

# Individual solutions



What can  
you do about it?

# Care about self

It is especially people who respond to a calling who have the tendency to ignore their boundaries and work intensively in the name of change for the better. The mind twist is that you only serve your purpose well when you are healthy. Put yourself first.



Meg-John Barker  
Hell Yeah Self Care

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

– Audre Lorde, *A Burst of Light* (1988)

# Change your habits & beliefs

Toxicity is connected to the main beliefs of our society. It relates to stories we tell each other about life being hard and the need to fight for success (no pain, no gain). Support inner transformation by reconnecting with your body. You could use acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) methods.



ACT

# Follow your gut

“If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck.” Try to find the reason why you feel this way. Is there anything you can do to change the way you feel? Share it with others. How do they feel? How do they act?



Architects,  
We Need to Talk

# Play fair, be kind

Play in alignment with your inner values, needs and goals. Don't get drawn into games you don't like to play. We always have a choice, sometimes unfortunately without a comfortable solution. A public manifesto or code of ethics may help you to communicate your attitudes and to target partners with similar values.



This Ethical  
Disclaimer may  
help you to find  
your values

“I know you are fighting because you are scared and confused... Please be kind especially when we don't know what is going on.”

– Waymond, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022)

# Ask for help & help others

The easiest way out of a struggle is to ask for help. It doesn't matter if you need help with your work, with your business or with negotiations, or if you're going through a difficult time in your life. There is always someone you can ask for help. The converse applies too: be there for those in need.

# Listen actively

The smallest thing we can do is to actively listen. You can apply Pareto's 80/20 rule – 80% listening, 20% talking. It goes hand in hand with aware use of language.



Hear what people  
are really saying

# Be aware of the language you use

RATHER THAN THIS → USE THESE PHRASES

That's not what happened. → That's not how I thought it happened.

It will be all right. → What would you need?

It happened to me once... → Tell me more about your situation.

You can't take a joke. → I meant it as a joke, but it came across really wrong.

You're overreacting. → I now see that this is a very important issue for you.

How are you? → What made your day today?

Nonviolent communication works with everyday talk, which is secretly full of judgement, fight, inequality or competition. This is why it may be a guide towards collective solidarity in communication in architecture.



Principles and Practices of Learning about Nonviolent Communication

# Plan

Make routines and plans to facilitate the journey towards your goals. You can find many approaches. However, the key aspects of a well-functioning project or organisation are:

1. a plan that everyone knows
2. clearly defined competencies, responsibilities, methods of communication, tasks and their deadlines
3. continuous feedback enabling process iteration
4. open communication
5. respect for others

# Do something about it

Don't be silent. *Nemo iudex sine actore* – where there is no plaintiff, there is no judge. What's the worst that will happen if you do what you want? What's the worst that can happen if you do nothing? Once you find the courage to speak up, you're likely to hear a lot of unpleasant things from those whose stereotypes you're disrupting. Don't let it get to you.



Do something about it

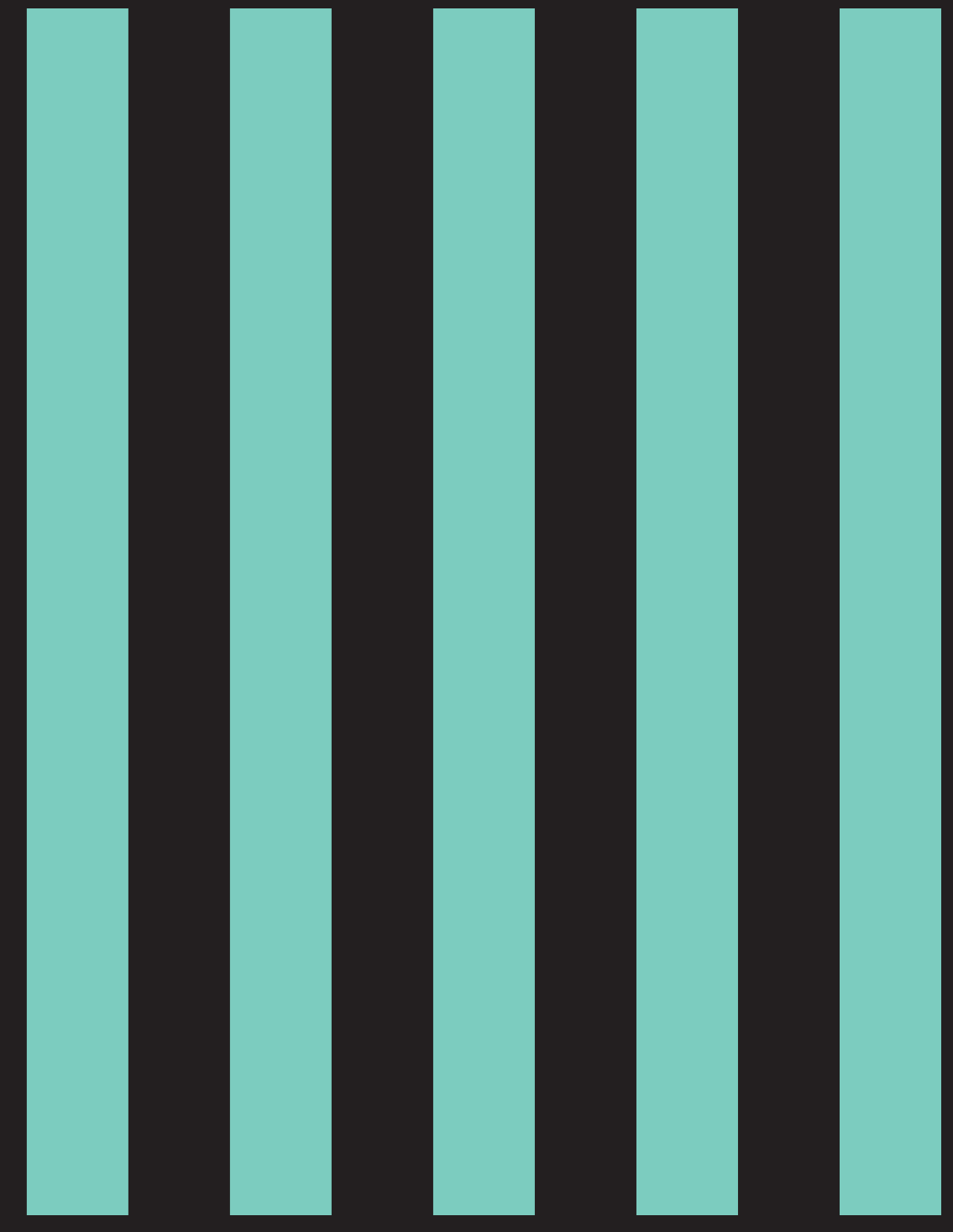
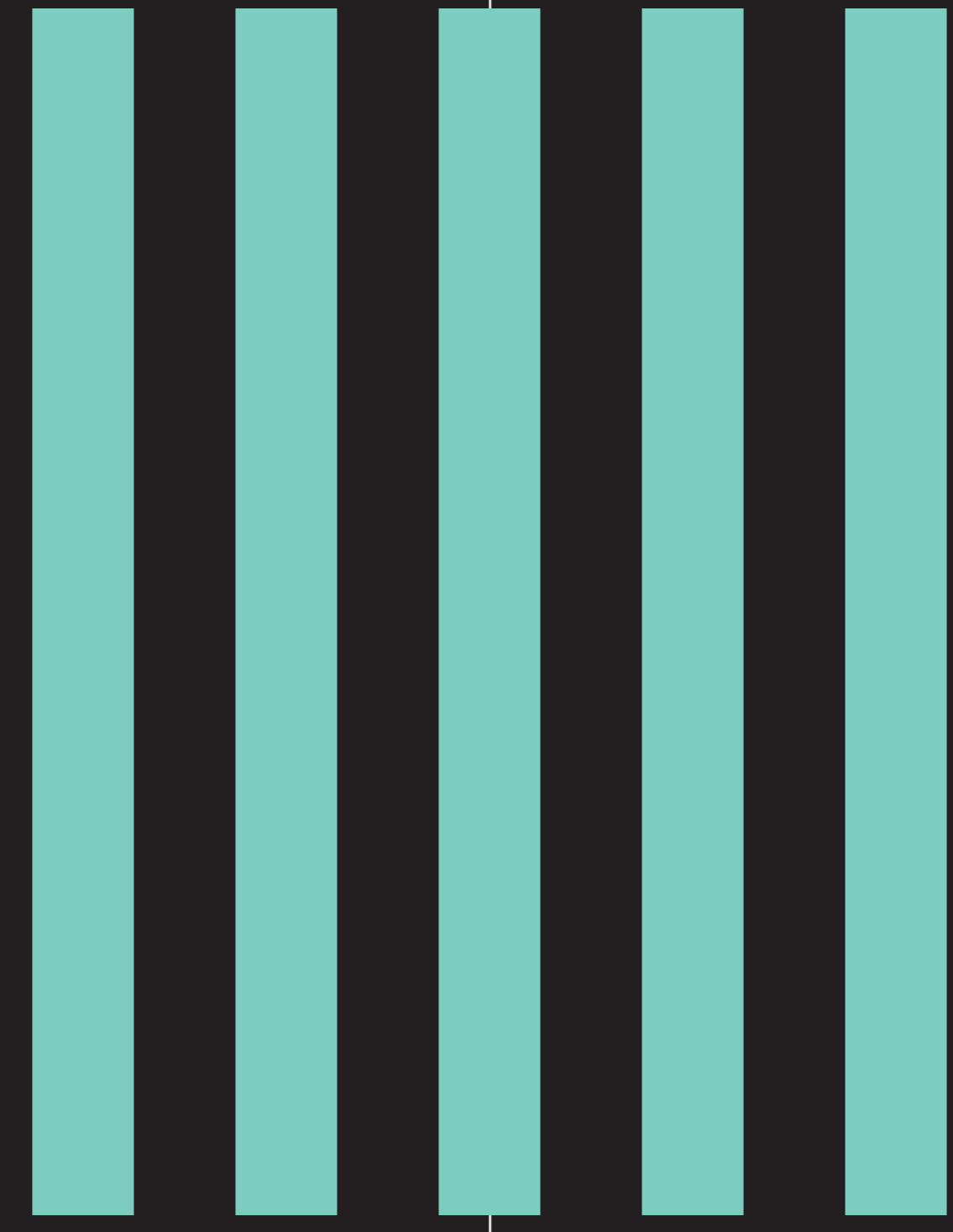
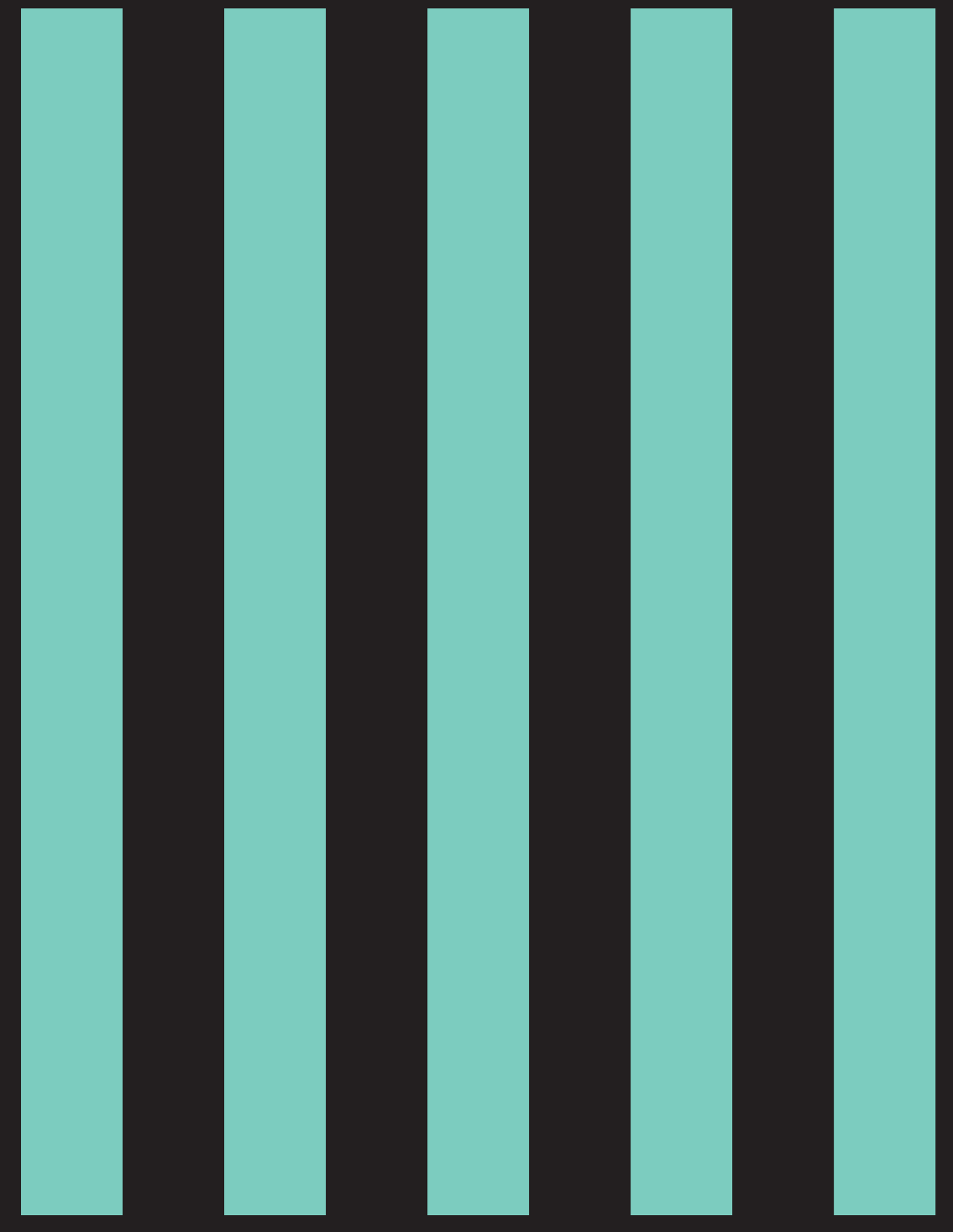
# If there is no other way, leave!

You don't have to sacrifice yourself for the love of architecture or because you decided to become an architect in your early twenties. There are many happy people with an architecture background healing the world in different fields. Take Pink Floyd as an example!



Alisha Tillery:  
You've left a toxic job, congrats. Now comes the healing.

# Collective solutions



What can  
we do about it?

# Legal Bodies

## Cooperatives

As a legal form, a cooperative is an enterprise owned, run and controlled by and for its members. It is driven by values such as self-help or responsibility, democracy, equality, solidarity and social and environmental justice. Cooperatives exist mainly to reach the common economic, social or cultural goals they set for themselves, not simply to increase profits.



Spatial Agency:  
Cooperative Practices

## Chambers of Architecture

The main task of official regulatory bodies in architecture is to ensure that their members have the education and knowledge adequate and necessary to pursue the profession. Could these bodies also be places where architects discuss and improve working conditions?

## Unions

Through their membership of a union, employees, but in a way also workers in a broader sense, are able to negotiate better working conditions while minimising individual risks. Unions are enshrined in law, which guarantees workers' rights and obligations in political negotiations. This legal definition is the great advantage of unions over other forms of self-organisation. Unions can be established within a company or a sector but are not yet common in architecture as the freelance status common among architects puts their efforts to collectively bargain at risk of committing competition-distorting behaviour. However, architects can negotiate their needs with official professional regulatory bodies, exert collective pressure on employers and represent their members in conflicts with employers.



Interview with  
Marisa Coltright  
on unionising  
in Europe



Architectural  
Workers United:  
5 Steps to  
Forming a Union

# How to find your modus operandi?

## Set rules for operation, especially communication

- Set a code of conduct that summarises the organisation's values, priorities and rules.
- Try your best to make the rules as clear as possible.
- Provide regular feedback and hold strategic meetings so that you can figure out as a group what are your needs, priorities and values.
- Set gestures by which members can express (dis)agreement without having the need to speak.
- An external facilitator is helpful in these matters because he/she does not have his/her own agenda, is also not involved in relational issues and can therefore keep the discussion neutral. Some collectives have a permanent facilitator who guides them and who knows the context.

## Set rules for the working process

- The process of onboarding and offboarding should be as clear as possible. Provide a welcome package for newcomers. Find a way to thank those who are leaving.
- Divide competences and tasks – everyone working on everything leads to everyone working on nothing. Make sure to designate who is responsible for completing the task.
- Make sure everyone works for a decent salary so you can not only develop a safe space but also grow personally.
- Communicate your values with the public so that your clients know what you stand for, and so that experts may find the inspiration for their operation.
- Each member may apply ten commandments.

# Informal structures

## Collectives

The term “collective” refers to the management structure of an organisation regardless of its legal form. A collective typically lacks a hierarchy between the members, who are at least more than three and who cooperate on projects based on multilogues instead of a division of task and collectively or otherwise fairly distribute authorship of a project. Collectives are often but not inevitably accompanied by the aim to self-initiate projects, to engage interested parties and/or to be involved in the construction process.

## Networks

Micro-firms make up the majority in architecture (70% in Czech research, 90% in the European Sector Study 2020 and 76% in the AIA Survey 2018). Within networks, services and infrastructures can be shared, which allows members to cope with considerable administrative and financial burdens that big corporations do not feel as strongly. Creating a network can enable individual entities to function better, to share knowledge and to further their impact. The Architectural Lobby and Peggy Deamer elaborated a vision on how to do it.

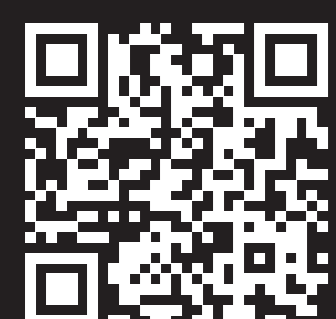
## Initiatives   Platforms   Interest groups

Associating with like-minded people can lead to establishing common ground on one of the profession’s key issues. A community can offer many forms of mutual support in what members lack or struggle with within the architectural industry, profession or education. An interest group can bring attention to and offer solutions for problems within the industry affecting a particular group of architecture workers.

## Teal organisations

according to Frederic Laloux

Teal organisations show the best long-term results despite giving employees both trust and freedom, based on Laloux’s research. The smallest self-organising unit should have up to 12 people. These self-organising structures have a coach to help them. The work time is divided into producing, group decision-making and learning soft skills. Humanity is at the core of the organisation. Others are human first, co-workers or customers second.



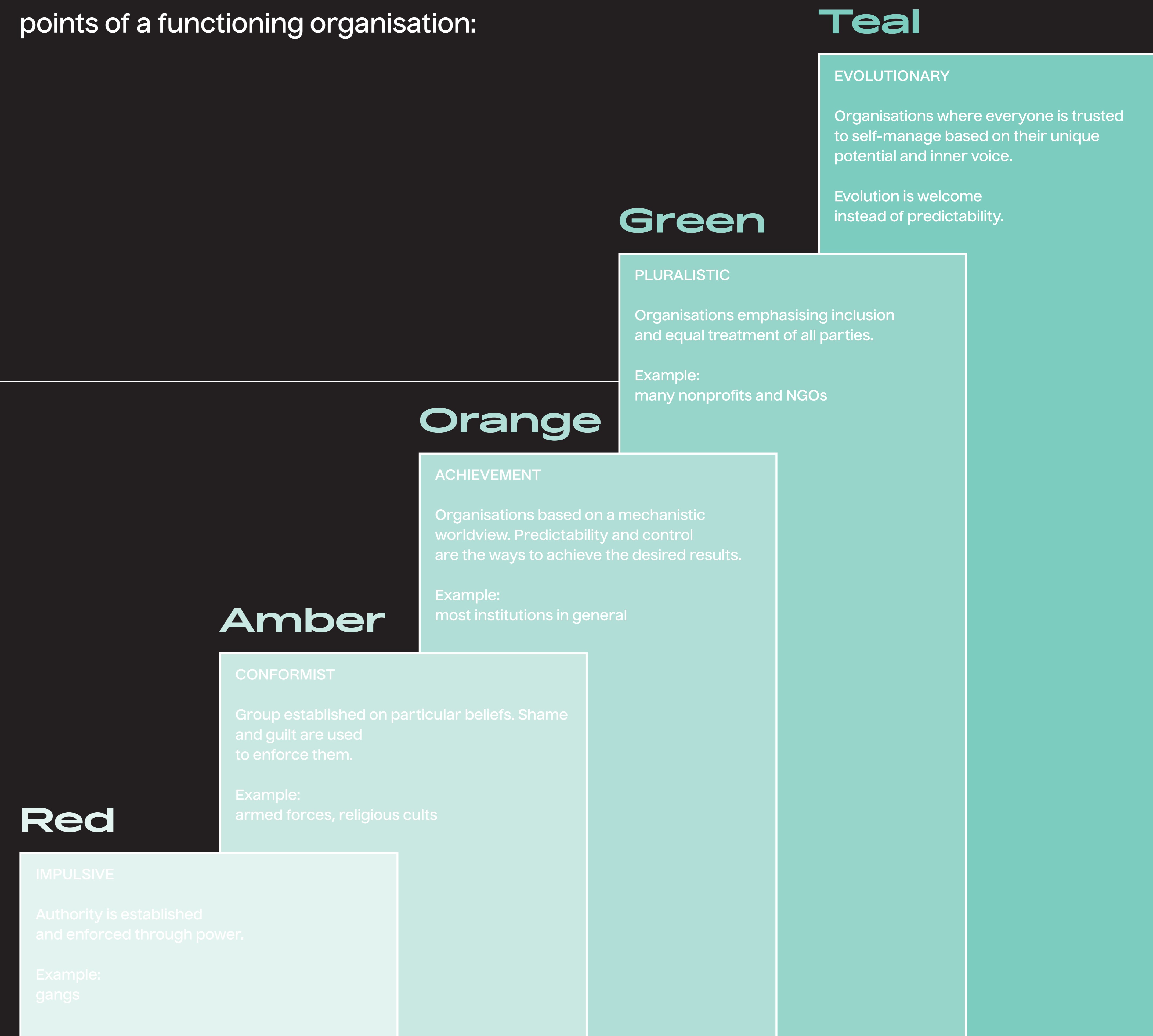
Architectural Lobby:  
Template for a Cooperative Network  
of Small Architectural Practices



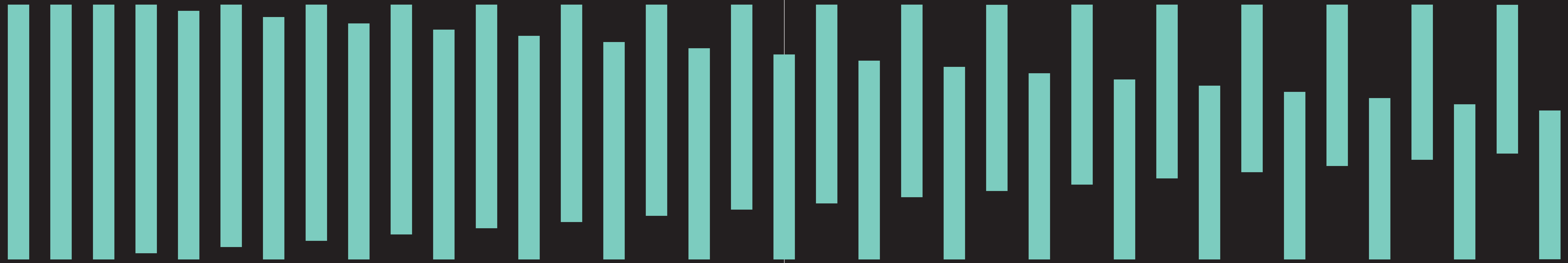
Reinventing  
Organisations  
Wiki

# Operate as you wish: self-organised

Frederic Laloux interviewed people from many organisations for his book *Reinventing Organisations* (2014) in order to describe trends and essential points of a functioning organisation:



# Systemic solutions



How can the system  
contribute to  
the change?

# Education

Universities strongly shape future professional lives. As is clear from all the surveys and interviews we have been working with, there is no way to change the current status quo of the profession without changing education. However, we can find inspiration from the history of experimental and radical pedagogies in architecture globally.



Beatriz Colomina,  
Ignacio G. Galán,  
Evangelos Kotsioros,  
Anna-Maria Meister:  
Radical Pedagogies,  
The MIT Press (2022)

# Policy-making in architecture

The architecture market is very limited. With political support, it may gain importance and set standards for the built environment, because it has the potential to cultivate relationships with its inhabitants. Architecture reflects the culture of the society in which it is created and may search for solutions beyond the boundaries of individual imaginations. Public interest is an inseparable part of quality architecture, and the policy of architecture may provide a shared basis for stakeholders and opinion makers such as residents and experts in fields other than architecture.



Davos Declaration  
2018: High-quality  
Baukultur for  
Europe!

# Follow existing legal norms and implement legal instruments

Setting rules alone is not enough. As visible from the examples below, many topics are already being addressed by legislation. From our Central European point of view, it is necessary to:

- know one's rights and obligations
- monitor whether rights are being violated
- know where to report possible embezzlement
- have confidence in the integrity of the investigation

# Decent minimum wage

The way to set a minimum standard level regarding remuneration can be the concept of a living or decent minimum wage meant to allow for a material-wise basic but socially acceptable standard of living. The EU directive 2022/2041 describes criteria for establishing the state's adequate statutory minimum wages. A living wage can be promoted also at the level of a professional organisation, for example the RIBA Chartered Practices.



RIBA:  
Living wage  
requirement  
for RIBA Chartered  
Practices



Directive (EU)  
2021/2041



# Predictability in working conditions and labour law enforcement

The EU Directive 2019/1152 determines that workers will have the right to more predictability in their working conditions and more timely and complete information about the essential aspects of their job, such as place of work and remuneration. Member states must transpose and enforce this EU guideline.



Directive 2019/1152 on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions

# Collective bargaining

Although collective agreements by freelancers on the pricing of their services were formerly regarded as a form of cartel, the EU C (2021) 8838 guidelines suggest promoting collective bargaining and no longer labelling freelancer pooling as market and competition-distorting behaviour.



Example of collective agreement from the Netherlands, Collective Labour Agreement (CLA) between the Royal Association of Dutch Architects (BNA) and trade unions FNV, CNV and De Unie



Draft guidelines on the application of EU competition law to collective agreements regarding the working conditions of solo self-employed persons.

# The European Anti-racism Action Plan 2020–2025

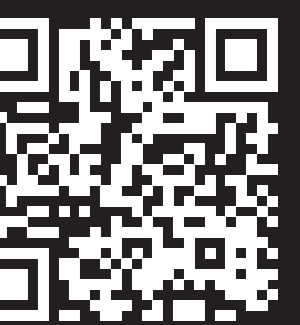
This is an important strategic document when it comes to building a more sustainable future for all. Before the set goals are achieved, our daily behaviour can contribute to a more equal and accessible environment for all.



European Commission: EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025

# Gender Equality Strategy & equal opportunities

The equity situation in architecture replicates the situation throughout society. Part of the key objectives of a gender-equal Europe are closing gender gaps in the labour market, achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy, addressing the gender pay and pension gaps, closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics.



European Commission: Gender Equality Strategy