Recognition of Trainers/Facilitators for Transition

Amended proposal: April 15th 2021
Consented to by Training Primary Circle April 28th 2021

Authors: Training for Transition Operational Circle
Decision makers: Training for Transition Primary Circle
Status: Agreed

This proposal was presented for the consideration of the Training Primary Circle on April 14th 2021. A decision by consent process was held, amendments were made in response to a number of initial concerns and objections, and the revised proposal below was consented to on April 28th 2021.

Training for Transition Background

Since 2015 Transition Network, the UK based NGO which supports the Transition movement, has been in a process of distributing power and decision making out of the NGO and into the wider movement, via the international Hubs group.

At the Santoroso-Italy Global Gathering in 2016, a strategic plan emerged to better represent, and meet the complex and diverse needs of the Transition movement system. A major outcome of this process was the formation of the Hubs Heart Circle (HHC). This was constituted in 2019 as the space where decisions about the movement are made by consent using a shared governance model. Since then a number of topic specific circles have also formed in relationship with the HHC. This includes the Training for Transition Circle (T4T).

Purpose and Governance of the Training for Transition circle

The Training for Transition circle was formed (1) to decentralise power, agency and decision making regarding training for Transition, out of Transition Network (TN - the NGO/support charity) and into the wider movement - including to the trainers themselves, and (2) to re-energise training and learning opportunities within the Transition movement internationally.

Originally the plan was to form a training circle in the Hubs domain and to hire a Training Coordinator to deliver operational activities related to the circle. What emerged instead was a group of operational roles rather than a single coordinator. This led to the formation of a Training Operational Circle (task level), within the Training Primary Circle (strategy and decision making level). The primary circle is made up of voluntary (advisor oriented) roles and the paid operational roles, all with equal voice in decision making. TN and the Hubs Heart Circle are represented in the operational and primary circle with link roles. Decision making regarding training related topics, particularly strategy and policy changes, now sits in the Training Primary Circle, rather than in TN or the Hubs Heart Circle.

In the first part of 2020, the Training for Transition Operational Circle conducted action research through surveys and interviews of trainers and hubsters from around the world. This

research aimed to sense and analyse what is needed and what is already available in terms of training and learning opportunities across the movement and to ascertain how we can best re-energise and support training and learning opportunities. Although we didn't receive voices from Africa, and only some from Asia and Australia, we were able to collate a lot of input from trainers, Hubs and training recipients in Europe and from North and South America. A report was compiled of the results gathered which can be accessed here.

Following the research period, the operational circle started to draft new policy proposals which would address some of the tensions identified in the research. One of the topics we wanted to address early was the question of who can be recognised as a trainer for Transition, and how this recognition, (e.g. through training of trainers or accreditation) could occur. A draft proposal was shared with the trainers email list, TN and the Hubs Circle for more specific input during February and March 2021. The feedback received has been included in the proposals within this document.

Purpose of this document and proposals

This document and the proposals it presents are one step toward a revitalized international community of trainers and learning opportunities for Transition. It recognises that the Transition movement is a dynamic ecosystem that changes over time, and the training and learning needs within the movement have also changed.

Our intention is to support the emergence of a wide and abundant array of learning opportunities, accessible to many more people and supporting both the existing Transition movement plus new territories and communities where still there are no hub or transition initiatives. In some regions training and learning about Transition is alive and vibrant, with trainers and Hubs feeling a sense of agency and creativity. However in many other areas training has decreased or stalled, with trainers and Hubs feeling a lack of agency or clarity about how to access or develop training, train trainers and so on.

In Transition we recognise that clear membranes and agreements are vital for healthy group functioning. So in addition to supporting an increase and re-energisation of training and trainers, this document is also needed to define shared guidelines regarding who can be recognized internationally as a trainer for Transition, and a member of the international community of trainers for Transition**.** This membrane will create a sense of belonging to the wider movement, connecting trainers to an international community of practice, while also supporting ongoing quality of training and learning opportunities.

Tensions identified regarding recognition of trainers for Transition

Language and terms tensions

Some respondents attributed a hierarchical or top down significance to the word ‘trainer’ and proposed the word ‘facilitator’ to acknowledge the shift of power distribution and decolonization that the Training for Transition circle is inviting. Others expressed that the concept facilitator and trainer had different meanings, and that both have important roles in learning processes. Some proposed that the terms should not be chosen centrally, e.g. by the Training for Transition circle, but instead that appropriate terms should be chosen at a local level, to make most sense to the group and local culture.

Other tensions

At present the Trainers webpage on Transition Network's website is very out of date. As Training was originally held centrally by Transition Network, many groups and regions still look to TN for information about how to access training for Transition. In order to update the trainer list and details on the website, and better share and promote training and learning opportunities, TN, the Training circle, the Hubs group and the international Community of Practice of trainers/facilitators for Transition need to have clarity on who is recognised internationally as a trainer for Transition. Ideally this will be a broader definition than previously - which will also serve to increase the number of trainers and trainings available. Once there is agreement around this, we can update online listings of trainers, create a broader calendar of events, and better support access to and promotion of training opportunities.

In the action research some of the feedback was related to the Transition movement being eurocentric and mostly white middle class centered. Therefore, as we attempt to re-energise training and empower more trainers, it's important to address aspects of social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, including considering ways in which to empower trainers outside of Europe, support learning opportunities/training in wider regions and in collaboration with marginalised groups and communities.

The original Train the Trainers (ToT) process has been criticised as being a low-inclusivity and high-cost process, with few opportunities to participate. It has been largely suspended since 2017. Currently there is not a clear or accessible way to become recognised as a trainer for Transition.

It was also identified that there are many (non Transition accredited) trainers within the Transition movement, closely related with local regions, Hubs and initiatives, who have training and facilitation skills, and have learned Transition content and principles through other professional or voluntary life routes. These people could be an asset to the trainers for Transition community of practice and the wider movement, but are not currently recognised or their training endorsed. We would like to change this situation.

"**Accreditation"** was also mentioned as a tension. As a concept it is recognized as being helpful in ensuring good standards of learning opportunities. However, if accreditation is held too tightly or centrally by any group or circle (whether TN or the Training circle), it limits the ability of the wider movement to be self determining and to lead on developing training skills in people at a more local and distributed level.

Another tension is around the current method of offering standard 2 or 5 days training programmes. Some trainers and Hubs have identified that learning is more a process than a specific event. This requires that a different kind of learning opportunity is offered, which may affect the skills and structures needed from trainers. Longer term / ongoing learning opportunities make space for a mentoring or apprenticeship model as a possible route to becoming a trainer for Transition.

Taken in combination, we believe these tensions are significantly limiting the numbers of trainers and trainings available, the accessibility of these to new or marginalised groups, and the potential for more vibrant learning and sharing of Transition principles and practices to occur and continue to develop across the movement.

PROPOSALS

PROPOSAL ONE: SHIFTING THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECOGNISING AND ENDORSING TRAINERS/FACILITATORS FOR TRANSITION

We propose that the responsibility for recognising and endorsing trainers/facilitators for transition, and supporting entry into the international community of practice, moves *from* its previous role within Transition Network (a UK based support organisation to the movement), *to* the newly formed Training for Transition Circle.

This circle is now the decision making body for all international level decisions regarding training for the Transition movement. It is made up of representatives from Transition Network, the Hubs Heart Circle and trainers themselves.

Decisions taken by this circle, regarding recognition and endorsement of trainers/facilitators for Transition, are relevant to the international or wider movement level only, rather than the local or regional level. This international or wider movement level is represented and supported by Transition Network, The Hubs Heart Circle, The Training for Transition Circle and the international Community of Practice of trainers for Transition.

Hubs and local initiatives are in no way restricted from starting or continuing to make their own decisions about local or regional level training development and delivery, training of trainers, recognition of trainers, employment of or contracting with trainers. Hubs and local initiatives are free to develop transition related training as best meets their needs and local context.

This current set of proposals is aimed at providing a platform for recognising and endorsing trainers/facilitators who would like to be promoted internationally and to participate in the international community of practice. This will be supported by TN, the HHC, Training circle and the international Community of Practice for trainers, who will between them; list, promote, support and provide connections and learning opportunities for trainers/facilitators of transition. The aim is to benefit both trainers themselves and the international re-energisation and growth of Transition related training and learning opportunities.

PROPOSAL 2: CHANGING TERMS

2.1 For international listing and communication/promotion purposes, we propose that the Training circle, Hubs Heart Circle, Transition Network, and the international Community of Practice will use the term trainer/facilitator in their communications. These terms are used interchangeably to mean someone who can design and hold both the process and content of Transition related learning opportunities, while meeting the recognition and endorsement criteria outlined in Route 1 or Route 2 and their appendices.

2.1.1 For local & regional listing and communications we emphasise that the terms used to describe trainers, facilitators, coaches etc. is a local and flexible decision rather than one made centrally by the Training circle.

2.2 For international or local/regional listing purposes, we propose that events intended to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and practices related to Transition can be referred to either as 'training' or as 'learning opportunities' depending on the preference of the local group or region. Other terms are also welcome and can be determined by the hosting trainer/facilitator or group. The Training circle, HHC, TN and international CoP will use the term 'learning opportunities' in their communications.

PROPOSAL 3: RECOGNISING & ENDORSING TRAINERS
(including retaining this recognition over time)

We propose that trainers/facilitators for Transition, who wish to be recognized by the Transition movement, listed internationally, and promoted through Transition Network's website and social media, can choose one of two different pathways. These pathways will enable recognition, as a trainer or facilitator for Transition, by the international Transition movement, through the Training circle.

Regardless of which pathway to recognition trainers/facilitators choose, we ask that all abide by the following values and criteria:

- ***Are passionate and clear about the Transition model and principles, and integrate them in their lives and their work.***
- ***Create and run high quality training.***
- ***Can explain technical concepts in clear and accessible language.***
- ***Can work with emotional depth and hold participants in a group to safely go beyond comfort zones.***
- ***Have an awareness of their own journey in personal development and awakening to the need for major social change.***
- ***Represent a variety of viewpoints, cultures and backgrounds; additional languages would be an advantage.***
- ***Are flexible, self motivated, collaborative, positive and have a sense of humour.***
- ***Willing to work in a cooperative and harmonious way with other trainers/facilitators and groups throughout the Transition movement.***

3.a. PATHWAYS FOR RECOGNITION & ENDORSEMENT

Route 1. For those who have successfully completed a Transition 'Training of Trainers'

In addition to this you must

1. Have led or co-led at least one training or learning opportunity every two years (or, if newly qualified, can demonstrate that you intend to do so).

2. Be actively involved with Transition
    a. Through a local group/initiative, Hub, distributed circle or Transition Network (support organisation), ***and/or***
    b. By participating in and contributing to an active national or international community of practice for trainers & facilitators of Transition.
    c. Or, if newly qualified, demonstrate that you intend to be so.

3. Demonstrate that you are committed to a personal development path that supports your ability to experience, cope with, and support others to engage with, the huge shifts and changes happening for humanity and within local and global communities

and ecosystems. *We believe this is important to support personal resilience of trainers/facilitators, and also to support good conduct and integrity within our relationships, communities and the wider movement.*

4. Demonstrate that you understand and can deliver training content on the basics of Transition (an appendix of relevant topics will be provided).

5. Subscribe to the values and principles for trainers and facilitators for Transition (an appendix outlining these will be provided).

Route 2. For those who have not taken a Transition Training of Trainers

You need to

1. Be an accredited trainer/facilitator from an organization or movement * aligned with the Transition movement vision, values and practices, including being trained and experienced in participatory/experiential processes.
   ** e.g. Gaia Education, Gaia University, GEN and its Regions, Permaculture, 8 Shields, The Work that Reconnects. We are open to recognizing more organisations and movements than this - trainers will be invited to make suggestions for others who could be included so that the list continues to evolve and grow.*

2. Have designed and led (or co-designed/co-led) at least 3 'transition' aligned training/learning opportunities (climate change, community building, resilience, regeneration) over the last 2 years.

3. Be actively involved with Transition
   a. Through a local group/initiative, Hub, distributed circle or Transition Network (support organisation), ***and/or***
   b. By participating in and contributing to an active national or international community of practice for trainers & facilitators of Transition.
   c. Or demonstrate that you intend to be so.

4. Demonstrate that you understand and can deliver training content on the basics of Transition (an appendix of relevant topics will be provided).

5. Demonstrate that you are committed to a personal development path that supports your ability to experience, cope with, and support others to engage with, the huge shifts and changes happening for humanity and within local and global communities and ecosystems.
   We believe this is important to support personal resilience of trainers/facilitators, and also to support good conduct and integrity within our relationships, communities and the wider movement.

6. Subscribe to the values and principles for trainers and facilitators for Transition (an appendix outlining these will be provided).

3.b PATHWAY FOR CONTINUING RECOGNITION AS A TRAINER/FACILITATOR

To continue being recognised and endorsed internationally as a trainer/facilitator for Transition by the Training circle, HHC, TN and the international trainers/facilitators Community of Practice, you will need to:

1. Design and lead (or co design & lead) a transition related learning opportunity every two years (exceptions can be made in certain circumstances, subject to a conversation with the Training circle).
2. Demonstrate that you remain actively involved with Transition
    a. Through a local group/initiative, Hub, distributed circle or Transition Network (support organisation), ***and/or***
    b. By actively participating in and contributing to a national or international community of practice for trainers & facilitators of Transition.
3. Demonstrate ongoing learning and practical professional development in topics relevant to Transition.
4. Demonstrate that you are embodying and sharing the values and principles of trainers & facilitators for Transition.

Review Terms

This proposal, if consented to, will be reviewed one year after consent. Any feedback and learning gathered during that year will be reflected upon by the Training circle - or a group authorised by that circle, and amendments made to the recognition and endorsement process as needed.

Further work needed

If these three proposals are agreed, the Training for Transition circle will next explore and make proposals for how these new pathways can be practically activated and delivered.

For example a role and process for receiving trainer's requests for recognition and endorsement, which could include an application form, self assessment, or an interview. The aims of this are (i) to create clarity and some level of agreed standards and (ii) to provide an information sharing opportunity for new trainers, about where they and their events can be listed and promoted, and how they can engage with and benefit from the international community of practice.

To enable the delivery of trainer/facilitator recognition and endorsement, and the continuing energisation of the international Trainers/facilitators community of practice, the Training for Transition circle will be responsible for creating and ensuring delivery of,

1. A process for recognition, induction, and also exclusion where needed, of Trainers/Facilitators for Transition at the international level.
2. Clear roles and responsibilities, and adequate resourcing, within the T4T circle to support practical delivery of this.
3. A clear set of criteria regarding the values, principles and knowledge/learning content, skills, expected from a recognized and endorsed trainer/facilitator for Transition.
4. A clear process by which new & ongoing Training of Trainers (ToTs) programmes can be developed and delivered - including a process/pathway by which a new group of ToT trainers, endorsed to deliver training at this level, can be recognised and activated.

Proposal AGREED BY CONSENT - HURRAY CELEBRATE! - April 28th 2021