

Thoughts on the mobilisations in 2008

Tuesday 29 May 2007, by [BRUUN Otto](#), [KUUSELA Hanna](#), [LARNESJO Lisa](#), [NILSEN Marte](#), [SAULI Mikko](#), [van der WEKKEN Ruby](#), [YLA-ANTTILA Tuomas](#) (Date first published: 16 May 2007).

Greetings from Finland!

Dear friends,

During the 6th Finnish social forum held recently in Helsinki a session was organised around the day of mobilization in 2008. Attending were apart from Finnish friends of the World Social Forum process and actors in social movements, also activists (one each) from Germany, Norway and Sweden. As the WSF International Council and its working groups are preparing for the discussions on the issue at the next WSF IC meeting in Berlin, we report from the session some main comments and concrete proposals. Please note that the following is not in any way a joint statement from the Finnish social forum or any organisations on the mobilisation issue, but presents our personal opinions and constitutes a mere beginning point of discussions in our localities and movements (see also a brief report with further justifications from the meeting below):

1. We support the decision taken at the WSF IC meeting in Parma of a WSF mobilisation week in 2008, with a global day of action on 26-27 January 2008.
2. We support the idea as put forward in the WSF IC meeting of Nairobi of a ticking clock accompanying, symbolising and visualising the time for change, and the mobilisations around the world.
3. We feel that a clear global interconnectedness between the mobilisations all over the world would be crucial, whilst leaving room for plurality and diversity as to the exact nature of the mobilisations.
4. We feel that the slogan of Another World is Possible as well as the alternatives the WSF process wants to be instrumental to should be upfront during the mobilisations.

We suggest:

- a. a coordinating body to gather one liner information on the initiatives of mobilisation from all over the world into a program of mobilisations, in which the actions could be listed both according to time zone as well as according to theme in order to point to the global nature of struggles.
- b. interactive communication means as video (screens) set up between different mobilizing venues during the mobilisation day.
- c. innovative activities to bring the theme of Another world is possible as

well as the theme of alternatives out in the open, with some elements which could be carried out globally.

Concrete suggestions:

- Making the slogan Another World is Possible visible in as many different ways (and different languages) as possible in the mobilizations around the world. Hanging banners from buildings, wearing it on one's clothing, forming the words with torches...the possibilities for creative experimentation are endless. These activities can have a global nature and be a form of connecting throughout the mobilising moment.

- We see a need to bring in more people, especially youth, into our movements and the WSF process. Therefore, cultural activities such as parties and concerts should be important elements of the global day of action, next to events focusing more directly on the proactive political content.

with kind regards,

Otto Bruun, ATTAC Finland

Hanna Kuusela, Attac Finland

Lisa Larnesjö, Attac Sweden

Marte Nilsen, Attac Norway

Mikko Sauli, Attac Finland

Ruby van der Wekken, NIGD

Tuomas Ylä-Anttila, NIGD

Session notes

Suomen sosiaalifoorumi - towards WSF-mobilization january 2008. 23.4.2007

Background

A session was arranged during the 6th Finnish social forum about the day of mobilization in 2008. Attending the session was apart from Finnish friends of the World Social Forum and actors in social movements, also activists from Germany, Norway and Sweden.

The session started off with noting the decisions made by the international council in Nairobi during the WSF 2007, notably, that no WSF as such will be organised in 2008 - but rather that a week/day/weekend of mobilization will

take place. More accurately this was defined as a minimum of a day of action around the world, during which people from all over could mobilize around the world. This is important to keep the WSF-process alive and vital, it has been thought.

General notes

The participants in the session felt that

- 1) the mobilization is meaningful
- 2) it is definitely worth putting effort in organising something on the 26th of January
- 3) the day of action poses some challenges in the Nordic countries due to weather reasons, while the time of year is really dark and cold
- 4) we should try to arrange something else upon the typical open meeting/demonstration -like activities, which are already quite common and used as a general setting in most social movements.
- 5) plurality and openness need to be respected
- 6) securing the global feeling of any events during the mobilizations is important
- 7) strengthening the role of expressing and showing alternatives during the mobilization is important, to make the alternatives more outspoken.

Questions of slogan, common themes etc.

We thoroughly discussed the question of the need for a common slogan. Several participants felt a sense of fatigue with the old "another world is possible" -slogan. A common worldwide slogan is still needed - and one of the ideas could be to revitalize the "another world is possible" -slogan, by making it figure in many different contexts and making visual renewal. We need to symbolically use the slogan in a more innovative and inspiring way. Another possibility was the theme of "Another world is under construction".

Both slogans are viewed as potentially good, and they allow for the crucial plurality. A concrete proposal that rose was to make the slogan of "Another world is possible" figure in as many forms as possible - one idea was to light it up with torches in the dark Nordic cities. This would mean making the slogan Another World is Possible visible in as many different ways (and different languages) as possible in the mobilizations around the world. Hanging banners from buildings, wearing it on one's clothing, etc.

Participants did not straight away see one common thematic to be agreed upon as easy or even desirable. Still, having the theme of alternatives (see next section) could make the mobilizations more concrete, and some elements of the theme could maybe be carried out even globally. The possible idea of a theme related to human dignity was also discussed, but still left open. Later during the forum, the idea of mobilizing together under the banner of

democratic initiatives was discussed, but was not taken into account during the session itself.

Thoughts on possible action and some proposals

Besides allowing for plurality, the Finnish social forum session participants called for a global collection of initiatives before the day of action. These could then by the secretariat be distributed globally - strengthening the global common spirit and allowing for better mutual awareness of initiatives around the world. Whereas it is difficult to agree on just one theme, it would be great to know what social movements are mobilizing for in different countries. This would support the efforts to add content and concrete initiatives to the process. Adding to this, it would also be in line with the theme another world is possible - as several initiatives for change would be gathered and presented.

To make the idea of "another world is possible" more concrete and use more of its potential, we also called for the concrete alternatives to be more present during the day/week of mobilizations, for instance like being some kind of theme. Both the slogan of Another World is Possible as well as the alternatives the WSF process wishes to be instrumental should be upfront during the mobilizations.

Furthermore we concluded that local mobilisations are important to contribute to the specific needs of the local movements.

The key challenge for the global mobilization is to figure in the global media in some way - how to do that is still an open question. Otherwise the mobilizations will be mostly felt as national ones.

Action proposals in Finland concerned both a joyful party-like come together and activities outside in the snow, adding light or torches to the manifestations. This planning did not take speed, but will be continued when more people will be able to join our forces in the planning of the January mobilization. The idea of a party-like manifestation for another world would especially be important, as we later noticed the importance of more young people joining the movement.

We support the idea as put forward in the WSF IC meeting of Nairobi of a ticking clock accompanying, symbolising and visualising the time for change, and the mobilisations around the world. We hope that the feelings and the mobilization of this could also be shared in some way via modern technology (live videos and screens, maybe?), in order to strengthen the sense of a really global mobilization, although we see that this will be very challenging to achieve with the limitation of resources in mind.

Background - social movements in Finland

Inspired by the Norwegian analysis of social movements we discussed the challenges Finnish social movements have in general.

Some of the challenging questions are related to political culture - others relate to the spreading of the movement and of the few new activists that

have joined lately. Moreover, concerning the results of our activities, more co-operation with trade unions and the likes was called for. These challenges seemed to be shared by many of the international guests, at least those from other Scandinavian countries.

The Finnish Social Forum also included a seminar on the ESF and its future path, as it will take place in either Malmö or Copenhagen in the late summer of 2008.