

Support Material 2:

How to become politically active?

A general toolbox for approaching non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as grassroots and civil society movements

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), grassroots and civil society movements, and human rights groups are manifestations of active citizenship: ordinary people working together to bring about social change through people power.

These groups come in all shapes and sizes, working with different methods to reflect the interests of their supporters and their core values. In portraying

reality, it is important that any organisation tells the truth and defends the dignity of people.

Emotion-riling false news and hate speech travels farther and faster than real news. Sometimes it can be tricky to choose an effective organisation to follow, join and contribute to. Here is a brief toolbox that can help us gauge the effectiveness of a movement or organisation:

- **Critical approach:** It is important to stay critical. We should not accept any information blindly, following for the sake of following. Constructive criticism is an essential asset that can help us to understand the complexity of a situation and make better choices.
- **Research:** It is important to conduct our own research. It is crucial to examine the basic information and achievements of an organisation or movement in order to understand their activities and agenda. It can be helpful to read an existing manifesto or list of objectives in order to understand the organisation's goals and who they represent.
- **Subjectivity:** Keep in mind that each movement or organisation approaches problems from a specific point of view. The activities of organisations and movements might differ even though they advocate for the same issue.

Here are some follow-up questions:

- Can the organisation clearly communicate what it is and what it does?
- Can the organisation tell you the progress it has made (or is making) towards its goal?
- Is it clear what the organisation's financial resources are? How financially efficient is the organisation?
- Has the organisation presented any literature or research strategies regarding the interventions they've made?
- In the process of conducting their activity, does the organisation respect ethical considerations?
- Do the organisation's programmes make sense to you?
- Does the organisation apply professional standards to its work?
- How does the organisation coordinate its work with others, and how does it ensure that its beneficiaries have a say in its decision-making process?
- Does the organisation court media attention through sensationalism?
- How transparent is the organisation about its resources of income and organisational processes?
- Who are the main partners of the organisation?

Additional resources:

https://manoteises.lt/peticija/prieglobscio-prasymas-nera-nusikaltimas-uz-zmogiska-elgesi-su-migrantais/?fbclid=IwAR1U1SFeG3UDXpSJ_HuqWZYgCRwqlj2RZZrnn7-g1ZTeWAtohQdm-ojH--E

https://venro.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Dateien/Daten/Publikationen/Sonstige/NGO-IDEAs_Toolbox_for_Participatory_Monitoring_of_Outcomes_and_Impacts.pdf

<https://arab.org/blog/how-to-recognise-an-effective-ngo/>

<https://business-humanrights.be/>

http://www.ngo-ideas.net/mediaCache/impact_toolbox/NGO_Ideas_Toolbox_v05.pdf

<http://www.ngo-research-toolbox.org/>



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EMPOWERING TOOLS