

Global Youth Summit 2.0

From the Margins to Mainstream: Building a Mass Movement for FoRB

Date: November 30, 2024, various time zones

Hosted by the First Freedom Foundation

Registration: <https://forbsfuture.org/application/>

Location: Virtual (Zoom - link to be provided upon registration)

What time does it start?

It depends on where you live, and which session you want to attend. So figure out which session you want to attend on the [schedule page](#), and then figure out what time that starts wherever you are using a [time zone converter](#).

How does Open Space work?

Open Space Technology (OST) is a flexible and dynamic meeting format that allows participants to create their own agenda and engage in meaningful discussions. Here's a step-by-step overview of how it works:

1. **Opening Circle and Agenda Creation:**

The event begins with all participants gathered together. The facilitator introduces the theme and explains the principles and process of Open Space. Participants are then invited to propose topics they are passionate about or interested in discussing. Each person writes a brief description of their topic, announces it to the group, and selects a time slot for their session. These topics are posted on an online schedule, thus creating the agenda.

2. **Breakout Sessions:**

The event moves into breakout sessions, each held in a separate virtual space and facilitated by the person who proposed the topic. Participants are encouraged to move freely between sessions, following the "law of two feet," (or "law of two clicks" for our virtual event) which encourages them to go where they feel they can contribute or learn the most.

3. **Documentation:**

Each breakout session has a designated discussion leader responsible for documenting key points and outcomes. This documentation is compiled into a report and shared with all participants after the event.

4. **Convergence and Closing Circle:**

After six rounds of 45 minute breakout sessions, participants reconvene as a whole group to share insights and action plans developed during the sessions. The event concludes with a closing circle where participants reflect on the experience, share final thoughts, and outline next steps. This helps reinforce connections made and commitments to action.

What is the “law of two feet?”

The law of two feet is “If at any time you find yourself in any situation where you are neither learning nor contributing: use your two feet and go someplace else.” In a virtual format, it is sometimes called “the law of two clicks.”

In addition to the law of two feet, Open Space also has four principles: :

1. **Whoever comes is the right people:** The participants who attend are the ones who are meant to be there.
2. **Whatever happens is the only thing that could have:** Embrace the outcomes, as they are the result of the collective effort.
3. **Whenever it starts is the right time:** Creativity and inspiration are not bound by a clock.
4. **When it's over, it's over:** When a session has achieved its goal, it naturally concludes.

Why is it called “Open Space Technology”? (Do I have to be good at tech?)

Harrison Owen coined the term "Open Space Technology" 40 years ago, before "technology" became synonymous with digital tools. The term refers to the method's ability to create an open environment for productive discussions and problem-solving. It emphasizes the methodology's systematic approach that promotes self-organization and effective communication among participants.

Although virtual events utilize platforms like Zoom and Zulip, the Open Space format itself relies on collaborative processes rather than digital tools.

Why should I attend?

There are several compelling reasons to attend this event:

- **Connect:** Network with other FoRB advocates and build relationships, because progress happens at the speed of trust.
- **Create:** Bring forward your own ideas and projects, and find others to help implement your plans.
- **Contribute:** Offer your experience and expertise to enhance other people's initiatives.

Collaborate: Share resources (connections, information, etc.) and join forces on new projects and strategies.

What results can I expect?

There is a reason Open Space is among the most popular large group interventions in the field of organization development—it works! No other format is more effective at empowering large groups of people to make progress on a shared goal. Its ability to move quickly from idea sharing to action planning is unparalleled

While the unexpected is expected during an Open Space event, there are some consistent results from the process:

- **Issue Identification:** Every issue of interest to any participant will have been raised, provided they take responsibility for doing so.
- **Detailed Documentation:** A full report of issues and discussions will be compiled and distributed to all participants.
- **Actionable Advancements:** Priorities will be set, and action plans will be developed.

There will also be follow-up discussions and resources available in the FoRB Forum on Zulip after the event to maintain momentum and engagement. More details will be provided following registration.

Why is it so long?

An Open Space event requires a minimum of five hours because it follows a structured process with distinct phases. This time frame allows participants to create the agenda, lead and learn from discussions, and synthesize and share learnings.

It ensures there is sufficient time for meaningful dialogue and effective problem-solving while enabling the spread of ideas and information throughout the group. Additionally, the extended duration fosters creativity and helps build strong connections, which are essential for the success of the movement.

Given the intensity of interest in our topic, the time is likely to fly by.

Moreover, if we were meeting in person you would spend lots of time and money on travel, and waste much of that time there listening to boring speeches, or making small talk with strangers. This event is designed to maximize the output from a regular conference but at a fraction of the time and cost.

Will there be breaks during the event?

No, there will not be scheduled breaks. Everyone has different needs and is encouraged to tend to their own requirements. We don't stop the process according to some arbitrary schedule. If something is preventing you from learning or contributing, please exercise the law of two feet and take a break when you need to.

Can I invite friends?

Yes! But they must apply.

In Open Space, the attendees are the agenda. Therefore, we must be careful about who to include. Moreover, in a virtual format, there is a natural tipping point where the event can shift from interactive, strategic dialogue to speech making and grandstanding. To maintain the quality of interaction, we'd like to keep the gathering fairly small. All participants must be committed to respecting freedom of religion or belief for everyone, everywhere, and be willing to actively participate, treat others with respect, and bring unique perspectives or resources to enhance the discussions.

How are discussion leaders and session times chosen?

Open Space is an entirely self-organizing system. Anyone can propose a topic that they are passionate about, and these discussion leaders then choose a time on the schedule on a first-come, first-served basis.

Do I have to speak?

No one is required to lead a discussion, although all participants are welcome to do so.

When you join other people's discussions, there is an expectation of interactivity. It's okay to say, "I am just here to learn," but silent lurking can make others feel uncomfortable sharing their ideas. Treat it like a polite conversation in real life; your active participation helps create a dynamic and engaging environment.

Do I have to leave my camera on?

For the most part, yes, please. Having your camera on greatly enhances the quality of interaction. It helps build trust and a sense of community among participants. And it signals to the discussion leader that you are fully present and ready to participate.

However, we understand that this is a six-hour event, and we expect highly engaging conversations. So if you must address a need but don't want to miss a word, feel free to briefly switch off your camera.

Isn't it impolite to hop in and out of sessions?

In Open Space, it is not considered impolite; in fact, it is encouraged. The format is designed for participants to move between sessions based on their interests. This movement helps to cross-pollinate ideas, enriching the discussions and leveraging the collective knowledge of the group.

This dynamic approach fosters a collaborative and engaging environment, ensuring that ideas flow freely and participants contribute where they can add the most value.

Where can I learn more about Open Space?

This [two minute video](#) is instructive. You can also find decades of wisdom about the Open Space process on the official website, [Open Space World](#).

What technology do I need to participate?

You will need a stable internet connection, and a computer or device with a) a webcam, b) a good microphone, and c) Zoom installed.

Additionally, a personalized link to our secure instance of Zulip (called the "FoRB Forum,") will be provided upon registration. While you can easily access Zulip via a web browser, we

recommend installing it on your laptop and mobile device so you don't miss notifications when conversations happen.

What is Zulip?

Zulip is a powerful, open-source team chat application designed to facilitate efficient and organized communication. It combines the immediacy of real-time chat with the productivity benefits of threaded conversations, making it ideal for collaborative environments.

Zulip also offers robust security, providing end-to-end encryption for private streams and messages. Unlike other apps such as Signal and WhatsApp, Zulip's open-source design allows the First Freedom Foundation to control our own instances of the platform, eliminating the risk of external surveillance. We have a dedicated instance of this platform for the freedom or belief movement called the FoRB Forum.

Other features include:

Threaded Conversations: Keep discussions organized by topic within a channel, making it easy to follow multiple conversations simultaneously.

Search Functionality: Quickly find messages, files, and discussions with powerful search capabilities.

Customization: Subscribe to notifications about topics that interest you, and opt out of everything else.

Cross-Platform Support: Available on web, desktop (Windows, macOS, Linux), and mobile (iOS, Android) platforms.

By using Zulip, we aim to enhance collaboration, keep conversations organized, and avoid overwhelm. Make sure to download the Zulip app beforehand to ensure seamless access.

What if I can't attend the entire event?

While we encourage full participation to maximize the benefits of the event, we understand that schedules can be tight. If you can only attend part of the event, we still welcome your participation. Try to be as engaged as possible during the time you are present.

Active participation is strongly encouraged to ensure you gain the most from the sessions and contribute meaningfully to the discussions.

How will the sessions be documented?

Those who lead sessions are responsible for recording key points or delegating this task to someone else. A full report of the discussions will be compiled and shared with all participants after the event, ensuring that even those who miss a session can benefit from the insights and action plans.

What makes someone a good session leader? Any tips?

The only qualification required to lead a session is passion about the topic. Extensive knowledge can actually be a double-edged sword--either enhancing meaningful dialogue or preventing it! Balancing enthusiasm with openness to others ideas is key.

Tips for Effective Session Leadership:

Have a clear and concise topic: Clearly define what the session will focus on.

Determine your goal: Know whether your session aims to brainstorm, get feedback, find allies and/or resources, or something else. Clear objectives lead to more effective sessions.

Ensure all voices are heard: Use open-ended questions to encourage dialogue and make sure quieter participants have a chance to speak.

Encourage diverse viewpoints: Being open to different perspectives can lead to innovative solutions.

Manage time effectively: Keep the session on track to cover all key points.

Record summary: Take good notes, or designate someone as a note-taker to document important insights.

Be adaptable: Be prepared to adjust based on participants' needs and the discussion's direction.

By following these tips, a session leader can foster a productive and engaging environment, maximizing the benefits of the Open Space Technology format.

Any tips for offering constructive feedback?

When offering feedback, be mindful of the stage of development of an emerging strategy. Different approaches might be helpful for different stages:

- **Initial Brainstorming:** Focus on contributing new ideas, adding to an idea, or making gentle suggestions based on your experience. In this phase, it is important to stay as positive as possible.

- **Idea Selection:** Help identify the most promising ideas from the brainstormed options. This is effectively done by focusing on the best ideas, rather than criticizing the less good ones.
- **Thorough Vetting:** This is the time to provide detailed critique and evaluation of the selected strategy. Some discussion leaders might not be open to this process and might be tempted to skip ahead to action planning. In that case, you can exercise the "law of two feet" and find a session where your input will be more appreciated.
- **Action Planning:** As ideas move into the planning phase, offering information, contacts, or other help can be crucial to implementation.

Open Space operates on an “opt in” basis. Participants are welcome to stay in sessions for as long as they feel they are learning or contributing. If you find that your input is not being well received, feel free to move to another session where your contributions will be valued

What if I am not interested in any of the topics? Or I get “brain fry”?

This is why we have a [virtual] “lounge.” This is a place for people to casually chat about anything and nothing. In the lounge you can even have a dance party if you want to blow off steam!

Paradoxically, some of the best topics for additional sessions, and some of the most fruitful connections, come out of interactions in the lounge. But the lounge is not about productivity. It's about a break.

Is there a dress code for the event?

There is no formal dress code.

What if I have technical issues during the event?

Technical support will be available throughout the event. You can reach out to Dean Householder for assistance via Signal, WhatsApp, Zoom, Zulip, or by phone at +1-801-520-9494.

What if I have more questions before the event?

If you have any questions or need further information before the event, feel free to reach out to Patrice Pederson via Signal or WhatsApp for general inquiries, and Dean Householder via Signal, or Zulip for technical support.

How can I prepare?

Think about how we can grow into a mass movement for Freedom of Religion or Belief, and come with ideas and questions. Your ideas can range from policy changes and grassroots mobilization to international collaborations and “street theater.” This is the time to be proactive and think big.