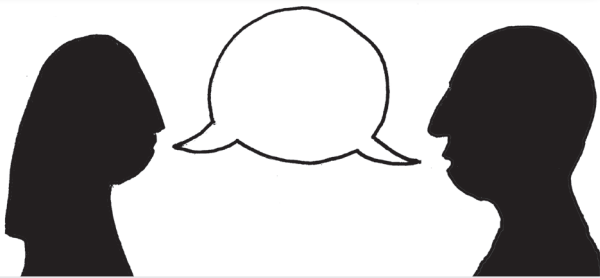
Think of a fun and interesting way to introduce the topic and get people thinking about the issue.

The Talk Group Outlines give ideas – OR think about using magazine articles, interesting statistics, video clips or pictures to introduce the theme.

# 5

## STEP 5. Plan your questions:

Think of some questions or statements to guide the discussion. The Talk Group Outlines give ideas of questions to ask. Think about how you can get different people's opinions and viewpoints by asking open questions.



# 6

## STEP 6. Plan your wrap up:

Wrap up involves summarising the discussion and encouraging the group to think about what they want to take away from the discussion. This is a great time to communicate the key message for the session, or to correct any wrong or unhealthy views.

# 7

## STEP 7.

**Practise and get feedback** from your Facilitator Intern and other Peer Educators.

# 8

## STEP 8. Deliver!

## Top tips for Running Great Talk Groups

- Successful Talk Groups involve everyone sharing ideas and listening to what everyone has to say.
- Encourage people to talk one at a time.
- Make eye contact with people.
- Be prepared with good questions to lead the discussion.
- You do not always need to answer every question. If someone else or a couple of people in the group know, let them answer.
- Make sure to meet with your Facilitator Intern after the Talk Group to give and receive feedback!
- Attitude check! No one likes to talk to people who are not willing to chat, be friendly and kind. These Talk Groups are fun, relaxed and flexible. YOU don't have to be the expert. Remember you are sharing valuable information and ideas with your peers. This is a time for everyone to learn from one another.

# 9

## STEP 9. Review & fill out the review tool.

And remember that the Facilitator Intern at the Talk Group must sign the Talk Group tool – and so must an educator/teacher if it is carried out at a school.



# TOOLS: Talk Group

## Talk Group Plan

Date planned for Talk Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Form completed **BEFORE** a Talk Group is facilitated. Complete with your Talk Group co-facilitators.

### STEP 1. Divide into teams.

Names of Peer Educators who will participate in this Talk Group.

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### STEP 2. Know your target:

Who are you carrying out this Talk Group with? How old are they?

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How long will the Talk Group last?

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Where will the Talk Group be carried out?

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### STEP 3. Choose a topic:

What is the topic for this Talk Group?

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What are the key messages that you want pass on to your peers in this Talk Group?

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### STEP 4. Think about how to introduce your topic:

What stimulus will you use? Who will lead this section?

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### STEP 5. Plan your questions:

What questions will you use to lead the discussion? Who will facilitate the discussion?

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### STEP 6. Plan your wrap up:

How will you summarise the discussion and who will do this?

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**AND don't forget to practise and get feedback from your Facilitator Intern!**

