

Decision-making methods and questions

Last week's Strategy Note 287 began describing how to create democratic discussions, especially discussions leading toward decisions about priorities.

It helps to have a clear method for making the decision and a clear role for this discussion in that method. For example, "The Executive Board will decide. This discussion will decide what to recommend to the E-Board." Or "Today's meeting will start the discussion and we'll decide by Robert's Rules and majority vote at next month's regular meeting." Or "We'll decide this question by discussing it (in multiple meetings if necessary) until at least 90% of members support the decision and nobody blocks it."

State clearly and concretely the question that needs a decision. For example, "Do we believe in solidarity?" offers empty rhetoric without specific results. "Do we delegate Mary from our organizing staff to work for Organization X for the second half of this year?" offers a clear yes/no question about action. "How should we respond to Coalition Y's invitation to join?" offers a clear open-ended question about action.

Revise the question or set of questions as needed to get general agreement that it correctly presents the choice.

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