

We are community obsessed people

<https://yam.telekom.de/groups/community-obsessed-people>

Welcome to our little guide to self-organized communities.

Let us **introduce** ourselves.

The Self-Organization Learning Track was developed from the Community-Obsessed People Initiative, to learn self-organization through first-hand experience. The following description summarizes the jointly developed results.

How do we develop innovations from ideas and impulses in the face of simultaneous disruptive developments, digitalization and life's fast pace? How do we operate in a non-linear world and cope with complexity, ambiguity and paradoxes? And how can we experience purpose in our work? What will bring about the reconciliation between people and organizations?

The modern forms of self-organization!

With a framework in which all participants can contribute and meaningful work is possible. With support systems that help break down obsolete patterns of the past. With the courage to embrace uncertainties and risks, and the constant investment of energy to reshape. With groups of people who come together of their own free will, who gain strength from solidarity, mutual respect, and appreciation.

Self-organization is always the result of experiments that allow for rapid adaptation to new circumstances and challenges. Self-organization thrives on the awareness that in today's world there are no omniscient people who have all the answers to the burning questions.



The structure of self-organization is the lack of structure

A feature of self-organization is the absence of fixed structures which formally allows a handful of people to make decisions for everyone.

Self-organization possesses the inherent property of instantly dissipating any structure so that it can adapt itself autopoietically (in a self-creating fashion) to new circumstances.

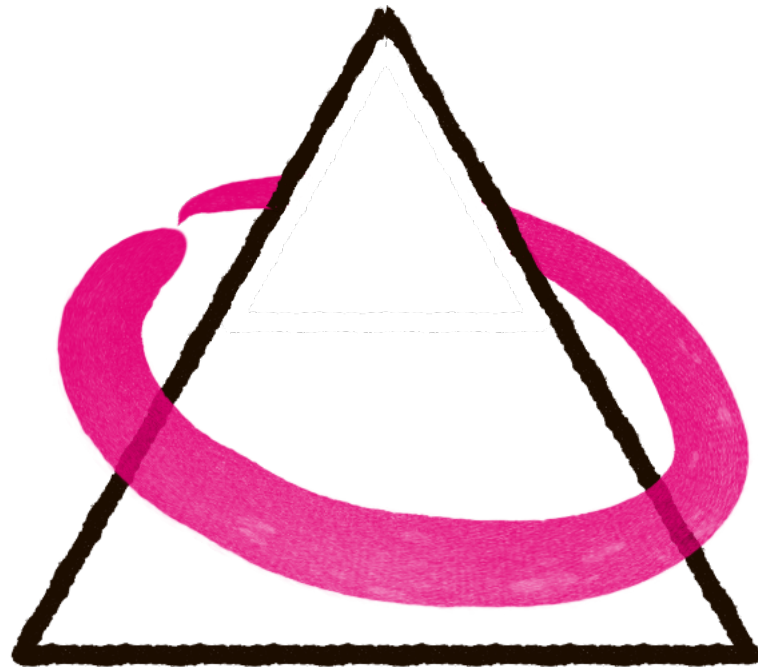
On a personal level, living means recreating one's identity over and over again. Within self-organized communities, a system consisting of many people engages in the creation and recreation of identity.

Self-organized communities emerge and dissipate based on the freedom, interest, and pleasure of each individual element of the system.

#dissipativestructures

Learn about
some **principles**
of self-organized
communities.

Dual Operating System



dualoperatingsystem

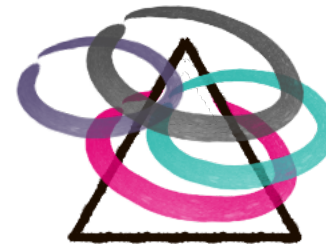
Self-organized communities can co-exist in a fruitful and enriching way with organizations. All members of an organization can always also be members of self-organized communities.

By making yourself aware which element is dominating for the time being, both systems are created and complement one another.

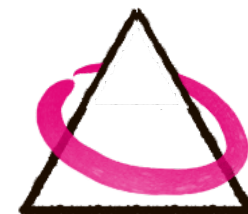
dualoperatingsystem

<https://yam.telekom.de/groups/community-obsessed-people>

We do have both already, the Management-System AND the people Networks.



We all experience the double networking layer in all organizations, in which people can openly say what they mean. Why not giving this layer a professional stage? This is more than authentically accepting that organizations can not meet all personal needs. But shouldn't we strive to unleash all potentials in our organization? Ok, then let's do it professionally, with the #dualoperatingsystem.



dualoperatingsystem

What does this mean for me? Shall I contribute to my organizational unit AND to Communities at the same time? First of all, you have decided to work for this company. This is the organization you want to contribute to. You should do that in the first place. Also, this organization is allowing you to put your toes into other topics and areas of interest. The better you are getting into your daily routine job, the more you will experience the need to look elsewhere. You may start with having a look around in the social networks, what is offered beside your expertise, Communities and inspirational people.

You may become better in building up more personal relationships, participating and contributing to events voluntarily. Once you are good in doing so, it is a small step to reach out to all this Community people when it comes to work on your unit's projects. You will be looking for inspiration, exchange, and even resources to make your project to an outstanding success. The best effect: It's going to become easier for you, you will work less, be more relaxed and have better and longer lasting relationships.



Self-organized communities are set up as hierarchy-free spaces. Leadership and teams emerge and dissolve according to tasks and situations.

#hierarchyfree

<https://yam.telekom.de/groups/community-obsessed-people>

Freedom from hierarchies

Each and every one brings in individual knowledge, skills, time, and energy. Hierarchies are eliminated. The role someone has in professional life is irrelevant to the community.

Participation is voluntary and self-determined. Everyone is responsible for themselves.

Teams and responsibilities form depending on the current intention, situation and challenge.

Whoever participates invests energy! This is the very motivation for participating; and the desire to explore issues and tasks again and again. Together, within the respective team. Networking and learning from each other is a natural side effect of the constant exchange.

Voluntary participation



Participating in a self-organized community is voluntary. You join, stay, and leave based on your passion, your interests and your desire to contribute to the community.

#voluntarily

Whoever freely takes action to participate in a community in some way is a member.

Boundaries define when someone is and is not part of the community. By understanding the community's purpose, members make a free and educated decision to join or not to join. An admission process exists for whoever takes action to join.

Members contribute to at least one shared value, identity, and to moral prescriptions on how members of the community should be acting. They want to engage, work, and grow their purpose, they want to find people with whom they "fit" – people like them.

Members experience meaningful engagement in the community when they can decide whether to join and contribute. Those who "must" participate merely conduct a transaction to avoid negative consequences. This is the opposite of community connection.

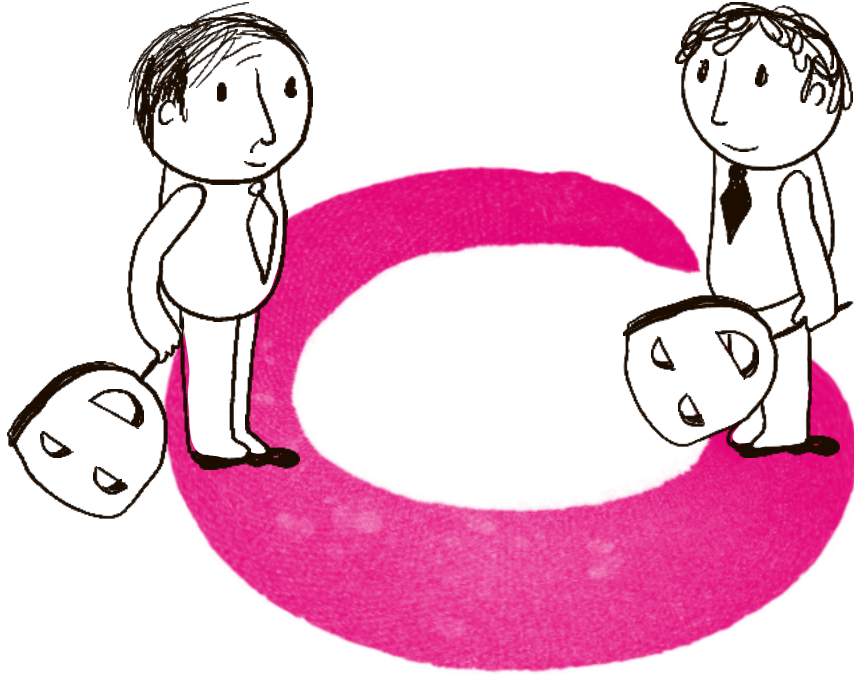
Members want to be acknowledged and accepted for who they are. This includes being appreciated for shared values and commitments.

People want to experience progress toward some purpose. This might mean progress toward mastery of an art, skill, or field. We refer to this progress as a form of growth toward "being". People want to be a catalyst for change, a friend, or anything else.

Different types of people join the community: participants, visitors, members, elders, principal elders/masters, allies.

People want to belong, but even when they are part of a group they often don't feel like doing so. They experience a feeling of homelessness and loneliness. When people in such a crisis receive an invitation from any community member, the invitation itself becomes evidence of their belonging.

Authenticity



Authentic cooperation is the foundation of self-organized communities.

People have a fundamental need for authenticity. If we can be who we are, we have high self-confidence, and we deal and work well with others. Members of communities can build such authentic relationships.

We create strong connections when we share uncertainties, mistakes, weakness or fears. Dealing honestly with a difficult situation creates trust. These strong connections make a good team and enable successful and effective cooperation.

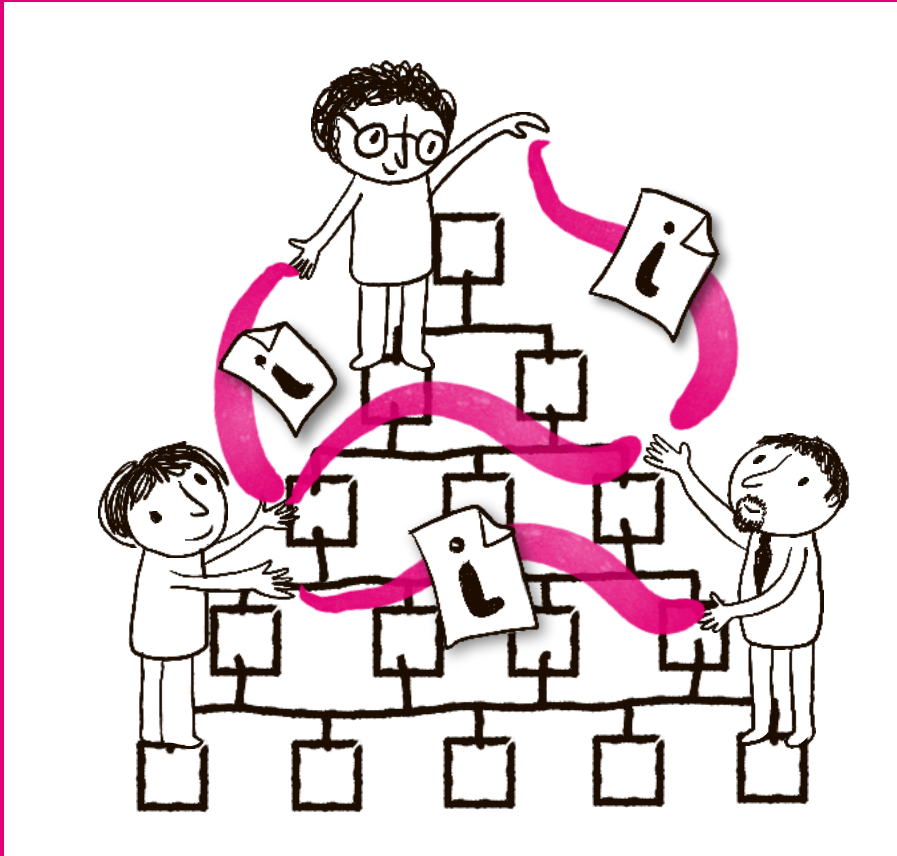
People want to share their personal stories, be seen and understood. They want to share their challenges and find help and understanding in the community.

Self-perception is a prerequisite for being authentic.

Personal development hinges on the awareness of one's own position. Without it, personal development is not possible.

Show yourself as you are in self-organized communities.

#authenticity



Information flows freely and across hierarchies in self-organized communities.

#fulldisclosure

<https://yam.telekom.de/groups/community-obsessed-people>

Full Disclosure

Self-organization is the courage to share all information with the relevant group so that the overall system can manifest the most natural solution.

Common truths are created through decision-making processes that are based on abundance, transparency and openness.

Consistent openness is the prerequisite for overcoming hierarchical barriers in organizations.

Self-organized communities excel at sharing relentlessly everything the group has developed in their field.

Openly shared ideas and wishes inspire further developments and cooperation.

Each individual makes the decision for full disclosure at any given time.

**This is how you
as an **individual**
can benefit from
being part of a
self-organized
community.**



In a self-organized community you experience new ways of thinking, feeling and acting. As a result, you grow as a person.

#selfgrowth

Self-Growth

- You are better connected, especially across departments.
- You benefit from the exchange of knowledge.
- You find the information you need more quickly.
- You jointly define communication channels and media with the community.
- You have a safe haven - communities are continuous and constant, even in times of transformation.
- You invest your **working time** in the community.
- You broaden your horizon.
- You impress your co-workers and superiors.
- And most importantly: **You enjoy your work - guaranteed!**

Personal growth is both greatly challenged and supported by self-organization. How many times have you already thought: "If I had just pursued my idea!"

We benefit directly from efficiency, performance and well-being.

Experiencing the Unknown



Each member of a self-organized community is an influencing factor in the process. Many things have yet to be determined.

This is a challenge for everyone involved in a dual operating system. We are used to clear agendas and detailed guidance through issues. Suddenly, we are asked to express our own wishes and ideas and to assume responsibility for the further development without knowing how the other participants will respond.

Community Builders accept these uncertainties: What issues will be addressed today? Who is present and what is important to them? Only if Community Builders allow this space can the participants contribute their wishes and ideas.

This marks the beginning of an unbiased process in which those involved can formulate their viewpoints and goals and take responsibility for the next steps – if they decide to do so. In this way, each participant can discover how they feel and act in the face of uncertainty, then assume responsibility and find the courage to contribute.

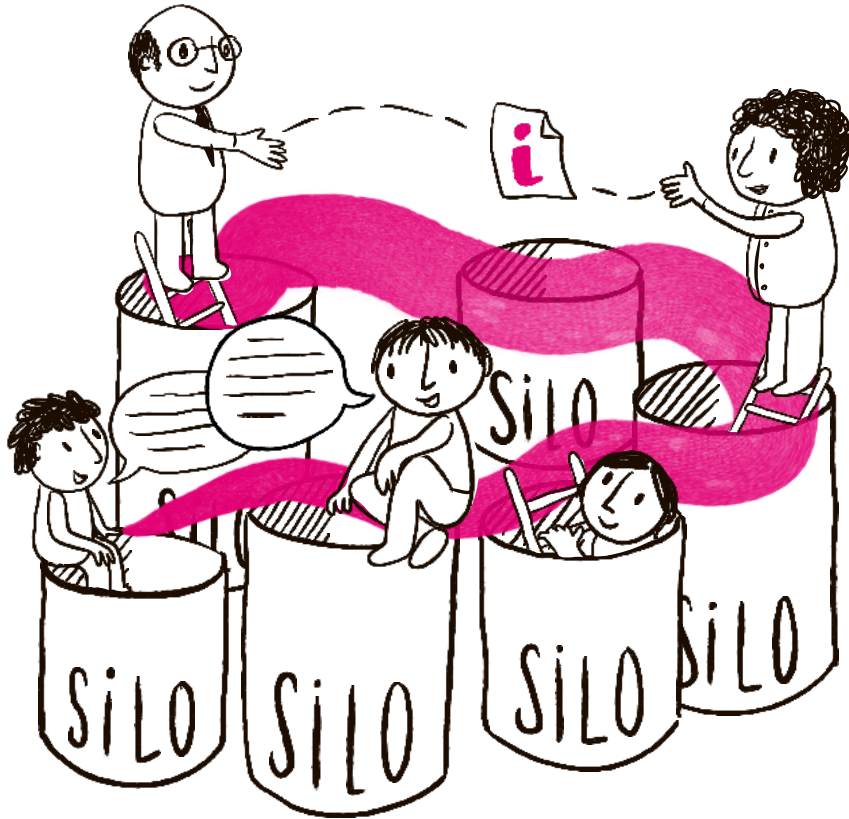
Thus, participating in self-organized communities enables people to get to know themselves and grow in a new way.

Self-organized communities allow you to explore the unknown and experience yourself in a new way.

experiencingtheunknown

**This is how an
organization
benefits from
self-organized
communities.**

Connecting People



Self-organized communities are the antidote to silos in an organization.

connectingpeople

Silos hinder successful cross-company cooperation. It's much more constructive to think outside the box and invite new and different ideas.

Cross-disciplinary projects in particular are an opportunity to expand the network and facilitate exchange among experts. Preferably as soon as a trend emerges...

... and before the project is launched and subject to time pressure: Discuss ideas and prepare in a self-organized way, in a comfortable atmosphere before a project contract is signed.

Communities often discuss future trends at an early stage. This discussion becomes more complex and diverse when the community considers different perspectives and applications, stemming from various disciplines and interests – in a self-determined way.

As it was developed by practice- and solution-oriented people, the outcome of such discussions is usually practicable.

Reinventing Organizations

Classic organizations are hierarchical with clearly defined structures, processes and responsibilities. Changes to the established system are met with fierce resistance. This applies to bottom-up and top-down initiatives.

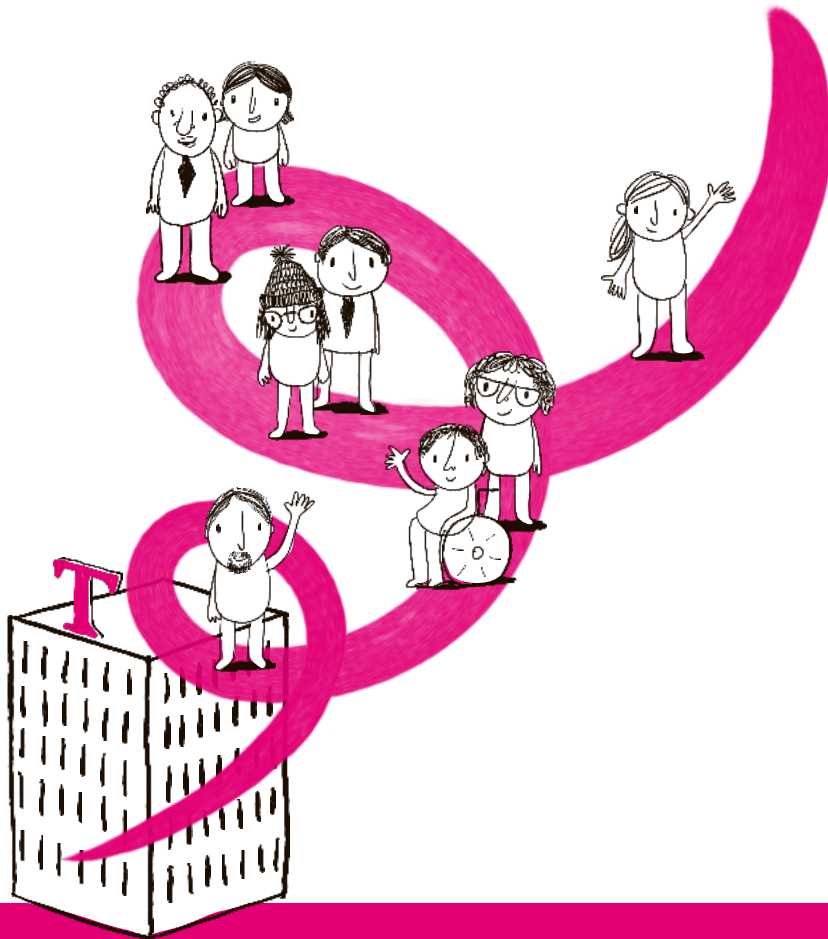
Communities open up new spaces for exchange, spaces where people connect. People from different departments examine issues and together they develop – and maybe even try out – new ideas and solutions.

In this way, in a sort of parallel universe, solutions can emerge and reach a critical mass. These solutions are then available as an alternative to the existing system. Therefore, communities enable new approaches to challenges in the areas in which they are needed.

Communities facilitate a higher quality of exchange because they are based on voluntary participation and trust. This allows people to critically examine their own mistakes, address grievances and question the status quo.

Communities invite open, authentic feedback across departmental boundaries and jointly tackle problems.

Above all, communities foster new forms of collaboration, which are reshaped constantly and dynamically, thus paving the way for the entire system to better adapt to current circumstances and reinvent itself again and again.

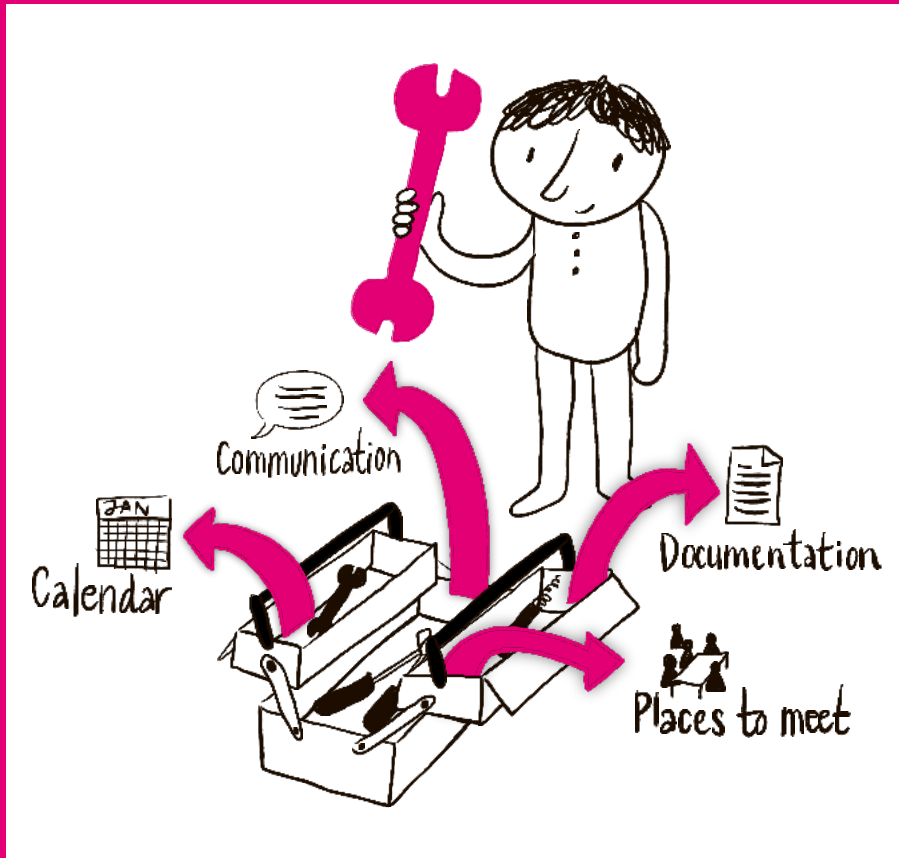


Self-organized communities pave the way for organizations to reinvent themselves.

#reinventingorganizations

Here are some
practical things
about running a
self-organized
community.

Tools for Self-Organization



The tools of self-organized communities are a community calendar, a way to communicate on- and offline, a place to meet, and a place to document results. Have these tools handy and you are ready for self-organization.

#toolsforselforganization

<https://yam.telekom.de/groups/community-obsessed-people>

A number of tools and methods **support** self-organization to achieve results. A jointly agreed and always changeable structure underpins the activities in the community.

Digital tools provide the communication platform that allows for easy meetings, management of all information, and short and long-term coordination of the group. This enables rapid exchange, learning, and solutions across all areas.

The location- and time-independent documentation enables individual, peer and group work. The reflection for harvesting is especially supported.

The community needs a specific (virtual) place for community activities. This includes a specific time and place which are dedicated exclusively to the community.

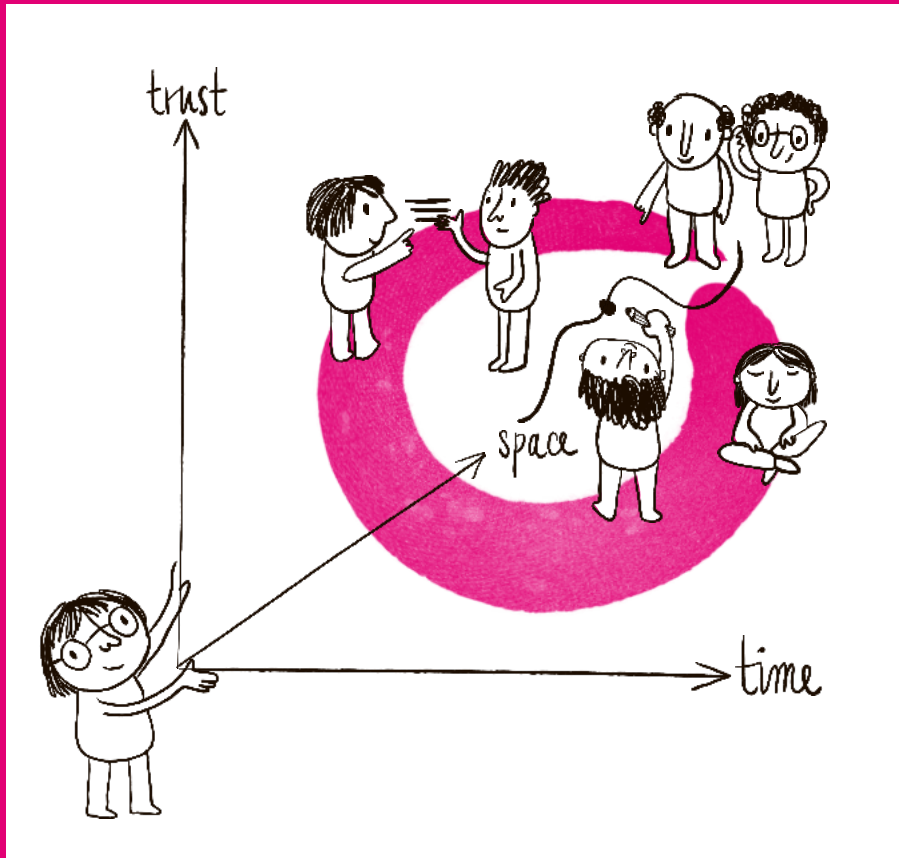
A recurring agenda creates a sense of connection and security. The sessions are made up of the following:

- Check-in
- Interactive work on relevant self-organized topics
- Individual cases
- Process reflection
- Check-out

The Buddy Concept connects people, pushes personal and content-related growth, and supports the transfer into the individual working world.

Checklists are used to examine the "state" of a community and show the available support options.

Impulses and instructions are given for individual growth.



To hold the room for people in a self-organized community means to create time and space and let things unfold.

holdingtheroom

Holding the Room

Self-organization needs space to develop. Such a space does not exist in the hierarchical and thoroughly coordinated organization. Therefore, supporting the community and self-organization means creating and keeping open a safe space.

- By space we mean first of all a meeting place, virtual or physical, as well as a thematic orientation.
- Participants can only submit their own ideas, questions, and wishes when there are unstructured periods of times which are open for exchange.
- The third component is trust. Only in a trusting environment can people quickly establish a connection with each other, participate in an open and authentic exchange, and take responsibility for further steps.

We need people who create such spaces, to enable communities to interact among themselves in a spirit of trust, thereby encouraging a self-organized design process.

This means fewer structured processes and more space for personal experience and non-knowledge; more space for the integration and dynamic shaping of discussion processes, and many small opportunities that encourage people to take responsibility and shape the community according to their ideas.

Closing words

We hope you've enjoyed our little guide to self-organized communities.

In 2020, we spent seven months in a Self-Organization Learning Track as part of the T-Systems self-organized community engagement discussing the characteristics and benefits of self-organized communities.

This guide represents our first collection of insights and key points.

December 2020

The people involved in creating this guide are:

- Georg Holzknacht
- All members of the Self-Organization Learning Track
- the B:TRANSFORMATION Team

Contact us if you have questions or thoughts you would like to share:

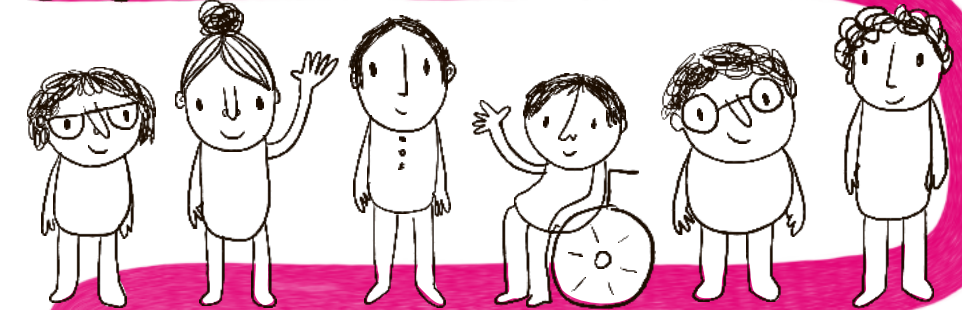
georg.holzknacht@t-systems.com

hello@self-organized.community

contact@b-transformation.com

To find out more about self-organized communities we recommend the following resources:

- <https://yam.telekom.de/groups/community-obsessed-people>
- www.self-organized.community



We are community obsessed people

