



Structuring into collectives  
to gain power of action



*Governance and prevention of  
relationships of domination  
in collectives*



« Former pour Transformer » collective - 2020

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# 1 Introduction

Structuring  
into collectives

to gain

POWER OF  
ACTION

« Structuring into collectives to gain power of action » is at the heart of the political vision for social transformation of the *Former pour Transformer (Train to Transform)* collective.

## Why is this important?

- > The formation of groups or collectives often accompanies emancipatory training.

It is a way of continuing the learning while promoting action taking.

- > For the most vulnerable, the group or collective is a structure where to get training and contribute.
- > The strength of the collective allows its members to become aware of certain social relations that enclose them and to act on them collectively.



The collective is also **a springboard for social change.**

Emancipation is not enough to fight the relationships of domination and to change society.

It is **collective actions** in solidarity that contribute to it.

Once functional, collectives can seize opportunities or initiate projects that help create other ways of living or producing wealth.

For all these reasons, the member organisations of the *Former pour Transformer*<sup>1</sup> collective pay particular attention to these collectives.

<sup>1</sup> The **Former pour Transformer** collective, created under the impetus of Frères des Hommes, brings together in 2020, the following civil society organisations: MPP (Haiti), CENCA (Peru), UGPM (Senegal), APEF (DRC), Duhamic-Adri (Rwanda), Adenya (Rwanda), Fédina (India), Batik International (France), Frères des Hommes (France).

## 4 booklets for further reflection

These 4 booklets focus on 4 angles to better understand the ways of the **APEF, CENCA** and **UGPM** teams.

Intended for facilitators and trainers, these booklets share lessons learned and questions to improve the support provided to groups. We hope that this will inspire those working in these groups on a daily basis!

①

Collectives for emancipation !

②

Governance and prevention of relationships of domination in collectives

③

6 practices for supporting groups


④

Collective structuring processes

This booklet focuses on the **governance and prevention of relationships of domination in collectives** and compares various support approaches: training, formal or informal collectives, awareness-raising actions on the relationships of domination in a group, etc.



*Transversal  
capitalisation as a  
learning method* ↙



## 2017

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**Launching seminar  
of the *Former pour  
Transformer*  
collective.**

Focus on «The  
structuring of groups  
of population» as  
learning angle.

## 2018

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**Facilitation of a  
series of webinars.**

Refining the topic!

**New seminar by the  
*Former pour  
Transformer*  
collective.**

Forming of a first  
working group.

**Launch of  
transversal  
capitalisation.**

Mapping the  
practices and  
experiences of the  
member  
organisations of the  
working group.

## 2019

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**Workshops and  
interviews with  
populations in  
Senegal, Peru and  
DRC.**

APEF, CENCA and  
UGPM are organising  
themselves internally  
to manage their  
capitalisation actions  
and write their  
summaries.

**New seminar by the  
*Former pour  
Transformer*  
collective.**

The 3 organisations  
share the findings of  
their capitalisation  
effort. Start of the  
transversal analysis.

## 2020

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**Lessons learned by  
APEF, CENCA, UGPM  
and by the other  
members of the  
Collective.**

Drafting of the  
transversal analysis<sup>2</sup>  
in the form of 4  
booklets. Each  
organisation is to  
produce deliverables.

<sup>2</sup> Independent consultant  
Jean-Eudes BEURET  
provided methodological  
support to Frères des  
Hommes and drafted the  
transversal analysis.

*The  
3 organisations  
capitalising  
their  
experience*







**APEF** works with the women of South Kivu (region of the Democratic Republic of Congo) on an economic approach (support to the development of income-generating activities) and for the promotion of their rights through awareness-raising.

APEF offers vocational training:

Tailoring, sewing, dyeing, embroidery for 4 to 6 months and then invites women from the **UPCs (Collective Production Units)**.



These UPCs are a means of accelerating the socio-economic integration of women and, above all, a lever for gaining power of action.

APEF's capitalisation focused on **2 UPCs, Charité and Amina**, whose capitalised structuring practices date back 20 years.

### Further information on *UPCs*:

#### Organisation

**Committee of elected women** and distribution of tasks based on skills

#### Composition

**4 to 6 members**,  
all **craftswomen**

#### Scale

Mostly **local**  
economic activity

#### Types of activities

**Production of clothing** for sale, **marketing** visits, **experience sharing** between UPCs, **management** of a solidarity mutual aid fund, ...





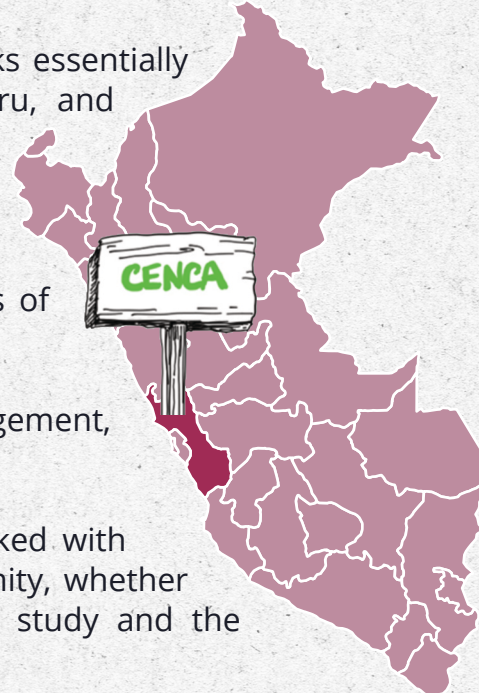
Instituto de Desarrollo Urbano

**CENCA** works essentially in Lima, Peru, and addresses a

major issue of the city: the growing rural exodus which leads to the extension of the city and the construction of precarious and vulnerable popular districts on the outskirts of the capital.

In 2014, to conduct a study on territory management, CENCA decided to «*call on the people.*»

CENCA selected people having already worked with CENCA and well respected by their community, whether community leaders or not, to validate the study and the questions.



Together they questioned the assumptions, then organised interviews in the field and created thematic committees.

This study made it possible to consolidate a group that would be mobilised again for another study (observatory of everyday risks).

The **community team** was born.

### Further information on the community team:

#### Composition

**A dozen members**

#### Organisation

**No representative**, open collective managing new joiners and departures

#### Scale

Mariatégui **district** in Lima

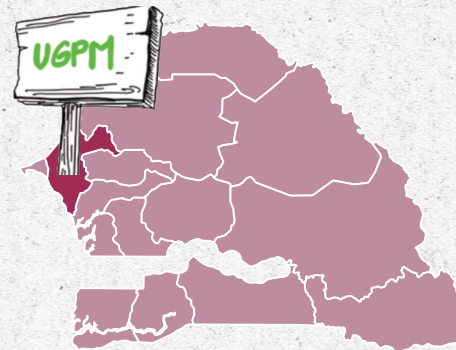
#### Types of activities

**Community mapping, technical and social training, popular housing, social economy, ...**





In the Meckhé area (Thiès region in Senegal), **UGPM** helps families develop their farms through sustainable agro-ecological practices and the diversification of their sources of income.



UGPM is composed of 76 farmers' groups.

The objective of the groups is peasant self-promotion: **training, getting stronger, defending one's rights, being a stakeholder** able to influence public policies. UGPM has a technical and a political dimension.

UGPM's capitalisation focused on the provision of support to **Femboul farmers' group**.

This group has been provided support for more than 10 years and is emblematic of the local community actions provided by UGPM in order to revitalise farmers' groups.

### *Further information on Femboul farmer's group:*

#### *Organisation*

**A chairman and a chairwoman**, for parity purposes, an office, an AGM, committees for the management of common activities

#### *Composition*

**51 members,**  
all **farmers**

#### *Scale*

**Village**

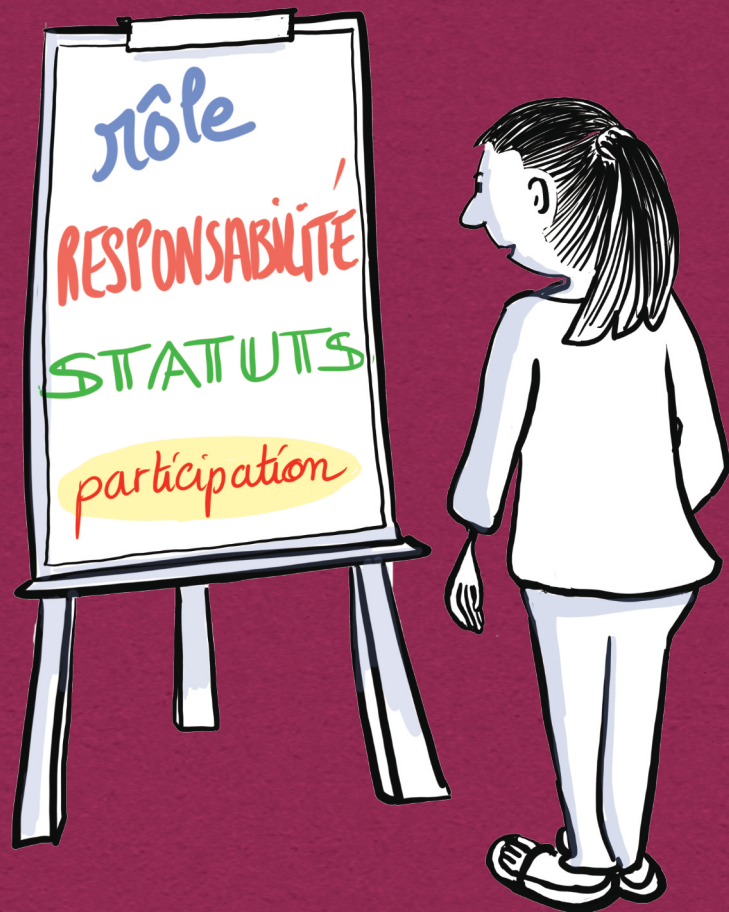
#### *Types of activities*

**Provision of services** to members through mutual aid, **small loans, solidarity** towards members in need, **training, literacy, management** of a collective grain warehouse...



# 2

## Training on the governance of collectives



In some organisations, training on the governance of a collective is crucial for its operation. Governance covers a variety of concepts: roles and responsibilities of elected representatives and bodies, regulatory texts, participation of members, etc.

- > Information and awareness-raising sessions on the importance of frequent meetings and commitment.
- > Training in accountability is also mentioned: « *the management committee was trained on governance and on the importance of reporting to the group.* »

**UGPM covers governance during specific information/awareness-raising/training sessions for the elected representatives of the farmers' groups:**

**APEF offers vocational training (4 to 6 months) to women: sewing, embroidery or dyeing. In addition to this technical training, they are trained to structure themselves into groups of women entrepreneurs: UPCs.**

- > Sessions on the importance of governance tools as well as information on the ideal functioning of a group, to have the members reflect on the updating or drafting of governance tools.



ÉCRITURE d'outils de GOUVERNANCE



APEF has identified several steps for the structuring of collectives, involving specific training sessions: first, workshops to discuss governance, then internal rules and regulations, and then the drafting of a business plan.

This is the «starter kit» provided by APEF to the UPCs (equipment, rental assistance, working capital).

The governance training focuses in particular on «*the role of each committee member and governance best practices: transparency, equality, representativeness, respect for values, democracy, alternation of power, accountability, control, participation of all members in activities, planning of activities.*»

Members of the collectives report the positive effects of these trainings.

Here is a testimonial from a member of an APEF collective:

«*I have observed great changes in our UPC as a result of the training I have received. Here are some examples:*

> At organisational level:

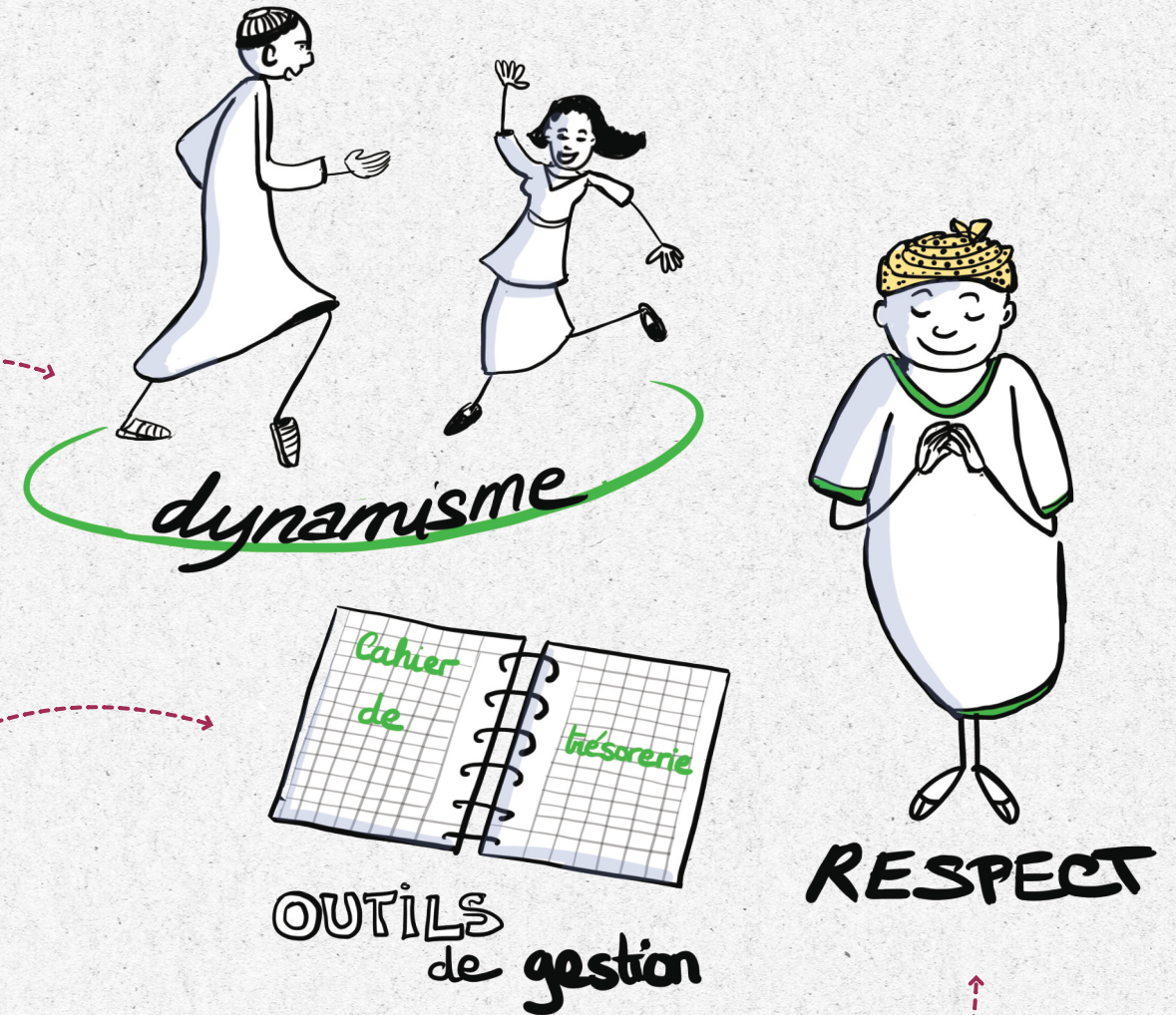
*the involvement and the distribution of tasks among UPC members according to their skills; the application of governance best practices by the committee set up despite the absence of alternation; the involvement of the whole family in the work of UPC members; the dynamism of the committee and members; the travels to look for new models (innovation); the marketing done by each UPC member;*

> At economic level:

*transparent fund management, maintenance of management tools (call records, economic documents, meeting minutes documents, treasury documents); the creation of a solidarity fund for social interventions; the distinction between the group's goods and the family's goods; the equitable distribution of salaries among the members;*

> At human level:

*love and mutual respect; cultural diversity.»*



### Takeaway

APEF and UGPM consider that governance is crucial for the constitution of collectives. Members of their collectives report the beneficial effects of governance training: better involvement and distribution of tasks, application of governance best practices, distinction between the group's goods and the family's goods, etc.



# 3

## Open and informal collectives



For other organisations, governance is not a prerequisite for the proper operation of a collective. It's actually the collective's lifecycle that will ultimately determine its functioning.

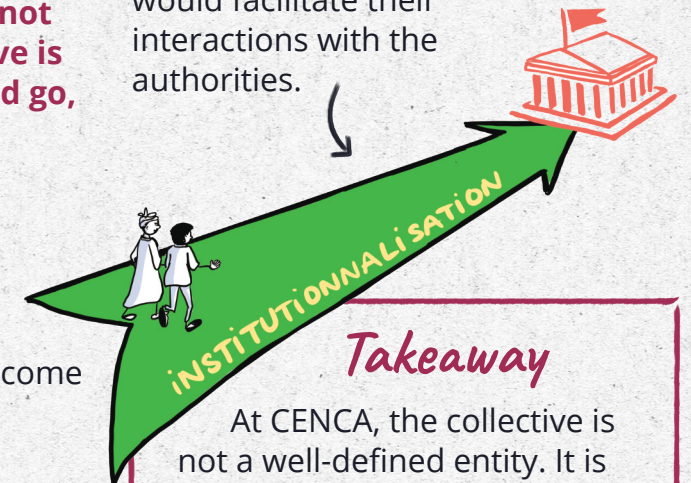
The challenge in this model is to welcome and integrate anyone who wants in, at any time.

**CENCA's community team is not very formalised. The collective is open to people who come and go, to ideas from everywhere:**

- > The community team is a meeting and exchange environment, open to anyone. It is very attractive. Some people leave but can come back.
- > The collective takes into consideration ideas developed within the collective but also ideas and projects brought by members, once discussed again together.

Therefore, CENCA does not provide collectives with governance training, but with a follow-up, on a case-by-case basis, of the groups. This open functioning is to be compared with UGPM's and APEF's collectives' distinct practices, with more delimited collectives.

It is an interesting system, but how can it be combined with a possible institutionalisation of the group? Indeed, the members are asking for an institutionalisation of the community team, with standards and articles of association that would facilitate their interactions with the authorities.



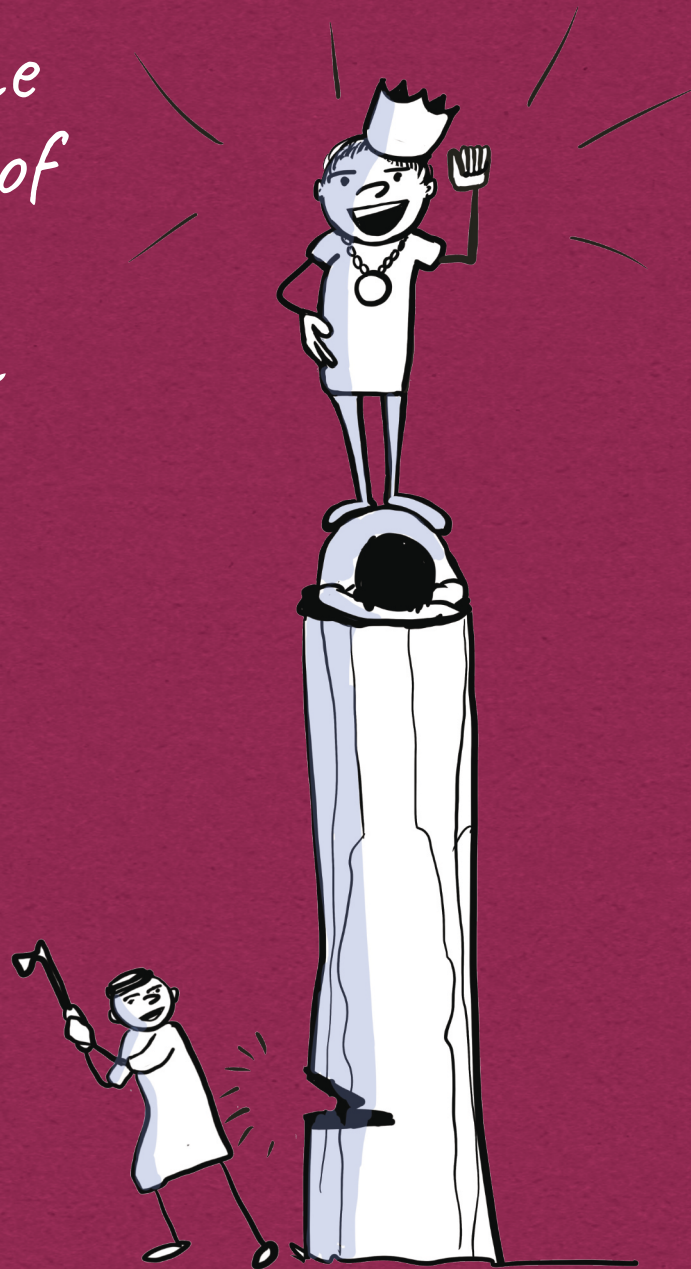
### Takeaway

At CENCA, the collective is not a well-defined entity. It is open to people who come and go. However, in order to interact with the authorities, for example, the informal nature of the groups may be considered a limitation.

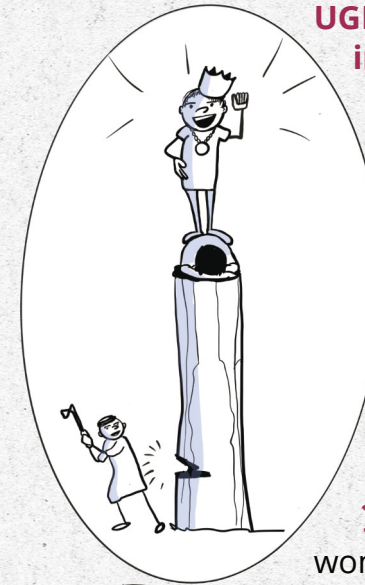


# 4

Preventing the reproduction of relationships of domination within the governance body?



Specific training courses are sometimes implemented to fight against relationships of domination within collectives and groups.



**UGPM offers several training courses intended to fight against relationships of domination:**

- > the «roles and responsibilities» training, which questions individualism within groups and regulation within collectives;
- > the cycle of sessions on relationships of domination, which aims at raising awareness and reducing relationships of domination in groups;
- > the training course on women's leadership and communication, which also contributes to the fight against relationships of domination.

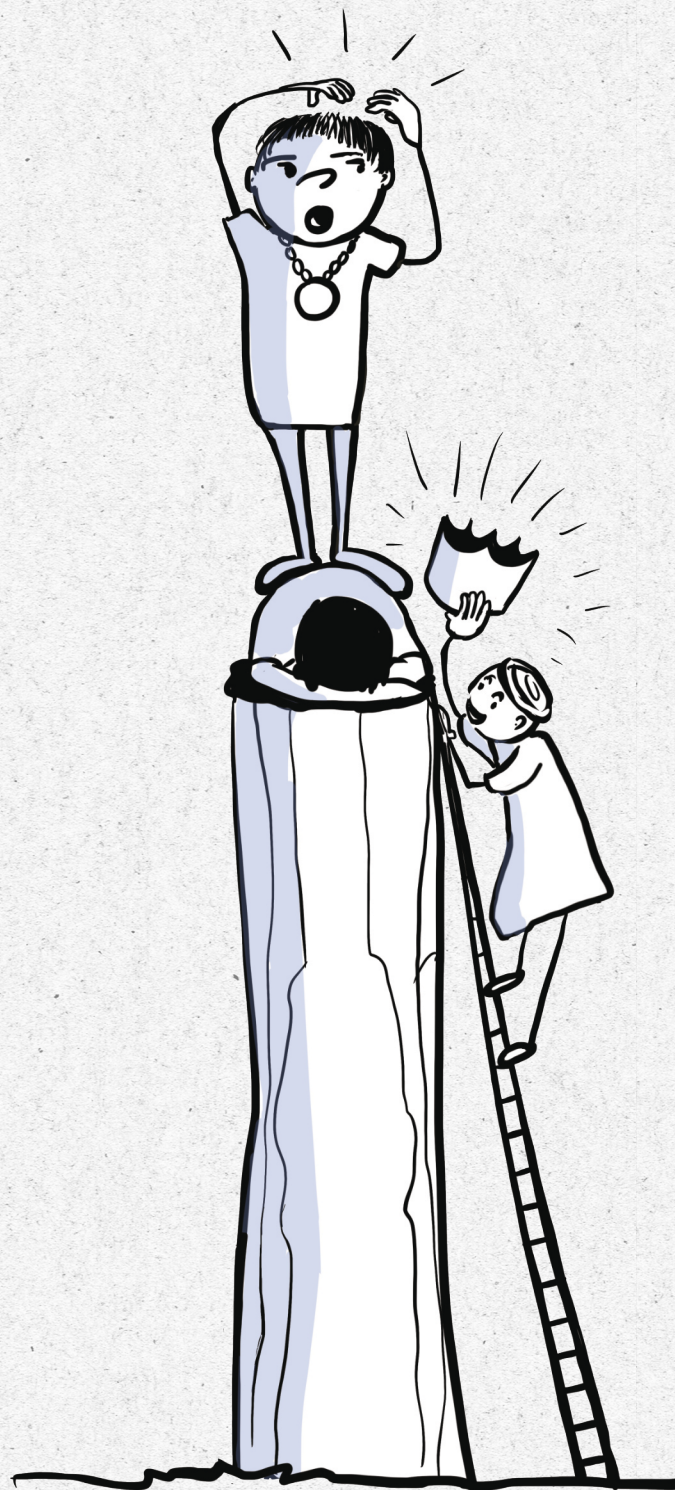




In the case of CENCA, leaders are taught «to organise the population without using power as a means to promote their own interests as leaders.»

Beyond these specific training courses, however, other governance training contents could encourage certain relationships of domination.

For example, the definition of selection criteria for the people representing the collective (public speaking, experience, etc): although these criteria are relevant to ensure an effective governance, don't they also contribute to reproducing relationships of domination, by giving power to those who already have it?



### Takeaway

Some organisations provide specific training on the prevention of relationships of domination within collectives or integrate this concept into non-specific training (e.g. training of leaders).

**ATTENTION À  
LA REPRODUCTION  
DES RAPPORTS  
DE DOMINATION  
!**

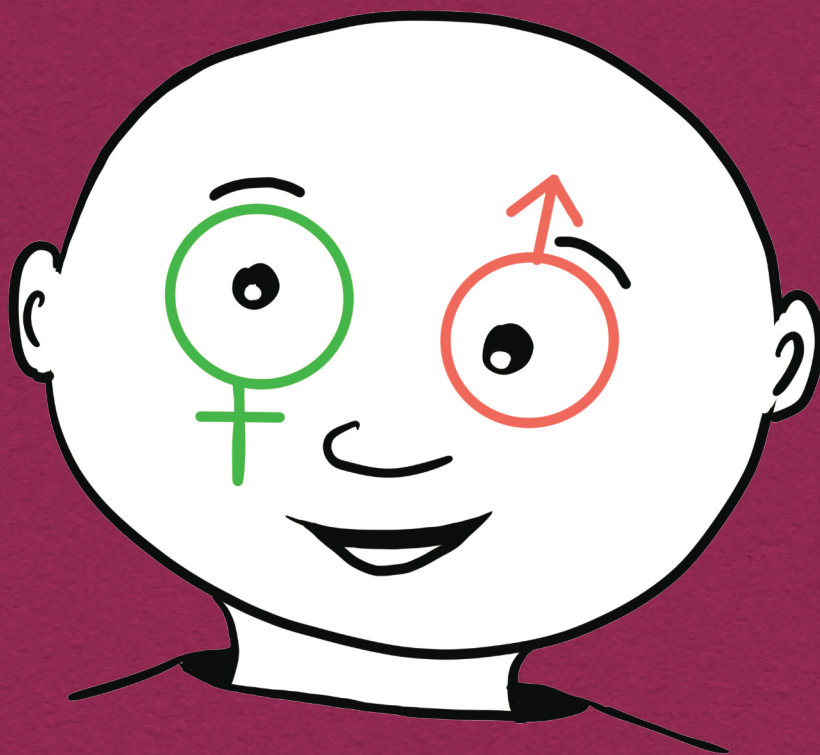
But we can also question other training courses, i.e. training on selection criteria for the elected representatives of collectives, likely to contribute to the perpetuation of relationships of domination.

Another focal point in order to prevent relationships of domination in collectives: how to teach leaders to be leaders and exercise power without taking power?



# 5

## What about gender relations?



The organisations' governance does not take gender issues into consideration. However, a few practices are worth noting.

**UGPM proposed that groups systematically appoint a chairman and a chairwoman (although it was observed that men would still speak out more than women).**

UGPM thus implemented a series of practices to develop women's assertiveness:

- > Offering women training course on women's leadership and communication.
- > Making sure that, during the meetings, the facilitator would give the floor to those who stay in the background: *«we insist on everyone's participation, it's what our collective is all about.»*

We make sure *«that women really feel involved and contribute to the different discussions (...). The facilitator is accountable for this.»*

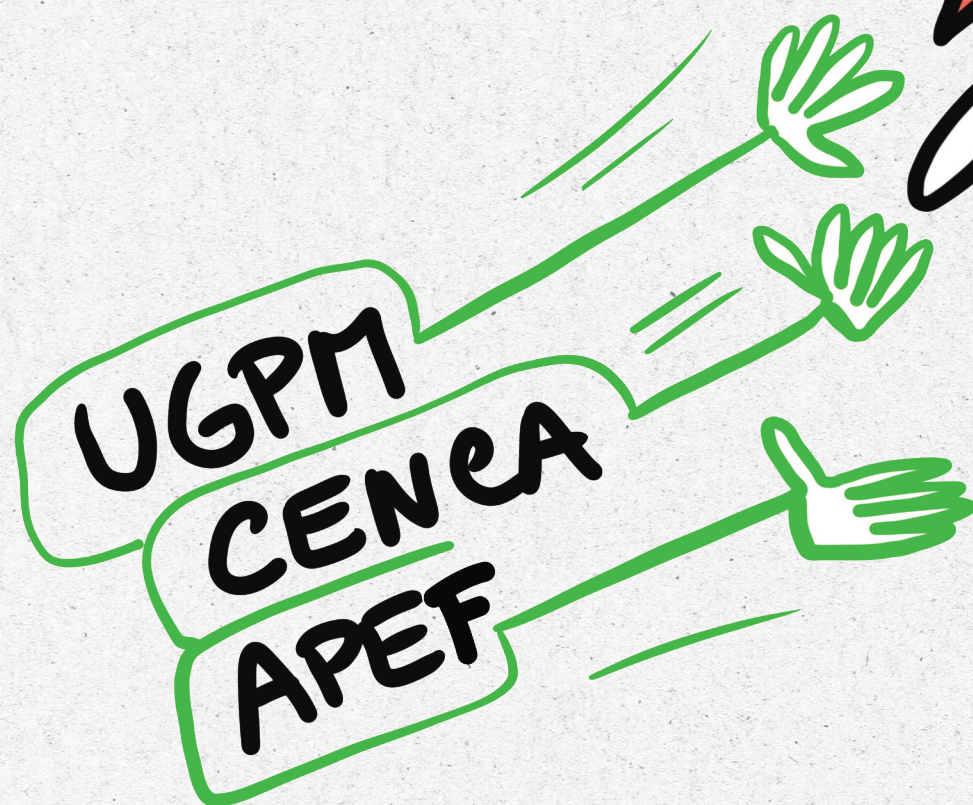
- > Awareness-raising activities related to local development are also a way to get women involved: *«women thought they should not participate in the development: this activity allows them to understand why their participation is just as important as that of men.»*



**In the case of CENCA, the community team is made up mostly of women.**

CENCA values the women involved because they are concrete examples of individual emancipation: they take initiatives and carry them out so as to transform their communities, they have pushed back the boundaries of the domestic space to intervene in public. To CENCA, training women leaders is already a way to fight against certain relationships of domination.

**APEF also trains women leaders de facto, because its learners are women.**



### *Takeaway*

All three partners of the transversal workshop train women leaders. This is already a way to fight against gender-based relationships of domination, outside and within the collectives. Training women is fighting against a form of relationship of domination.



# 6

## Going further



### **Creation and implementation of governance training : a way to standardise collectives?**

Such training obviously helps the operation of collectives, while also contributing to the standardisation of governance.

For example, UGPM collectives appoint a chairman and a chairwoman (for gender equality), an office, an AGM, committees for the management of common activities.

The UPCs supported by APEF also follow the same principles of organisation and governance.

A certain paradox can be seen between standardising governance and trying to ensure that everyone takes ownership of it.

#### *Question to be asked in its own context :*

Doesn't standardisation have a negative impact on the ownership of governance? If so, how to provide quality governance training while allowing for leeway for self-organisation?



## Is it possible to institutionalise a collective while preserving a very open, flexible, informal mode of operation?

CENCA members also consider that institutionalisation is crucial for the sustainability of the community team. They value this process, which reflects their desire to continue to use this structure.

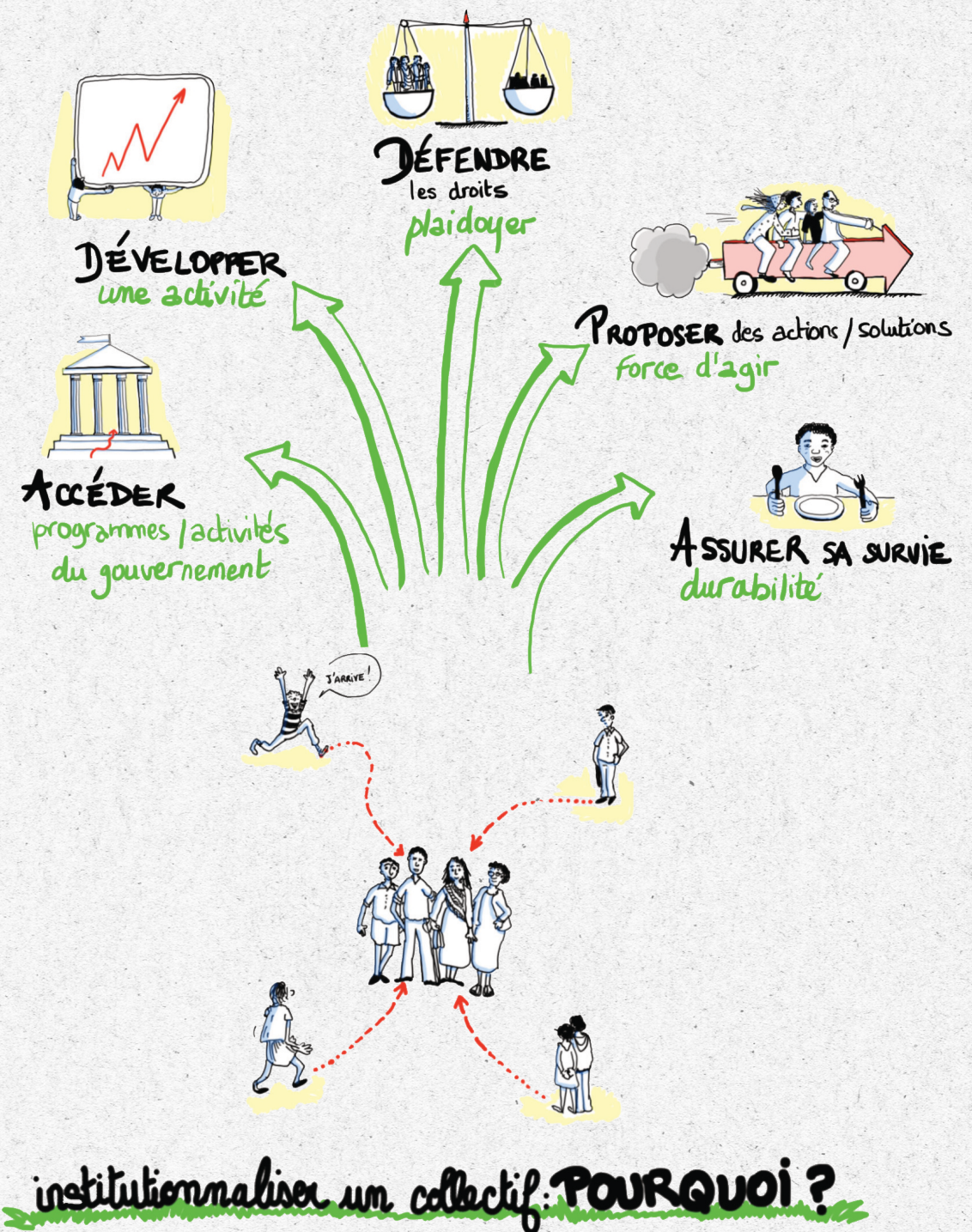
Some of the people who work at CENCA wonder if there is a risk of red tape (the work table at the municipality was mentioned as an example). Institutionalisation does not seem compatible with this kind of openness and informality.

This leads to another question: Is it possible to institutionalise a collective (so that it can liaise with the authorities), while remaining very flexible, open to everyone, and informal at the same time?

How can this be done?

### *Question to be asked in its own context :*

Can a collective be institutionalised while continuing to operate in a very open, flexible, and informal manner? How can this be done?





# 7

## Summary



- 1 APEF and UGPM consider that governance is crucial for the constitution of collectives. Members of their collectives report the beneficial effects of governance training: better involvement and distribution of tasks, application of governance best practices, distinction between the group's goods and the family's goods, etc.
- 2 At CENCA, the collective is not a well-defined entity. It is open to people who come and go. However, in order to interact with the authorities, for example, the informal nature of the groups may be considered a limitation.
- 3 Some organisations provide specific training on the prevention of relationships of domination within collectives or integrate this concept into non-specific training (e.g. training of leaders).

But we can also question other training courses, i.e. training on selection criteria for the elected representatives of collectives, likely to contribute to the perpetuation of relationships of domination.

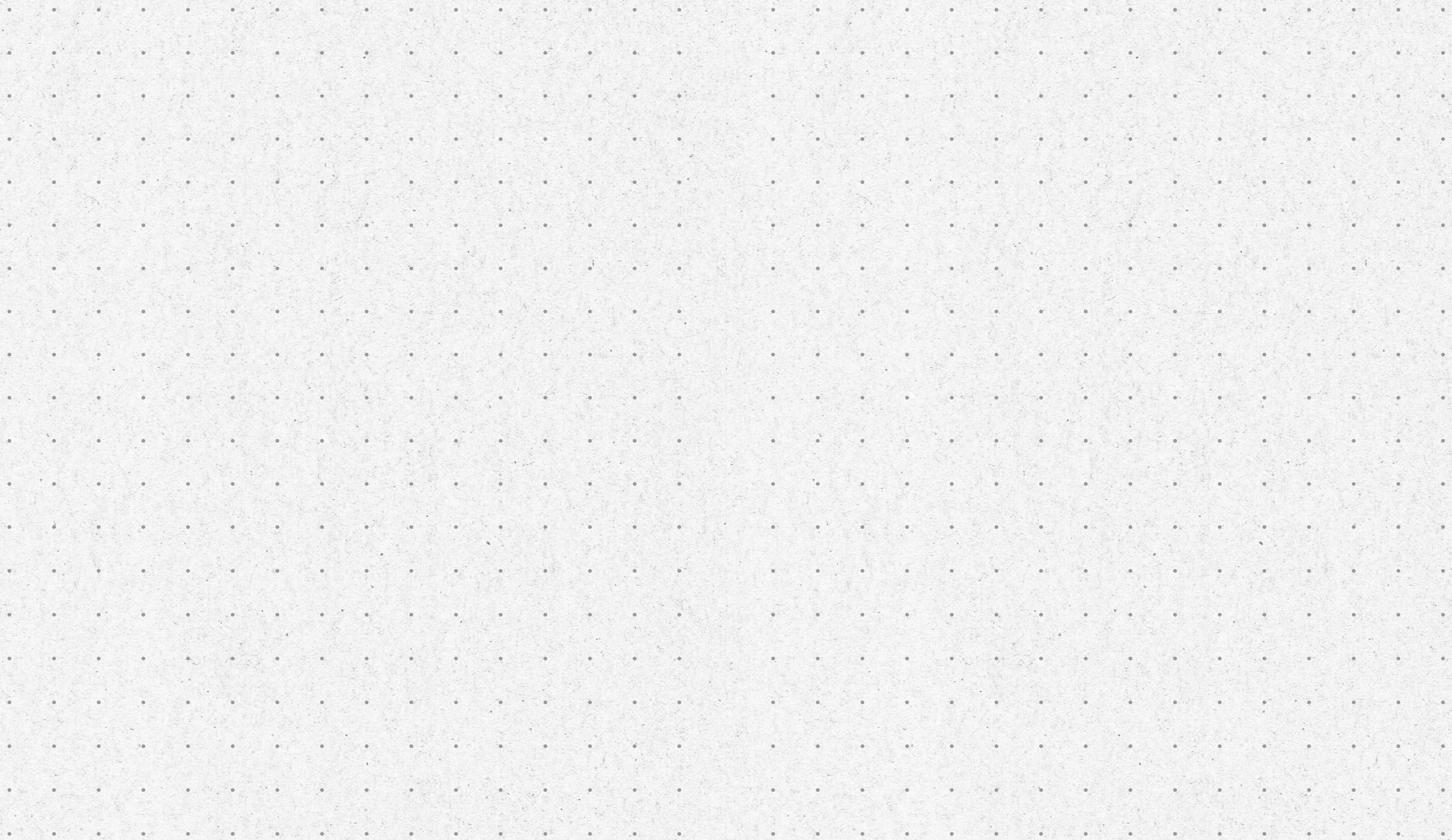
Another focal point in order to prevent relationships of domination in collectives: how to teach leaders to be leaders and exercise power without taking power?

- 4 All three partners of the transversal workshop train women leaders. This is already a way to fight against gender-based relationships of domination, outside and within the collectives. Training women is fighting against a form of relationship of domination.
- 5 Doesn't standardisation have a negative impact on the ownership of governance? If so, how to provide quality governance training while allowing for leeway for self-organisation?
- 6 Can a collective be institutionalised while continuing to operate in a very open, flexible, and informal manner? How can this be done?



# Notes









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