

**Access in the Making (AIM) Lab  
Meeting Facilitation Protocol**

## Acknowledgement<sup>1</sup>

As we write our Meeting Facilitation Protocol, we want to acknowledge in bold letters that it was the methodological work of **the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR)** that has inspired and guided us throughout the process.<sup>2</sup> We are extremely grateful to CLEAR Lab for the incredible amount of work that they have done in how to run a feminist and anti-colonial lab,<sup>3</sup> and their generosity in sharing this know-how with others. **We cannot cite you and thank you enough.**

## Citation

Inspired by CLEAR Lab's work, AIM Lab has worked on this document over almost a LAB of ten months (and we are still and will be working on it). This document is the result of *labour*, including doing research, collective conversations, and editing. This

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that in our *Manifesto* and *Protocols*, we make the deliberate decision to use, not endnotes, *but footnotes*. In order to subvert the design hierarchy scripted into footnotes (which automatically decreases their font size vis-a-vis the font size of main text) we choose to use the same font size for both footnotes and the main body of the text, with the same line spacing. These design choices reflect our commitments to feminist ethics of citation. Through these choices, we seek to emphasize the shoulders we stand upon, and the various intellectual genealogies, activist, and artistic traditions that we draw from. Thank you, Annemarie Mol, Sara Ahmed, and Max Liboiron for teaching us about the importance of citations and the politics of footnotes (Mol, *The Body Multiple*; Ahmed, "Making Feminist Points,"; Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism*).

<sup>2</sup> CLEAR, *CLEAR Lab Book: A living manual of our values, guidelines, and protocols*.

<sup>3</sup> For methodological projects of the CLEAR Lab, see:

<https://civiclaboratory.nl/methodological-projects/>

document is a research output. This document is a *publication*. If you quote, use, or in any way benefit from this document, cite it.

Cite as:

AIM Lab. *Access in the Making (AIM) Meeting Facilitation Protocol*. Montreal: Access in the Making Lab, 2022.

As a lab committed to disability justice and feminist citational practices, we are especially concerned that the intellectual labour of marginalized folks (including BIPOC, disabled artists, activists, scholars) and those occupying precarious positions in the academia (graduate students, adjuncts, emerging scholars) are not properly (sometimes, never) recognized. Our own citational practices seek to dismantle that ignorance and erasure, and we hope that you, the reader, will do the same.

### **Meeting Facilitation publication co-authorship**

This publication emerged out of a series of numerous conversations within AIM as well as from a litany of members' own experiences in various academic and community spaces as well as activist and social movements. The writing of this manifesto was by and large produced by Amy Mazowita and Dresda Emma Méndez De La Brena in consultation with AIM's Steering Committee.

## Meeting Facilitation Protocol

### 1. What is facilitation?

- 1.1. **Facilitation is a process** of enabling groups to work cooperatively and effectively together. The role of the facilitator does not imply assuming all responsibility for the running of the meeting (responsible input from all attendees is needed) but the facilitator must practice active listening, keep the discussion moving forward and manage tension, fatigue, and negativity.
- 1.2. **Facilitation is a co-responsibility.** The group should avoid placing sole responsibility on the person who is moderating the meeting. All group members need to take a responsible position on the achievement of objectives in the allotted time. Members are expected to:
  - Review the week's agenda ahead of time.
  - Add announcements and talking points to the agenda.
  - Agree to pin conversations that require a separate meeting.
  - If absent, take the time to review the meeting notes.
- 1.3. **Facilitation is based on mutual recognition:** We all take responsibility for achieving meeting objectives by helping participants bring about and make the best of the knowledge and ideas that they collectively possess. This is acknowledging that participants are knowledgeable and autonomous thinkers.
- 1.4. **Facilitating is to anticipate.** This means that there are steps we can take to foresee and avoid possible barriers. The following are some tips that can help make the facilitation process smoother:

- Prepare preliminary documents and send them to the participants.
- When required, arrange consultations or interviews with people who are experts on the issues that we are going to address.
- Translating complicated reports or information into a language understandable by everyone.
- If you are not facilitating in your mother tongue, or you are shy or suffer from anxiety, prepare with anticipation, rehearse, and share your access needs with the group so that they can help you (asking for clarity, speaking slowly, etc.). The group should also be careful to respect the facilitator's access needs and to approach all meetings with empathy.

## **2. How to facilitate a participatory process?**

### **2.1. Begin with personalized Land Acknowledgement**

- We acknowledge that our lab, and our meetings take place on Indigenous Lands<sup>4</sup>. Since 2021, we have been asking the weekly facilitator to make a personal Land Acknowledgement, discussing their own relationship to the Land, rather than making a general Land Acknowledgement at the start of each meeting.
- In September 2022, we dedicated two of our AIM's regular meetings to collectively workshop how to write our personal as well as AIM's Land Acknowledgements. In the workshops, we have read, discussed, and followed the "Template for Personalization, Definitions, and Speaker

---

<sup>4</sup> Following the guidelines for Land Acknowledgements as described in the Library and Information Studies Students' Association. LISSA, "LISSA Land Acknowledgement, Template for Personalization, Definitions, and Speaker Protocol," throughout this text we capitalize Land to in reference to the relations Indigenous peoples have with Land.

Protocol” created by Library and Information Studies Students’ Association.<sup>5</sup>

The personalized Land Acknowledgements that we created in these workshops will be uploaded to AIM’s website under our individual bios.

- We also invite any new attendees and/or anyone who is joining us from a new location to share their social positions with us at the beginning of the meeting.

## 2.2. Rest of the Meeting

- Each meeting has a facilitator and a notetaker. The facilitator is responsible for “running” the meeting. The notetaker is responsible for taking notes of all discussions, motions passed, disagreements, and noting any items that need to be addressed at a later date. Following the meeting, the notetaker should upload all weekly notes to Teams (General > Meetings > “AIM Weekly Meeting Notes”).
- Identify the kind of meeting: Meetings can be informative, decision-making, creative, etc.
- Address all items on the agenda. For longer agendas it may be necessary to table certain discussions for future meetings in order to discuss all points listed.
- Facilitators should post the proposed agenda to Teams, adjust the agenda based on member requests, ensure meetings carry on in a timely fashion, send gentle reminders of the time and date of the meeting.
- Clearly explain what the meeting objective consists of and what the procedures that are proposed are. Clarity regarding the meeting’s purpose/agenda will save time and ensure there are fewer misunderstandings amongst members.

---

<sup>5</sup> Thank you Library and Information Studies Students’ Association (LISSA) for gifting us with this template. Library and Information Studies Students’ Association. LISSA, “LISSA Land Acknowledgement, Template for Personalization, Definitions, and Speaker Protocol.”

- Ensure all matters are covered during the predetermined time. (1 hour for regular, weekly meetings).
- Facilitate the interventions of all those who participate in an orderly fashion and try to mediate interruptions. The facilitator must be aware of the whole group and be attentive to these requests. E.g., the facilitator is responsible for calling on those who raise their hands and wish to speak.
- It is important that the group know what the time limits are and, from time to time, be reminded of the time consumed. If long interventions take place (monopolizing the discussion), it is useful to limit the time of each intervention: i.e., making an announcement that we have limited time so that each intervention may not exceed XX minutes. Of course, not all discussions can run full course within an allotted time frame and there are cases when we will need to prioritize certain topics and ideas over others. If time constraints are limiting pertinent discussions, the facilitator should have the flexibility to adjust the agenda and make a list of items to be addressed at the following meeting.
- Depending on each case, make decisions, produce arguments, inform, generate ideas, ask questions, and coordinate.
- For each objective, attend to these three levels: active listening (necessary to create a trusting and supportive atmosphere); active thinking (necessary to keep the discussion moving forward); managing tension (focusing on shared goals and motivations).

### **2.3. Other notes:**

- Checking the “temperature” at the beginning of the meeting, adjusting meeting based on this check in. It is up to the facilitator to decide how to do this each

week. E.g., ask everyone to label their mood with a colour, or ask for another type of response.<sup>6</sup>

- Acknowledge recent achievements of members, remind members of upcoming conferences/events that others are participating in.
- Look to new members for their view on meeting proceedings/current projects—understanding that their new view may reveal ideas/problems/etc. that have not been apparent to those who have been “in” the work
- Writing thank-yous/sending acknowledgements to those who have helped, guided, collaborated with us.
- Keep things light, when possible, do not take the space of the meeting too seriously.

#### 2.4. A Final note on facilitation

The weekly facilitator is not “in charge” of the meeting, nor should their voice be prioritized over others. The purpose of the facilitator is to keep the meeting going smoothly, and to assist in bringing members’ ideas and contributions together. Borrowing from the CLEAR lab book, the facilitator should “‘grease the wheels’ of everyone else’s knowledge”.<sup>7</sup> We should all be working to make the facilitator’s job easier, and aware that facilitating a meeting is a practiced skill. Encourage the weekly facilitator, allow them the space to make mistakes, and support each other in our shared facilitation efforts.

#### 2.5. Example of typical meeting proceedings:

---

<sup>6</sup> We have borrowed/adapted this process from the CLEAR Lab protocols. See CLEAR, *CLEAR Lab Book*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> CLEAR, *CLEAR Lab Book*, 51.

- Meetings are called to order by the meeting facilitator.
- Each item on the proposed agenda is addressed.
- For each item of business, all members are given the opportunity to speak if they would like to. Members may also choose not to speak on the topic.
- Members are given the opportunity to bring up new business.
- The facilitator for the following meeting is confirmed prior to the meeting's end.
- Meeting is closed.

### **3. AIM Meeting Format: Hybrid**

- Weekly AIM meetings are being and will always be held in a hybrid format.
- Attendees on Zoom are welcome to keep their cameras off or on at their discretion and are encouraged to use the chat function if need be. Members are encouraged to use Zoom's affordances during meetings. These include the "reaction" emojis made available on the Zoom platform. For detailed information on our voting practices, please consult the Consensus-Based Decision-Making Protocol.
- We prioritize access in all meetings. We ask that any access needs are brought to the attention of the week's facilitator (if needed/for new members/if different than previous week's) ahead of time so that we can ensure all access requests are granted. (Please see the Member Address Book under General > Admin for a list of current members and their access needs). Should an access request be done in real time rather than before the commencement of the weekly meeting, we will do everything possible to incorporate the access need at the time of the request.

### **4. AIM Meeting Frequency**

AIM currently meets on a weekly basis (Mondays from 1-2pm Eastern Time). These meetings are meant to serve as weekly check-ins where Streeting Committee members discuss and update each other on their ongoing projects, propose new ideas, and bring pertinent issues to the forefront. A meeting agenda is posted to the AIM Lab Teams folder General > Meetings > “AIM Weekly Meeting Notes” prior to the meeting, and members may add topics they wish to be brought forward in the next meeting. Each of our meetings is facilitated by one of our Steering Committee members. We share this responsibility and rotate meeting facilitation through the members who wish to periodically take on the role of meeting facilitator. Rotational facilitation is meant to share responsibility, leadership, and administrative duties among attendees, and no one member is more or less important than another.

## 5. AIM Meeting Etiquette

- As a rule, we are actively anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-ableist, anti-transphobic, anti-homophobic, anti-xenophobic, anti-classist, anti-ageist. (For more information, please visit our Manifesto, Values and Principles Protocols). These are **non-negotiable**, and behaviour that emulates any type of oppressive ideologies **will not be tolerated**. Members and/or meeting attendees who participate in oppressive behaviour and/or use oppressive language may be asked to leave the meeting.
- All meeting attendees will be given the opportunity to speak, and we will value all opinions and perspectives, including those which appear to be dissenting. One person should speak at a time, and each speaker should be given the opportunity to speak uninterrupted. (Interruptions will happen, of course, especially on Zoom, but we expect all meeting attendees to handle such occasions with grace and move forward by taking turns with the “mic”).

- Members should try to be conscious of their speaking time, and we encourage everyone to use a phrase like “that’s the end of my thought” when they are finished speaking, so that others know we can move on. In the event that one or more people are monopolizing the conversation, the facilitator may choose to gently redirect the conversation and allow others a chance to speak.
- We are here to support each other, grow together, and build each other up! Disparaging comments have no place in our meetings. (Please see Apology, Call ins, Call out Protocol).
- Each member/attendee chooses what they want to share and when they want to share it. No one is expected to share anything that they are not comfortable with, whether this be related to disability or otherwise.
- As noted in the CLEAR lab book: **what happens in the lab, stays in the lab.**<sup>8</sup> Any personal and lab-related information discussed; any thoughts and ideas shared during AIM meetings are considered confidential and should not be disclosed to outside parties unless explicit permission has been given to do so. In order to ensure confidentiality, all AIM members are required to sign the confidentiality form included in the Appendix of this protocol.
- Respect each other, respect each other's experiences, respect each other's traumas. Be aware of how we speak of traumatic experiences (including but not limited to ableism, racism, genocide, sexual harassment and/or assault, etc.). Content/trigger warnings should be used when warranted.

Facilitating a meeting or workshop is not easy, it requires time and practice. However, it is a wonderful process to build strong skills and connections with others. There is no one way to facilitate: some facilitators can be trained and experienced while others are just beginning to develop this skill. Each person brings their own spirit and experience

---

<sup>8</sup> CLEAR, *CLEAR Lab Book*, 51.

into the process. By recognizing our own knowledge and know-how we make the process more fluid and comfortable. Therefore, we need to be kind and generous to ourselves when facing a facilitation process.

We should also be empathetic and gentle with facilitators who may be new and/or nervous about facilitating their first (or any) meetings. It is always good practice to offer positive feedback to facilitators at the end of meetings, and to thank them for the work they put in as the meeting's facilitator.

The AIM Lab facilitating protocol aims to provide some key tips to make a meeting effective. Some of these tips are focused on improving facilitation skills while others are meant to prevent barriers to full participation. These protocols also outline the expectations of an AIM Lab meeting, and what should be addressed and/or enacted each time we meet. Of course, these tips are not written in stone: they can be changed, reviewed, and/or improved.

## 6. Non-negotiables

Before starting, it is important to highlight certain **indispensable** conditions that will make facilitation anti-ableist, sustainable, and caring.

### 6.1. Accessibility

- The accessibility of the place/room/venue is essential for a successful facilitation (see Event Protocol). Consider the accessibility of the space prior to the meeting. Give preference to spaces that are flexible and have mobile or easy-to-move furniture that allows variations to suit group size and diverse body types can help to facilitate communication and connections.

- Make sure that the space allows more than a single wheelchair to fit in (see Event Protocol) and has enough room for multiple wheelchairs to maneuver. Make sure that there is room for guide dogs and service animals, and that their space does not pose a barrier to wheelchair users.
- Arrange the space in a way that allows for and encourages different postures and bodily movements. For example, not everyone might want to sit at all times throughout the meeting duration. People may want to lie down, stand up or move around, depending on their bodily needs.
- Pay attention to the utilization of accessible language and use graphic and visual aids to make participation more accessible. In our current pandemic circumstances, it is imperative that we consider those who cannot and/or are uncomfortable meeting in person. Our meetings will always be hybrid so that remote attendance is possible for individuals who are unable to join the meeting in person.
- Attend to the needs of participants' bodies and minds, and their needs for rest and self-care. Make sure that the meeting was planned at an optimal time to reconcile private life.
  - When possible, internal AIM meetings will be held Monday-Friday between 9am-5pm EST. However, individual working groups are welcome to set their own meeting times according to their individual schedules.
  - We are also cognizant of the fact that members may spend time travelling/living/doing fieldwork outside of Canada. As such, meeting times can be adjusted when necessary, so that all members are able to attend, regardless of geographic location.

- “Access intimacy” is important to the facilitation process.<sup>9</sup> Pay attention to emotional spaces (affective atmosphere: silences, tension, fatigue) and less visible access needs.

## 6.2. Sustainability

- Pay close attention to how our resource consumption leaves a footprint in our decision-making processes.
- Facilitators should verify if the meeting can be scheduled during daylight hours, how many computers are needed, what catering or drinking providers we are using. (See also Events Protocol).
- While we recycle and try to reduce our use of single-use plastics, we also do not turn these commitments into doctrines. As Max Liboiron and Josh Lepawsky remind us when we think of discards, we need to think of scale.<sup>10</sup> For example, while we commit to reducing our use of single-use plastics, we also commit to providing plastic straws, bottled water, plastic gloves and any other plastic access objects that disabled people might need.

## 7. Meetings Including Affiliate and Other AIM Lab Members

It is our goal to hold regular meetings which include our broader membership so that we may share our academic and creative work, discuss new and ongoing partnerships, and gather feedback from our community members. There is currently no set schedule for these meetings; we leave the organization of them open-ended so that they may be scheduled on an as-needed basis.

---

<sup>9</sup> Mingus, “Access Intimacy.”

<sup>10</sup> Liboiron, Max, and Josh Lepawsky. *Discard Studies: Wasting, Systems, and Power*, 54, 122.

## 8. AIM Lab Retreats

(At least) twice a year we will hold a retreat for all Streeting Committee members, usually scheduled as multiple sessions over a period of one or more days. The purpose of these retreats is to reflect on our work as a lab, discuss past, present, and future projects, take care of any housekeeping, set goals for the coming year, report on and discuss our anti-colonial work, identify changes that have or need to occur in our operations, etcetera. Retreats are scheduled as needed and according to the availability of our Steering Committee members.

## 9. Wages and Hours Re: Meetings

*Note: we include the following in our meeting facilitation protocol as part of our ongoing efforts to be transparent and uphold feminist practices. Grad student (and other) RAs, community members and researchers are always compensated for their time, and we view the opportunity to facilitate and participate in lab meetings as important parts of our research praxis and professional development. Notes on wages may be moved to and/or replicated in other protocol(s) if and when necessary.*

- RAs are paid for the work they complete as lab members.
- All members (including RAs, research associates, etc.) who are actively working for the AIM lab should be contracted and receiving wages paid through Concordia University's HR/Payroll department.
- Contracts and details of payment are provided and managed by the lab director.
- Weekly (and all other) meetings are counted towards the RA's and all other employee's paid hours.

- Any prep-work for weekly and other meetings (i.e., readings, prepping agenda, administrative work, developing content, community outreach of any kind, etc.) are also counted as paid hours.

## APPENDIX

### Dr. Arseli Dokumaci

Access in the Making Lab  
Department of Communication Studies  
Concordia University  
7141 Sherbrooke St. West, CJ 4.427  
Montreal, QC H4B 1R6  
Phone: 514-848-2424, ext. 4883  
Email: arseli.dokumaci@concordia.ca

## CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR AIM MEMBERS

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand that as a member of Access in the Making Lab (AIM) I have access to confidential information that must stay within our organization. *Confidential information* includes, but is not limited to:

- our fellow AIM and members' and communities' personal information (including disability status, financial information, immigration status, personal stories), other personnel information, and associated documents;
- AIM's current and future plans, our pipeline projects and events as well as the ideas, thoughts and proposals that we discuss in our meetings, including the ideas proposed by an individual AIM member and ideas proposed by our partners and collaborators (in order to protect us and the communities that we work with against idea theft and knowledge extractivism).

AIM members are not permitted to share this *confidential information* with anyone outside the Lab, or to remove or make copies of any of AIM's records, reports, or documents in any form, without prior consent from the director, Dr. Arseli Dokumaci. Disclosure of confidential information may lead to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment. Additionally, employees of AIM are prohibited

during and/or after employment from using AIM's *confidential information* in any form for their own purposes or for those of other persons or entities. Finally, all confidential information relative to AIM, regardless of its form, must be returned to the organization at the time of termination of employment with the organization.

Statement of Understanding and Agreement

I am aware that, during the course of my membership at AIM, *confidential information* will be made available to me. Further, I understand that this information is proprietary and critical to the success of AIM and may not be distributed or used outside of AIM premises or with non-AIM members. In the event of my termination of membership, whether voluntary or involuntary, I hereby agree that I will not utilize or exploit this information for my own personal gain, or share it with any other individual, non-profit agency, or company.

I have received a copy of this permission form for my records.

NAME (please print)

---

SIGNATURE

---

DATE

---

## References

Ahmed, Sara. "A Book Can be a Thank You Note." *feministkilljoys*, October 21, 2021.

<https://feministkilljoys.com/2021/10/21/a-book-can-be-a-thank-you-note/>

CLEAR. *CLEAR Lab Book: A living manual of our values, guidelines, and protocols, V.03*. St. John's, NL: Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2021.

Liboiron, Max. 2021. *Pollution is Colonialism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Liboiron, Max, and Josh Lepawsky. *Discard Studies: Wasting, Systems, and Power*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2022.

Mol, Annemarie. 2003. *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*. Duke University Press.

Zero Waste Concordia. "Zero Waste Concordia." Accessed September 19, 2022.

<https://www.concordia.ca/about/sustainability/sustainability-initiatives/zero-waste.html>