

# Meeting Summary and Minutes for Capacity Building Working Group of the European Network for Citizen Initiatives in Global Solidarity

March 12, 2026 11:00-12:45 CET



## Participants

- Belgium: Jacques Mevis / 4de Pijlersteunpunt/11.11.11
- Belgium: Pieter Santens / Province of West Flanders
- Catalonia, Spain: Júlia Ramos Barrufet, Isabelle Torallas / Lafede
- France: Nadège Riche / Lianes Coopération
- France: Marie-Alexia Delerue / RESACOO
- Finland: Anni Vihriälä, Anna Kivimäki-Pelluz, Senja Vaatainen-Chimpuku / Fingo
- Germany: David Koepfer / EWNT Eine Welt Netzwerk Thüringen e.V.
- Germany: Dominic Stucker / Collective Leadership Institute
- Italy: Andrea Micconi / COP
- Netherlands: Darlington Rukodza, ErnstJan Stroes, Yiva Dantuma / Wilde Ganzen
- Netherlands: Sara Kinsbergen / Radboud University
- Poland: Dominika Zaręba, Milena Ślusarz / Fundusz Partnerstwa/Partnership Fund

## Meeting Summary

The meeting began with participants sharing personal sources of hope in these turbulent times. Then, the previous meeting minutes were confirmed and a discussion followed on organizing workshops and conferences on quality standards across different countries. The group explored various funding opportunities including Erasmus+, CERV and other

programs and discussed forming working groups to explore different funding schemes. **The main focus was on discussing decolonization approaches in organizations and partnerships**, with participants sharing experiences from different countries and contexts, including efforts to shift power dynamics and promote more equitable partnerships.

### **Sources of Hope Check In**

The meeting began with participants introducing themselves and sharing practices that help them remain hopeful in turbulent times. Participants discussed various sources of hope, including nature, community engagement, small projects, demonstrations, research, everyday solidarity, seeing positive changes and reading positive news.

### **Erasmus+ Proposal Discussion**

Dominic Stucker, the co-moderator of the meeting, opened the discussion on the Erasmus+ proposal on “Quality assurance for Capacity Building in European CIGS partner and support organizations,” originally submitted by CLI, Germany; Fundusz Partnerstwa, Poland; Wilde Ganzen, Netherlands; 11.11.11, Belgium; Fingo, Finland; Consorzio delle Ong Piemontesi, Italy. The group agreed to seek a new lead organization for the proposal from another country, as the original submission did not meet with success when submitted in Germany. Pieter Santens shared feedback from provincial government colleagues indicating that while the project has clear objectives, the value for money was considered too low.

Dominika Zareba, co-moderator of the meeting, presented the original project idea, which included workshops in Krakow and Potsdam, and a final conference in 2027. Several organizations expressed interest in participating in a new consortium, including Fingo, 11.11.11, CLI, Fundusz Partnerstwa, COP, and La Fede, though none could take the lead role due to various constraints. The group discussed potential funding options beyond Erasmus+, including CERV, and agreed to share project materials for further review.

### **Further Funding Opportunities**

The group went on to discuss planning for future funding opportunities, particularly focusing on Erasmus+ programs and the need for partner organizations from the Global South. Andrea Micconi suggested forming working groups to explore different funding schemes and to submit proposals for 2-3 similar projects led by different countries. The group agreed to schedule a separate focused call to discuss funding opportunities and potential consortium partnerships, with ErnstJan Stroes offering to help coordinate subgroups for project proposal preparation.

### **Decolonization in Global Solidarity Work**

The meeting then transitioned to its main topic of decolonization, with participants asked to share their perspectives and current activities related to decolonial approaches.

Senja Vaatainen-Chimpuku presented Fingo's work on decolonization over the past three years, including the establishment of a Shifting the Power Working Group and development of ethical communication guidelines. She explained that Fingo focuses on shifting power in partnerships with the Global South. She presented the definition of decolonisation by Fingo: "It means actively shifting power in partnerships: that requires identifying and dismantling the imbalance in the distribution of power between different actors (NGOs and their partners, funders, actors at the community level) in order to promote global solidarity. The goal is to remove historical and structural barriers that maintain inequality and to ensure that development cooperation and its future modifications work fairly and equally" ([fingo.fi/vallansiirto](http://fingo.fi/vallansiirto)). **Presentation of Senja is attached to the Minutes of the meeting.**

Sara Kinsbergen from Radboud University shared research insights on the instrumentalization of decolonization efforts, noting concerns about organizations in the Global North using decolonization narratives while maintaining unequal power dynamics, and highlighted a disconnect between organizational decolonization efforts and societal attitudes.

Jacques Mevis shared that decolonization efforts at his organization are focused on shifting power dynamics in relationships with partner organizations in the Global South, rather than getting caught up in historical debates about colonization. He described using an inspiration guide created by 11.11.11 and the NGO Federation to help organizations reflect on power imbalances with their partners at a practical level.

Júlia Ramos Barrufet explained that in Catalonia, Lafede represents over 130 organizations and conducted an anti-racist review. The review revealed a gap between organizations' self-perception as anti-racist and their actual practices, leading to a proposal for training and support to help organizations begin transforming their approaches.

Isabelle Torallas discussed Lafede's ongoing internal debates in Catalonia about political and structural issues related to anti-racism and decolonization. A key context is that the feminist movement in Catalonia and Spain strongly embraces intersectionality, where anti-racism is considered a central axis of privilege and discrimination, especially in the global justice and cooperation sector.

Darlington Rukodza shared Wilde Ganzen's efforts to decolonize development through co-funding projects, supporting local capacity building, and promoting local fundraising efforts. The organization is also piloting participatory grantmaking and working towards

localization by transferring processes to project countries, with initiatives underway in Nepal, Ghana, Kenya, and potentially South Africa.

Pieter Santens pointed out that in Belgium, the national government is reducing public funding for NGO development projects (ex. in Africa) and encouraging private companies to contribute financially instead. However, companies often expect profit or direct benefits, which can conflict with the principles of decolonization and equitable partnerships. The goal is to promote mutual learning and cooperation while ensuring that partnerships remain balanced and fair rather than exploitative.

Dominic Stucker said that from the Collective Leadership Institute (CLI) perspective, decolonization means putting values into practice through concrete actions. The organization works with partners across the Global South, paying attention to colonial histories, power structures, racism, and language that still influence international cooperation. CLI also promotes local leadership and expertise through its global network of certified Collective Leadership Specialists. The organization aims to build a network of leadership hubs across the Global South, shifting from a centralized structure to a more distributed, network-based organization.

David Koepfer shared that his organization mainly focuses on development education and awareness-raising, rather than direct development cooperation. Their approach to decolonization operates on two main levels. First, in their educational work, they critically review their own teaching materials and those of partner organizations to address colonial history, colonial continuities, and power relations. Second, at the structural level, they work on creating more equitable collaboration with partners in the Global South, especially in digital and hybrid educational projects.

Dominika Zareba observed that in Poland and other Eastern European countries, decolonization is understood narrowly and is not commonly linked to global justice, gender equality, or environmental issues. Historically, these countries were under Soviet influence, so discussions of colonization often focus on liberation from Soviet control. During the communist era, education and propaganda framed colonialism differently, and Poland even supported some liberation movements abroad. Influential writers like Ryszard Kapuściński helped shape awareness of global justice, power dynamics and support for local communities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Within the Partnership Academy, the organization focuses on global justice, human rights, and equitable partnerships, even if they do not explicitly frame this work as decolonization.

Nadège Riche reflected on their organization's current state regarding decolonization and social justice in France. As a young organization, they have recently adopted a new strategic orientation focused on equality, but decolonization is not yet explicitly included. They see this as an important topic to address and are considering team training on decolonization, depending on funding availability.

The meeting focused on discussing decolonization approaches in organizations and partnerships. Participants shared experiences from various countries and contexts, highlighting both challenges and initiatives. Key points included the need to address colonial legacies in educational materials, support local experts from the Global South, and promote more equitable partnerships.

### **Next Meetings**

**The group agreed on the next meeting date and topic: Thursday, 22 October from 11:00-12:30 CET with the main discussion topic “Capacity Building for Navigating Polarizing Narratives”**

We will organise a special meeting of the Funding working Group on Opportunities for Funding for 2027 and beyond to be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2026 for all members to:

- ➔ Share about and prioritize key funding sources for CIGS capacity building
- ➔ Identify complimentary opportunities and possible consortia leads (including one for our previous Erasmus quality assurance proposal)
- ➔ Go into breakout groups to discuss possible next steps for each

Please register for this meeting here: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1/ Erasmus+ proposal on quality assurance for capacity building in European CIGS
- 2/ Fingo’s presentation on the activities around decolonisation in Finland
- 3/Links from the chat

*Prepared by: Dominika Zareba, Dominic Stucker, ErnstJan Stroes, March 2026.*