



FLOW 2025: SCI's Transformative Training Experience

FLOW 2025 took place over six rich and intense days, from April 22 to 28, in the beautiful mountain village of Mutters, Austria. Surrounded by snow-capped peaks and forests, a group of 27 participants arrived, some curious, some nervous, many excited, ready to co-create a space for learning, connection, and transformation. From the very beginning, it was clear that this was not going to be a typical training. The facilitators, Tamia, Sima*, and Thomas, welcomed everyone not just as learners, but as co-facilitators of the week ahead.

What is FLOW?

FLOW (Facilitating, Learning, Organising and Welcoming) is an annual "Training for Trainers" program designed to develop facilitation skills through non-formal education within the SCI network. The goal is to provide activists within our movement the necessary tools to organise projects and trainings with a special emphasis on peace education and inclusion.

What Happened

Getting Started

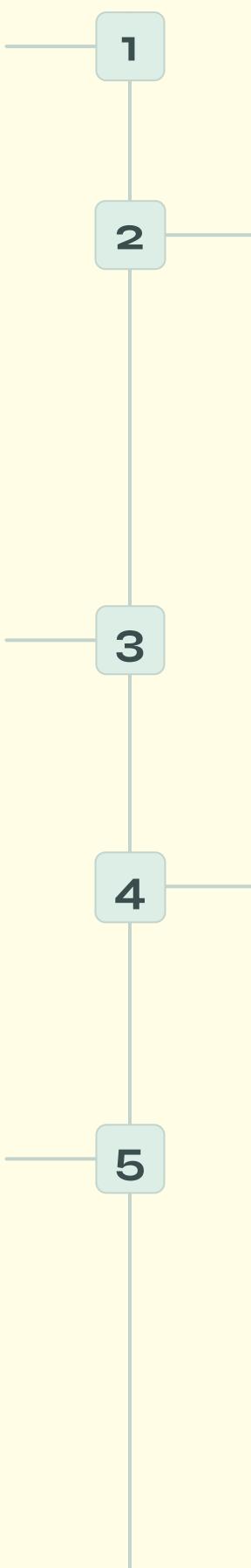
The journey started gently, with warm-up games, shared meals, and grounding exercises that helped participants get to know one another and the space. By the second day, the energy was rising: together they shaped their group agreements, discovered different types of education (formal, non-formal, critical, experiential), and began to experiment with facilitation approaches.

Tackling Real Challenges

One of the most memorable moments came during the "Trainer Support Chat," where real-life facilitation dilemmas were acted out and tackled collectively. Laughter and creativity met seriousness and care, as participants explored how to respond with compassion, clarity, and courage when things get tough in a training room.

Closing and Transition

The last day marked a transition from learning to application. In the morning, a playful and practical visual facilitation session helped participants build new tools for their workshops. Then came an open Q&A on "FLOW as a career," offering real-life insights into facilitation, freelancing, and future opportunities.



Midweek Exploration

Midweek, the group dived deeper. Theatre of the Oppressed exercises opened up conversations around group dynamics and power. The silent exhibition on discrimination created space for honest, sometimes uncomfortable reflection on privilege, internalised bias, and the complexities of being a facilitator in oppressive systems.

Broader Societal Questions

As the week went on, the content shifted toward broader societal questions. On Day 5, the theme of political education in times of collapse brought headlines and heartbreak into the seminar room. Through the "problem tree" method and silent discussions, participants connected the dots between climate breakdown, rising fascism, and their role as educators and activists.

And then it was time to close. In the final reflection circles and evaluation moments, there were laughs, tears, hugs, and plans. Participants shared what they had learned, what had moved them, and what they hoped to do next. What remained was a sense of gratitude and the feeling that something meaningful had been built together, something that would continue far beyond that one week in the Austrian Alps.

The Facilitators

FLOW would not have been possible without the guidance of a team of experienced facilitators, each bringing a strong background in political education, social justice, and non-formal education.



Tamia Alcázar

(she/her) is a Vienna-based trainer who has worked on Global Justice topics through non-formal education methods since 2018. Her work spans coordinating volunteer activities and facilitating workshops with a focus on decolonisation and anti-racism, always centring BIPOC perspectives and intersectionality.



Sima* Jakob

(they/them) is a trainer, facilitator, and activist based in Leipzig, Germany. Since 2014, they have been working with SCI and other organisations on themes such as climate justice, anti-discrimination, gender, group structures, and project management.



Thomas Schallhart

(he/they) is a Berlin-based trainer and political educator with a focus on queer rights, climate justice, global justice, and antimilitarism. A trainer with SCI since 2012, Thomas is a co-founder of *Critical Queer Solidarity* and *Bildung für utopischen Wandel*.

The Participants

27

Participants

From 11 countries representing 13 different nationalities

30%

Under 30

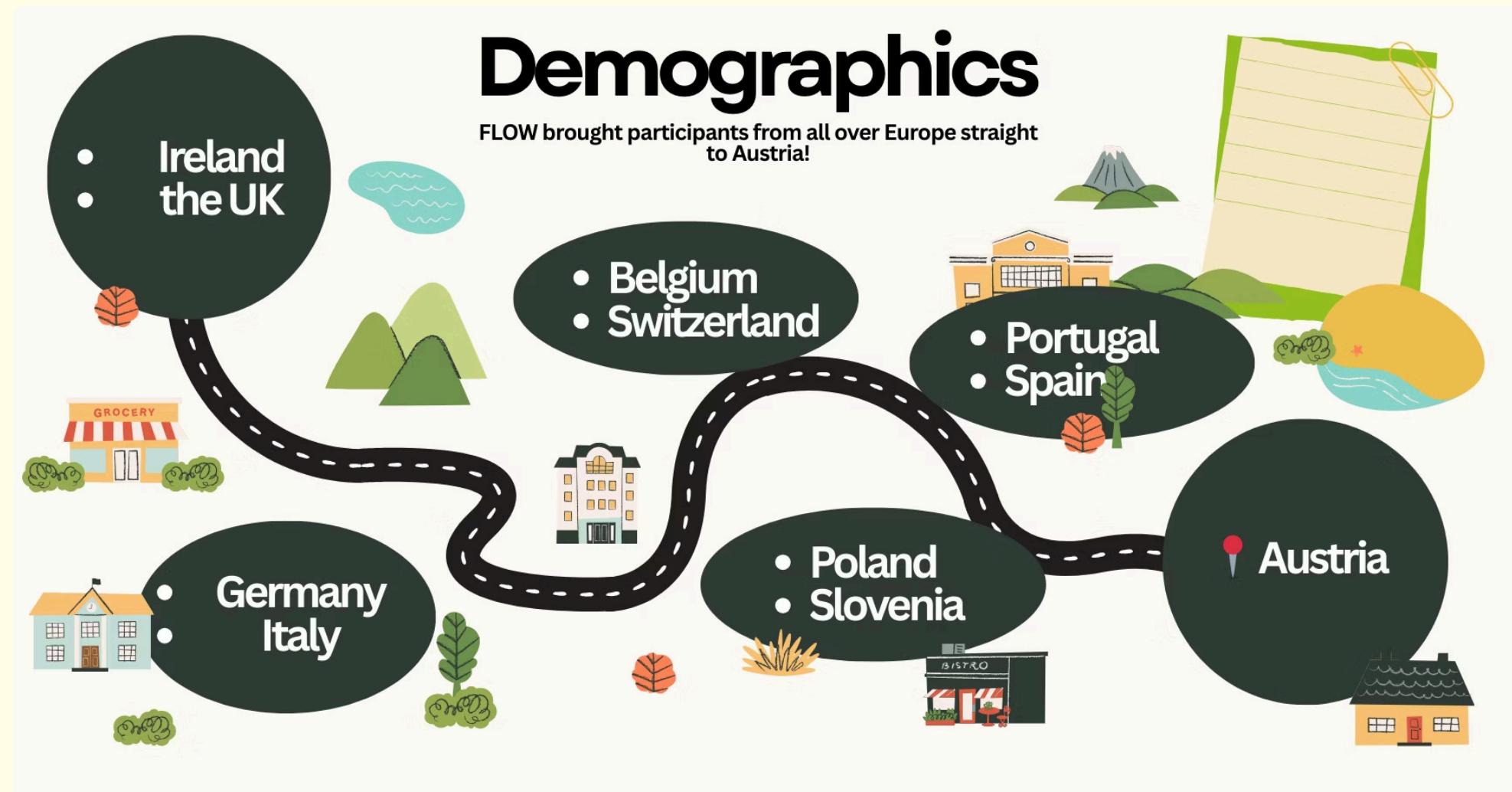
Creating an intergenerational learning environment

70%

Sustainable Travel

Chose environmentally responsible ways of traveling to the venue

FLOW 2025 brought together a vibrant, diverse, and deeply committed group of participants from all over Europe:



Attention to care and inclusivity contributed to a strong sense of safety, respect, and collective accountability throughout the training. Space was held for diverse perspectives, through participants listening, reflecting, challenging, and uplifting one another. FLOW became not just a safer space but a braver space for participants to share and contest..

Participants' Voices & Future Plans

Throughout the training, participants shared reflections on the moments that moved them most. Many highlighted the facilitators' approach, how they created trust, inclusion, and a deep sense of community.

1

Standout Experiences

The blindfolded guidance exercise was often mentioned as a standout experience, opening up conversations on leadership, care, and collective responsibility.

2

Braver Space

The concept of a braver space, where honesty, discomfort, and growth were welcomed, touched them deeply. One participant noted how FLOW offered a rare opportunity to discuss power structures in facilitation openly.

3

Practical Tools

Tools like the problem tree, circle of commonalities, and creative icebreakers gave participants both inspiration and confidence to try new methods in their own settings.

4

Future Applications

Looking forward, participants expressed strong motivation to apply what they learned. Future plans include facilitating walking tours, launching political education collectives, creating somatic and trauma-informed workshops, and running inclusive programs.

Many described FLOW as a refreshing alternative to formal education, one that blends critical thinking, creativity, and emotional depth.

Evaluation: What to Keep

Overall Structure & Flow

- Structured yet flexible schedule balancing practical, reflective, and experiential learning
- Low reliance on plenary sessions with strong focus on small group work
- Relaxed afternoon sessions helping manage energy levels

Methods & Facilitation

- Diverse facilitation styles and high-quality methods (Theatre of the Oppressed, empathy circle, visualization)
- Learning from the facilitation approach itself
- "Group coordination" and "power as a facilitator" sessions particularly impactful

Atmosphere & Community

- Strong, emotionally supportive group dynamic
- Training consistently described as a **brave and safer space**
- One of the safest and most inclusive spaces many had experienced

Care Structures

- EEE groups and task-sharing systems essential for group cohesion and reflection
- Embedded care work and use of metaphors in group tasks
- Deep connections formed in small groups

Logistics

- Clear, timely communication before and during the training
- Venue, atmosphere, and especially the food received enthusiastic praise
- Thorough and supportive info sheet and preparation

Evaluation: What to Improve

Physical Comfort & Movement

- Need for more physical movement during sessions
- Comfortable seating as an area for improvement
- More sessions outside to benefit from the natural setting

Time Management & Session Depth

- Some sessions could be more time-efficient or shortened
- Desire to go **deeper** into some methods or topics
- Possibly add an extra day or redistribute time across sessions

Content Improvements

- More practical inputs and knowledge-sharing from trainers
- "Flow as a career" session too short for the demand

Inclusion & Accessibility

One concern was that the venue was not fully accessible for participants with disabilities.

Suggested: include questions in the application form to help assess and address care-related or accessibility needs early on.

Task Coordination

Some task group responsibilities felt rushed or unclear. Suggestions included:

- Clearer separation of group vs individual tasks
- Daily check-ins or reminders
- Displaying task plans in a visible place (e.g. dining room)
- Rethinking when certain tasks (e.g. coffee prep) are scheduled

☐ Recommendations for Future SCI Projects

- Decolonisation
- Intersectional topics (queer-feminism, anti-racism, ecology)
- Ethical communication & media literacy
- Bridging volunteering with activism
- Cultural sensitivity and political education

The Future of FLOW

Building on what has been created during FLOW in 2024 and 2025, and learning from the feedback of the team and participants, SCI hopes to launch a second annual edition of FLOW from 2026. This FLOW (FLOW+, FLOW advanced, FLOW senior, or other suggestions welcome!) will offer an opportunity for more experienced facilitators to go deeper into specific themes and develop more concrete skills.

The aim is to establish FLOW as SCI's dedicated space for facilitators and trainers, similar to how the Placement Officer Training (POT) supports placement officers. This would offer branches a clear, recurring opportunity to train and grow their activist communities in a structured and inspiring way. FLOW Advanced will follow a similar format and identity to the original FLOW, ensuring continuity and visibility, while allowing flexibility in themes based on host branch interests and participant needs.

Collaborative Resource Creation

One of the most practical and appreciated outcomes of FLOW 2025 was the creation and use of a dedicated FLOW Padlet, an interactive online space that now serves as a living archive of the training.

Dissemination

- [FLOW 2025](#)
- FLOW [webpage](#)

The FLOW Padlet: A Living Resource

Throughout the week, participants and trainers added materials, notes, photos, flipcharts, workshop outlines, and visual tools to a dedicated online space.

[Access](#) the FLOW Padlet here

Facilitation Opportunities

A shared document listing facilitation opportunities was created. This evolving spreadsheet includes upcoming seminars, youth exchanges, workshops, and volunteer projects, many hosted by SCI branches or partner organisations.

Funders

FLOW 2025 was made possible with the financial support of the CERV programme of the European Union.

Previous editions of FLOW were funded through the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.



About SCI

Service Civil International (SCI) is a peace organization dedicated to promoting a culture of peace by organizing international voluntary projects for people of all ages and backgrounds. The organization consists of 41 branches and groups worldwide.