

FACILITATING NON-ELITE PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL & AND MULTI-SCALAR GOVERNANCE

MAY-JUNE 2026

Addressing power dynamics and overcoming the barriers that undermine non-elite political participation



University of Vermont
**INSTITUTE FOR
AGROECOLOGY**

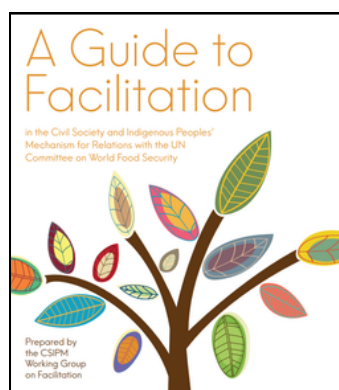
Why take this course?

Facilitation of participation has emerged as a powerful practice to support non-elite participation in contexts of governance and political decision-making. This course is designed to deepen your knowledge of its principles and practices. The training is also a vehicle for you to become part of the wider facilitation of participation community, so that beyond this training you can continue to learn from, and exchange with other facilitators facing the same challenges in a diverse range of contexts.

This Includes:

- Understanding the historic context in which facilitation of participation emerged within the food sovereignty movement and related political spaces.
- Collectively exploring the role of power relations in facilitation practices.
- Co-designing and critically assessing facilitation processes and approaches.
- Identifying and sharing key facilitation of participation practices.
- Enabling peer-to-peer exchanges with other facilitators .

The course is offered by the University of Vermont Institute for Agroecology in partnership with Stats4SD, with support from the McKnight Foundation.



Who is this course for?

The course is for individuals and organisations facilitating and coordinating non-elite participation in governance and policy-making processes. This includes members (and staff) of social movements and Indigenous Peoples; grassroots and community organizations; NGOs; academics; philanthropic entities; secretariats of networks and mechanisms; and others.

At A Glance

4 MAY - 15 JUNE

7 sessions

13 hours

25 participants

Course Approach

This course involves a mix of presentational, interactive, individual and collective sessions. We draw from real world examples of facilitation practice as well as feminist, intersectional and other emancipatory frameworks and methodologies. Course participants will be encouraged to draw from and share their own experiences, and will apply course insights in a facilitation design exercise.

Format

The course is taught in English only. It includes a 1 hr introductory session (Monday May 4th 15:00 – 16:00 CEST) and 6 interactive sessions (Mondays, May 11 – June 15 15:00 – 17:00 CEST) on Zoom. Outside of the classroom, participants are expected to complete another 2 hours per week (12 hours) on directed reading, viewing or listening; and 2 hours per week on reflections and final group work (12 hours).

1 Introduction to the Course and Getting to know each other (one hour)

- Introduction to course participants and facilitators.
- Introduction to course content and teaching strategy.

2 What is Facilitation of Participation (FoP)? (two hours)

- History of FoP in context of global food governance.
- Introduction to key principles, dynamics and spaces of FoP.

3 Facilitation and Power (two hours)

- Where is power located in FoP?
- FoP as power redistribution and transformation
- Examination of our intersectional identities as power holders and related 'roles'.

4 Facilitation and Communication (two hours)

- The importance of communication (across cultures) within FoP.
- Key principles and practices for transparent, generative, inclusive communication.
- Translating 'normative' language into popular narratives.

5 Facilitation and collective decision-making (two hours)

- Informing and facilitating decision-making spaces and processes.
- Ensuring inclusive and participatory decision-making spaces and processes.

6 Collective design exercise (two hours)

- Collective design and assessment of a facilitation process based on non-elite profiles and 'Facilitation Roles' framework.

7 Open Space (two hrs)

- Clarification and questions from previous sessions.
- Course evaluation.

Introductions



Teresa Maisano

is a feminist systemic group facilitator who has worked for over a decade facilitating small-scale food producers and civil society organizations in political participation and strategy design, grassroots and community-based processes, with a strong focus on gender justice, feminist approaches, and human rights. She is currently co-coordinating the Gender and Feminist Struggle of FIAN International, and worked from 2014 to 2022 in the secretariat of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism for relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security. She is also part of a transfeminist facilitation collective based in Italy and is an activist of the social space Lucha y Siesta in Rome. Partly Italian and partly Puerto Rican, she lives in Rome.



Josh Brem-Wilson

is a researcher who has been helping to document and strengthen facilitation of participation practices since 2017. Between 2019 and 2021 he was Technical Facilitator of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism for Relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security. Since 2022, with Teresa Maisano and other civil society colleagues, he has been a co-convenor of a Community of Practice for those facilitating non-elite participation in a range of different contexts. He lives in South East England, by the sea.

Technical Requirements

Sessions will be hosted on Zoom, so you must have an internet connection. Access to course resources, communications between participants and instructors, interactions in the group, and the submission of final project work will be through the Padlet interface. All associated resources will be available on this platform for download outside of seminar sessions. By participating on zoom, participants accept that the sessions are recorded, to be available for participants on the moodle platform. These recordings may later be open for public access.

Certification

On completing the course, participants will receive a certificate from the UVM Institute for Agroecology, have access to online resources, and be invited to join the alumni. Conditions include attendance, active participation during sessions, preparation and group work.

Apply

All those who would like to participate in the course are invited to first register their interest and provide some information via an 'expression of interest' form by **April 13 2026** (late submissions will be considered on a case-by-case basis). The criteria for this course prioritises people who are already active in the areas covered by the course. If you are not part of one of these groups, you can still apply. You will then be sent information about how to register by April 20 2026. For an expression of interest form please email jbremwilson@gmail.com.



For any questions, please email Josh at jbremwilson@gmail.com



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