

Real Utopia Bylaws

1) Real Utopia General Details

Real Utopia has a dream! That dream is to help create an international network of activist-organisers for a participatory society. This network will be made up of individuals who are inspired and motivated by participatory theory, vision and strategy. The establishment of this network will constitute the Foundation for a Participatory Society.

Our broad strategy for accomplishing this is to pursue what we call the 4 C's:

1. Consciousness raising (of participatory theory, strategy and vision)
2. Commitment building (of advocates and activists within a participatory network)
3. Contestation (of the established systems)
4. Construction (of new participatory institutions which can foster a participatory society)

We see each of these as essential steps in pursuing a society organised along participatory lines, with each step dependent on and strengthened by all of the previous steps.

The initial focus will be on consciousness raising (C1) and commitment building (C2). What constitutes an international network will be determined by the Members Council. From there, to move us towards our initial goal, a timeframe and specific actions will be identified. Once these criteria are met we will explore the option of moving into C3 and C4 actions whilst maintaining a commitment to C1 and C2. Creating a new organisation and site may be necessary at this stage.

2) Our Mission Statement

Our mission statement is:

- to raise awareness of participatory theory, vision and strategy as a new and effective way of thinking about and organising for radical-progressive social transformation;
- to lay the foundations for a participatory society through the establishment of an international network of activists committed to advocating and organising for a participatory society;
- to raise money to fund events, research, media projects and grassroots organising and activities.

3) Membership

3.1) Becoming a Member

Membership in the Real Utopia Network is voluntary. The Real Utopia Network may be joined by persons who support, advocate or wish to learn about participatory society concepts and principles and accept the rights and responsibilities that come with membership. The members are treated the same regardless of social, national, racial, gender, sexual or religious circumstances.

A person becomes a member by signing up to the RU Network on the Real Utopia webpage and is identifiable to the other members by their real name. When a person joins the network they become full members with all attending rights and responsibilities. They are given access to the organisation's communications channels (Discord server, Trello, Google Groups, Google Drive etc.).

3.2) Rights of Members

There are no distinct tiers or hierarchies of membership within Real Utopia.

Real Utopia will endeavour to ensure that all members have equal opportunity to participate in decision-making and all members have equal right to participate in decisions.

Each member is responsible for acting in a way which aligns with our mission statement and the bylaws agreed to within the Members Council.

Members have the right:

- to attend Members Council meetings, to debate topics, propose topics and vote;
- to become a member of a team or teams;
- to attend meetings of the teams they are a member of;
- to be informed of all issues relevant for the enactment of their rights and responsibilities;
- to pursue projects within the organization;
- to attend educational and other events organized by the organization;
- to criticize RU policies both within and without the organisation, and to criticize delegates.

3.3) Duties of Members

Members must abide by the organisation's bylaws and must act in accordance with the decisions brought by its bodies.

3.4) Ending Membership

Membership is terminated by exiting the organisation, death, or the organisation disbanding.

Members can end membership with a written request, without the need to give any reasons. The membership ends on the day that the organisation receives the request. The organisation must delete the former member's information from the public display of membership within seven days. For internal record keeping the member is kept on record with date of leaving noted.

3.5) Expulsion of Members

Members may be expelled from the organisation when the member:

- grossly violates the bylaws of the organisation or other internal rules;
- publicly identifies members of the organisation who do not display their membership publicly due to fear of political persecution;

- behaves improperly towards other members (harassment, pattern of abuse);
- reveals confidential internal documents.

Proposals for expulsion can be brought by any member at the meetings of the Members Council. When proposing expulsion the accusation of misconduct must be included in the minutes and the accused member must be given the opportunity to defend themselves before a decision is brought. The decision must be brought within thirty days of the expulsion proposal.

3.6) Membership List

The organisation keeps a membership list including name, surname (if the member is willing to divulge it), date of entry, date of exit, Discord handle and electronic address of members.

Member list is also displayed on the website of the organisation. Members are nominally identified on the website by their name and surname, location, electronic address and a short bio. Members can ask to have their identifying information be withheld from the website due to fear of political persecution. Instead, they are identified with first name and location only (e.g. Alex - Kiev). Displaying electronic address and bio on the website is optional for all members.

4) Internal Structure of Real Utopia

4.1) List of Bodies Within Real Utopia

Real Utopia has the following decision-making body:

- Members Council;

Real Utopia has the following permanent, regulated bodies:

- Finance Team;
- Dispute Resolution Team;

Real Utopia has the following autonomous bodies:

- Topical and Project Teams.

4.2) Relationships Between Bodies

All bodies within Real Utopia operate on a participatory and self-managed basis.

The Members Council may support the creation of teams and topical projects and define their scope, but it does not directly manage the teams or projects which it initiates. The process of establishing teams or projects and defining their scope is open to all members through the Members Council.

The Members Council is the forum in which RU members may make binding collective decisions. As a participatory organisation, the Members Council makes decisions in a way which reflects a commitment to the norms and values of participatory vision. Decisions therefore must be taken in a way which aligns with the following general principles:

- Self-management;
- Equity;
- Solidarity;
- Diversity;
- Sustainability;
- Internationalism.

Here “self-management” is defined as the principle that “a person should have a say in decisions that affect them, to the extent that they are affected”.

This means that decisions taken by the council must be taken in a way which accounts for differences in how members are affected by them.

If a member is not affected by a decision to any degree, they therefore do not have a right to participate in the making of that decision. However, they may be given the opportunity to participate in order to put into practice the principle of solidarity.

All members of Real Utopia are automatically a member of the Members Council, but not automatically a member of any other team or project.

Teams may organize how they wish, but may not exceed the scope of their team as defined by the Members Council. Teams and projects may invite members or eject members from their team or project according to their own procedures. The Members Council does not determine membership of teams or projects, except for instances

where the Members Council has agreed on removing RU membership from an individual completely.

The Members Council shall not override teams' decisions save for when those decisions are deemed by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority to violate RU bylaws and/or the team in question's own scope. Likewise, individual members assigned special roles or tasks by the Members Council or their teams shall not be overridden for the duration of their offices save for when their actions are deemed by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of the Members Council to violate RU bylaws.

5) Procedures and Purview of the Members Council

5.1) Calling Council Meetings

Members Council meetings are convened regularly every two weeks. Members Council may decide to hold additional meetings or to move the time of the regular meeting; however, it should still be held regularly at least once monthly.

Invitations with necessary information (e.g. links) for joining the meeting must be forwarded by Google Groups email to all members prior to the meeting.

5.2) Procedures and Meeting Etiquette

Members Council meetings have a chair and minute-taker. The chair and minute-taker for every meeting are decided at the previous meeting. If the chosen chair and minute-taker are not present at the meeting, a chair and minute-taker can be chosen from among the members present.

Agenda is compiled from agenda items decided at the previous meeting and agenda items proposed at the start of the meeting. Every agenda item proposed is added to the agenda. If there are objections to some proposed agenda items, the issue is resolved by a vote.

Overarching Structure of Each Meeting Agenda:

1. Approve last meeting's minutes
2. Agenda review and approval
3. Brief announcements and communications
4. Old business
 1. Updates on current projects and tasks
 1. Proposals (i.e. motions) are carried out as stated in section 5.4
5. New business
 1. Discussion of new projects and tasks
 1. Proposals (i.e. motions) are carried out as stated in section 5.4
6. Choose recording secretary and chair for next meeting
7. Well-being Check: A time for RU members to share their personal struggles and inquire into mutual aid services RU could provide to them

5.3) Decision-Making Process of the Members Council

The Members Council can bring decisions when there are 10%, rounded down, of the members present. Each member has one vote at the meeting. Members may not empower other members (i.e. proxies) to cast votes for them.

Members present at the meeting vote by a public vote where each member indicates whether they support or oppose the decision.

Absent a unanimous decision the Members Council reaches decisions with a simple majority of the votes present.

Absent a unanimous decision the Members Council needs a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of the votes present when deciding on:

- amending the bylaws;
- establishing new topical teams or closing them;
- adopting organisation-wide policies.

When agenda items requiring a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority are passed they are published on a suitable online platform that all members have access to. Every member must be notified over email that such an agenda item is awaiting votes. For one week from the time that members have been informed of the issue, every member must be given an option to

vote against the decision by email. If more than 5% of total members cast a negative vote the vote on the issue has to be repeated at the next meeting and all members must be informed of the agenda item in question. Before a repeated vote dissenting members must be given a space to voice their concerns in person or in writing. If given in writing when the member is unable to attend the meeting, their arguments are read aloud and discussed. Such a meeting is recorded and the recording is published in an accessible location for at least a month.

The result of the repeated vote is final.

The Members Council may establish regular decision-making processes for the sake of facilitating the everyday business of the Real Utopia network. Those decision-making processes must abide by these principles regardless of the particulars, including the use of particular forms of technology, etc.

MOTIONS AND DECISIONS DISSECTED

Main Motions

A motion (also called a proposal) can be made by any member at any time, having been recognised by the chair. Any time there isn't already a motion on the floor, that is. If there's a motion on the floor, that motion must be dealt with before another motion can be made. Exceptions are a motion to table (i.e. postpone) or the suggestion of an amendment. Once a motion is on the floor, anything that doesn't pertain directly to that motion is out of order. Members make motions by stating, "I move to..."

Seconding The chair says: "Is there a second?" If nobody seconds it then that's that. If one more person wants it to pass, they second it. If the motion is seconded, it is repeated by the chair, to establish the exact wording. The maker of the motion either agrees to the wording or corrects it. The secretary (i.e. minute-taker) records the motion and reads it back. When it has been read back, in exact wording, from the minutes, the chair calls for discussion.

Discussion The chair states that the seconded motion is to now be discussed. The format for discussion is flexible but should be facilitated by the chair.

Amendments

For every decision an attempt is made to achieve unanimity by modifying the original proposal in a way that it would be agreeable to everyone. If unanimity is not able to be reached, the issue is resolved through a vote. This attempt at unanimity is done in the following way:

A member may offer a friendly amendment during discussion. It should be stated in exact wording. The chair asks the maker if she accepts that amendment. If not, discussion continues on the original motion. If the maker accepts the amendment, it is repeated by the chair, agreed upon, recorded and read back from the minutes. Then the discussion continues on the amended motion, which becomes the motion on the floor. If the maker does not accept the amendment, it is considered unfriendly and the original motion has to be voted on before another motion, even an amended version of the previous, can be made.

Call The Question When it seems the question is clarified, adequately discussed, the chair or any member can call the question, call for a vote. Calling the question is a procedural motion (see below). The vote is taken, counted and recorded in the minutes.

Procedural Points and Motions Points of procedure and procedural motions speak to the process of the meeting. They are in order at any time and must be dealt with right away, before going on with the meeting.

Procedural Motions A procedural motion must be seconded and voted on by the group. This should be done quickly, so as not to distract from the main business at hand:

- to table (i.e. postpone, including when it is to be dealt with);
- to refer (to committee or wherever);
- to adjourn;
- to recess (take a break);
- to overrule the chair;
- to replace the chair;
- to call the question (call for a vote);
- to censure (the group tells an individual member that their behavior in the meeting is unacceptable and will not be tolerated);

- to expel (must be preceded by a motion to censure, except in case of immediate danger. This motion expels the individual from the meeting, not the organisation);
- to call for a straw poll (this is a non-binding vote, to assess the feeling of the group);
- to call for the decision to be made through a submitted proposal.
 - This creates a situation where members can vote on a decision where multiple proposal choices are available.
 - If passed, all members have until the next Members Council meeting to come up with their proposals. Their finalised proposals appear in a common place that all members have access to (details to be decided by the Members Council).
 - After this meeting, in which all proposals are in, members have until the next meeting to cast their votes.
 - The Members Council must choose a facilitator to create and monitor the shared medium where finalised proposals are placed, and to tally votes.
 - If there are two proposals, a simple plurality vote is used, where each member chooses one or the other.
 - If there are three or more options, the possibility of an option being chosen that the majority doesn't support can be avoided by using a cardinal voting system: each member gives each proposal a score out of 5, with the highest combined score winning.

Points of Procedure, Order and Privilege The maker raises their hand and speaks out: "Point of Procedure" (or "Point of Order"). The chair must recognize the member immediately. The chair may rule on a point of procedure. The ruling of the chair may be challenged by a member and put to a vote.

Other Important Points

If a Members Council decision is found to be inconsistent with the bylaws the decision is null and void. Nullification of the decision must be noted in the next convening of the Members Council.

The Members Council shall be governed by these rules of order save for where these are overridden or amended by RU bylaws or resolutions.

When formulating a proposal for a vote the chair should make certain that two nonconflicting options are not rolled into a single vote in a way where only one can be chosen. The chair should protect diversity of outcomes by allowing all action or activity proposals to be voted on separately.

5.4) Minutes of Council Meetings

Every Members Council meeting must have minutes.

Data to be Recorded:

- Date of meeting;
- Names of members present;
- Name of chair and minute-taker;
- Record of whether the last meeting's minutes were approved or amended;
- Record of whether the agenda was approved;
- Summary of the discussion in as detailed a way as necessary to capture the essence of what was said and by whom (ensuring that the results of any votes are recorded, including any vote tallies);
- Next meeting date and time;
- Next meeting's chair and minute-taker;
- The time at which the meeting was adjourned.

6) Procedures and Purview of Permanent Teams

6.1) Purview of the Finance Team

(Pending)

6.2) Procedures of the Finance Team

(Pending)

6.3) Purview of the Dispute Resolution Team

The Dispute Resolution Team (DRT) is responsible for resolving disputes between individuals and groups within Real Utopia.

6.4) Procedures of the Dispute Resolution Team

The Members Council decides how many facilitators are on the DRT and for how long, but it must consist of at least two RU members at any given time.

Any member of Real Utopia may request action from the DRT regarding an issue. The DRT then randomly **selects, by a method agreed upon by the Members Council, three members in RU who are to serve as a jury to resolve the dispute. If a dispute concerns an RU team or project group, the DRT jury must consist of RU members outside of that group. RU members are not required to be on the jury and may simply pass on the offer, in which case another RU member is randomly selected to be a jury member.

The DRT facilitators are responsible for assisting the jurors with the process of investigating any disputes and attempting to establish the facts of the dispute. The jury must then consider all sides of the dispute and resolve it by a vote. The DRT facilitators must ensure that the proceedings are carried out in a timely manner.

Motion for a decision can be made to this team regarding procedures, jurisdiction or regarding an allegation of a member or a body contravening the bylaws.

**If either party to the dispute objects to the jurors selected, they may call for the random draw to be conducted once more, in which case the previously selected jurors are excluded from further participation in the dispute resolution process. If a party invokes this procedure, they do not have to provide reasoning (i.e. it is a peremptory challenge).

7) Procedures for Topical and Project Teams

Establishing a Topical Team

Topical teams are established by decision of the Members Council. The decision to establish a topical team must include the description of the task of the team and the members who will join the team at that time.

Joining a Topical Team

Any member can apply to become part of a team. Aside from the original members at the time of the team's creation, members can apply to join a team. The member who

wishes to join a team communicates their wish to the team and the team decides whether they accept them into the team.

Team Meetings

Teams meet periodically at a schedule they set themselves. The procedures for the meeting and voting procedures they adhere to in the team are decided within the team. The team procedures must be written down and published in a way that lets any member access them at leisure.

Team procedures must include:

- meeting schedule;
- voting procedures;
- procedure for including new members.

Responsibilities

Teams are required to report their activities regularly at Members Council meetings and to strive to have at least one team member present at the Members Council meetings. Before every Members Council meeting teams are required to post a brief update on their activities in the appropriate channel.

Closing a Topical Team

A topical team may be closed by Members Council decision when:

- members of the team propose to close the team;
- team is found to be operating outside of its purpose to the detriment of the network;
- team has gone inactive for at least a month.