



Call for Participants

Digging Deep: Exploring the Roots of Ecological Breakdown

4 - 11 August 2025 in Bern, Switzerland

Background of the seminar

Since we were born, we have been told that if we work hard, we will be able to succeed if we just try hard enough. And that capitalism is the best system we have. We just need to work hard to have a bright future ahead of us. Of course, this promise had always been made on the back of structural exploitation of oppressed people, particularly for the majority world - the so-called Global South and the exploitation of non-human nature, the so-called environment.

Even now, in a time when it is obvious to many people, that we are increasingly experiencing ecological breakdown alongside other collapse processes around the world (wildfires, floods, exploding food prices, rising fascism), the answer of politicians and even among most "sustainability experts" is more of the same - green capitalism, market-based solutions, technology. Not digging deep enough to reach the actual roots of our ecological and social problems.

Still, we are made to believe that capitalism is the best and most fruitful system that exists. That under capitalism we can be anything we want and we should actually use it to save our planet, by buying and selling sustainable products. How can a system that is a cause of all of today's struggles, be also a way to fix them?

This is what this exchange is about: digging deeper to understand the actual roots of ecological breakdown. We want to discuss and critically look at the system in which we live. We believe that to be able to work towards a real change we need a good understanding of capitalism and how it is fuelled by all the other systems of oppression. We will mostly look at it from an environmental perspective.

From that understanding we want to move to envisioning how a society of sustainability and solidarity could look like and how we can work together to get there.

What you can expect from this training:

During this exchange we would like to invite youth workers and young activists and future changemakers, who want to gain a deeper understanding of the systems that we live in. Some of our objectives are:

- Understanding why the climate crisis is only a part of a general ecological breakdown;
- Understanding how ecological breakdown is connected to other forms of violence;
- Generating a basic understanding of how colonialism, gender-based discrimination the exploitation of "nature" together are creating what we call capitalism;
- Understanding how we can use this knowledge to create alternative forms of living in this world based on sustainability, equality and solidarity

Participant's profile

We are looking for participants who are motivated to transform this world. This could be youth workers, volunteers and activists within the wider SCI network and beyond. We are looking for participants are

- 18 years old or older
- able to work in English
- motivated to implement the learned knowledge and skills in practice back home
- motivated to actively participate from the beginning to the end of the training
- ideally involved in a social change movement back at home (this is not a necessary condition though!)
- interested in deepening their knowledge on topics mentioned above (such as ecological breakdown)

We explicitly encourage participants of all genders, sexual orientations, abilities, learning styles and ethnic backgrounds to apply.

In the application form at the end of this call, you can specify any needs that you would like us to take into account to make this seminar accessible for you, and express concerns on whether your needs match with the seminar (regarding need for breaks & struggle to concentrate for a long time, formats, ...). We will try to find solutions together!

Please note that there will be opportunities to visit Bern, but that this is not a “getting to know Switzerland” project. On some days, the training also foresees evening sessions.

Schedule*

	Day 1 4 Aug	Day 2 5 Aug	Day 3 6 Aug	Day 4 7 Aug	Day 5 8 Aug	Day 6 9 Aug	Day 7 10 Aug	Day 8 11 Aug
AM		Introduction + games	Ecological breakdown - an introduction	Your local context - presentation	Emotions cricle	Open Space	Creative connections	Clean up + departure
		Group Agreement, task division	Digging deep - parallel sessions	Links between ecological breakdown and capitalism	Guest speaker	Open Space	Creative connections	
PM	Arrival	Framework introduction	Capitalism - an introduction	Links between ecological breakdown	Free Time (optional: visiting a local place of	Utopian dream journey	Participant exhibition	

	Welcome, Getting to know; not mandatory	Group dynamic	Presenting your local context - preparation	and capitalism	anticapitalist resistance in Bern)	Reflection on your own work	Closing reflections	
		Reflection	Reflection	Reflection		Reflection	Final evaluation	

*the schedule might change, the more complete version you will receive in your infopacks

Logistics, financial conditions and sustainability

Simple life: The seminar will take place in a scouts center with very simple living conditions. You will sleep in a room shared with other people. We will ask you to bring your own sleeping bag + pillow and we will do our best to provide them if you do not have one. Showers are shared with other people as well, we will make a shower schedule.

Accessibility: The ground floor of the building where we will hold most workshop sessions is accessible to wheelchairs. Dormitories and showers are on a lower floor without ramps unfortunately and only reachable by stairs.

Money, money, money: Some notes here:

- For partner organisations that we could sign up to be official partner organisations for the funding application, we can cover all essential costs of the program (including food, travel costs up to a maximum amount, visa costs, accommodation and seminar) through a grant by the Swiss government agency Movetia. Your sending organisation might ask for a small participation fee.
- The maximum amount of travel costs we can cover differs from country to country:
 - Europe: up to 400 CHF
 - Zimbabwe and Nigeria: 800 CHF
- If you are having financial concerns and you are struggling, please get in touch with us and we will try to find a solution.

Sustainable food: The food we provide will be vegan. This is not just a practical decision, but also an ideological one: SCI believes in the values of sustainability and climate justice – and if we want to contribute to a more peaceful planet, we need to give up on industrialized animal agriculture and its destructive effects on our planet.

Sustainable travels: This is also why we ask you to come to this training through more sustainable means of transport rather than flying (e.g. by train or bus), if somehow possible. We will give you more guidance on how you can reach the venue once you are accepted to the seminar.

How to apply?

You can apply [by filling out this application form](#). All those accepted will later receive a detailed infosheet (incl. info on how to get to the venue, how to book your travels, more info about the agenda of the project). **Deadline for applying is 29th June 2024.**

Contact:

If you have any questions regarding the project and your application, don't hesitate to contact Jago at marysia@portfolio.art.pl or Timo at timo.kretschmer@posteo.de. We are looking forward to your application :-)

The coordinating team

Timo, Jago, Leo and the SCI Switzerland team