



OUR ORGANISATION

A PART OF MEMBER TRAINING

FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY



Socialdemokraterna

FRAMTIDSPARTIET

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These study materials have been prepared by the Social Democratic Party in cooperation with ABF. Free for distribution. Read more about our joint study work and download study materials at socialdemokraterna.abf.se

Foreword: Lena Rådström Baastad



By organising the members in different ways, the Social Democratic Party strengthens the dialogue and the force for change. Through an open and outreaching operation, we spread the ideas of social democracy, which is how we strengthen our organisation and politics.

Most people who join the Social Democratic Party do so because they want to get involved in changing and influencing the development of society. Regardless of why somebody becomes a member, it should be an exciting step to take.

Membership offers the opportunity to discuss important issues together with others and to be involved in building democratic society through the political decision-making process.

The Social Democratic Party is a popular movement party and being a popular movement requires a lot of members. It also demands that the membership pro-

vides possibilities of involvement based on the individual's circumstances and interest. Well-functioning political work therefore requires a well-functioning organisation. The organisation is a means to achieve the objective of an operation that reflects the will of the members, where political decisions are discussed and decided on.

I hope these study materials will give you knowledge about our organisation and inspiration to participate in our activities. The study materials are for all interested members, both new members and those who have been involved for some time.

I hope you have a truly rewarding study circle - together!

Lena Rådström Baastad
Party Secretary

Brief introduction



Photo: Ida Borg

This is a study circle booklet about the organisation of the Social Democratic Party. At the end of the booklet, you will find more information about how you can work in a study circle and suggestions for the circle leader. The following is a brief introduction to easily get started.

Three sessions

These study materials about the organisation consist of three sections adapted to three sessions in a study circle. Every section has a theme:

1. Welcome to a popular movement party!
2. Organisation of the Social Democratic Party.
3. Popular movement work, campaigns, elections.

Each section is wrapped up with discussion questions. Work based on them or formulate your own questions for discussions when you meet.

1.

Welcome to a popular movement party

Most people who join the Social Democratic Party do so because they want to get involved and make a change – to be able to influence the development of society. Regardless of your reason for joining, it should be an exciting step to take. You are now a member of Sweden's largest political party. Welcome! From arriving at your own political opinion, membership in the Social Democratic Party also entails a possibility to discuss important issues together with others, form an opinion, and get involved in building democratic society through the political decision-making process.

The Social Democratic Party is a popular movement party, and the popular movement idea is a cornerstone of Swedish democracy. People organise themselves in associations to work together for change, in large and small. The popular movements are in people's daily lives, and conduct their activities based on the decisions of the members. Activity in the association life of popular movements makes us active participants in democracy rather than passive onlookers.

Political craftsmanship also becomes better and the results become more poignant when many of us are involved in shaping a new proposal. Sometimes it may feel like there is a large distance from idea to realisation, but anchoring political ideas and proposals is also

an investment. It is how the proposals are tested and honed so they become sustainable. Being a popular movement demands a large number of members. It also demands that the membership provides possibilities of involvement based on each member's circumstances and desire to get involved.

The popular movement's strength lies in many people together contributing to:

- **Shaping the politics**

Our party's strength lies in the commitment that grows out of people's experiences of what equality and solidarity mean – and the insight that it is up to us together if there is to be any change. Our party has to have members of various ages, with different backgrounds, knowledge and experiences in order for the formulation of the politics to be comprehensive.

- **Keeping tabs on the world and listening to what is happening in daily life**

We the members are who together provide the view of what our local community looks like and the age we live in. What are the problems, difficulties and injustices? What do attitudes and values look like out among the Swedish people? How is legislation working in reality?

- **Being a force for change in people's everyday lives**

A popular movement that sees injustices and problems can also act to change them. A local party association can influence the party at large, but can itself also organise meetings and activities to give a voice to people's questions and ideas.

- **Being messengers**

There has to be a lot of us, members and sympathisers, who can describe our politics to friends, neighbours and workmates, every day, year-round, throughout the time between elections. Even without constantly talking about politics, members can stand up for our values by bearing the party symbol with pride or participating in different social media online.

Suitable organisation

Well-functioning political work requires a well-functioning organisation. The goal is for the activities to reflect the will of the members, that political decisions shall be discussed by many people and that the priorities made by the party's members are captured.

As an organisation, we must therefore be open and accessible. We should continuously welcome more people to our movement. Only then can we be the most relevant and popularly rooted party in Sweden. Only then can we call attention to problems in everyday life and present credible solutions. Through open, outreaching activities, we spread the ideas of social democracy. This strengthens our organisation and politics. Together, we strive for a society built on activity and community, a society that seeks out its citizens' involvement, where more and more people are involved in working for the future.

The members

The party is based on the members and every member is just as important. An internally democratic structure makes it possible for the members to influence the politics, to elect those who we trust for different tasks and to hold those we elect to represent us in various contexts accountable.

Those entrusted to represent the Social Democratic Party in a public post have the task of making the necessary decisions, based on financial realities and based on the considerations, debate and opinions that come forth in our party and among voters in general.

A part of a larger labour movement

Part of the foundation of the Social Democratic Party's strength lies in the party's close ties to other movements for social change. Many social democrats are active in popular movements other than the party. This is a key to success for our movement, and an important explanation of the strong trust our party has among many people.

Our party has been involved in building up many organisations that play an important role in changing society in great and small, such as the "Workers' Educational Association" ABF, the Swedish labour movement's youth organisation Unga Örnar and the democratic association of venues and meeting places Folkets Hus och Parker.

In addition to this, there are many organisations that share our view of people and society and are close to our party in different ways, such as the Swedish Union of Tenants and consumer cooperatives.

Union-political cooperation

The union-political cooperation between the Social Democratic Party and the labour unions in the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) is based on the organisations being a part of the same movement. As organisations in the labour movement, we share the same values both in terms of social change and social development.

By union-political cooperation, we mean a long-term, continuous collaboration between the Social Democratic Party and LO and its unions. The aim is to achieve changes that are good for wage earners through political advocacy and political decisions. This cooperation is based on the collaborating organisations sharing basic values and the same strive for a socially equal and gender equal society. The strive for the wage earners to be able to live a good life in a good society has united the labour movement in the development of the welfare state over all of the years the Social Democratic Party has existed and been active. So it is shared political goals for strengthening liberty and equality that are the basis of the union-political cooperation.

Studies

Studies play a fundamental role in building a strong popular movement. Studies provide tools – both

knowledge and methods – that can change both one's own life and provide the strength to change society in general. Studies have therefore always played a crucial role for the Social Democratic Party.

Olof Palme, Party Leader of the Social Democratic Party from 1969 to 1986, once described Sweden as a “study circle democracy”. The study circle and the rest of the popular education activities have given people the possibility to influence their life situation and society in general. Through study circles, people have also learned to respect their own opinions and those of others – which has created tolerance and a custom of listening to arguments.

The Social Democratic Party has all of its study activities linked to the ABF study association (Workers' Educational Association). It was the Social Democratic Party, LO and the consumer cooperatives that found-

ed ABF, and there is an important point in continuing to have studies together with a study association that shares the social democratic values.

As a member, you will be offered member training. These study materials on organisation are a part of the party's basic member training, which is about giving every member the conditions to strengthen his or her knowledge of our ideology, our organisation and our history.

Every party district and municipal party organisation has the responsibility of offering new members studies and themselves determine the format. All study materials prepared at a national level have been gathered on the party's and ABF's study portal, socialdemokraterna.abf.se. *There are also a number of studies that are arranged by the Social Democratic Party at a national level.*

Discussion questions



- What led you take the step to become a member of the Social Democratic Party?
- What political issues are you passionate about?
- What expectations do you have of your membership?
- What does the term “popular movement” mean to you?
- How can we get as many people as possible involved in shaping the politics of the Social Democratic Party?
- How can the Social Democratic Party be a force for change in people's everyday lives?
- Are you active in popular movements other than the Social Democratic Party? If so, which ones? How do you feel your various ways of getting involved are related?
- What do you think of the Social Democratic Party's close cooperation with LO? How can we strengthen the cooperation between the party and the trade union movement, including LO, TCO and Saco?
- What do you need to be able to influence politics and be more active in the Social Democratic Party?

Suggestions of activities: Start a study circle about a political issue you are passionate about, preferably together with friends in the party active in a union. Contact your local ABF branch and they will help you get started. You can find them at abf.se



Photo: Mattias Vepsä

2.

Organisation of the Social Democratic Party

The Social Democratic Party is a large party and has a large party organisation. As a new member, it can be hard to get an overview. In this section, we try to explain how the various parts of the organisation are related. From the local social democratic association to the Party Congress and the Party Executive Board with the Executive Committee.

The associations and clubs of the Social Democratic Party are the base of the party. The local political work, studies and campaign work takes place there. The associations in a larger area are gathered in municipal party organisations, which are the party's local main organisation at the municipal level. The municipal party organisations are in turn gathered into party districts. The party districts are the party's regional organisations. Together, the party districts form the party's national organisation.

Associations

The Social Democratic Party's associations and clubs gather people who share the social democratic values. Associations and clubs shall develop the value of membership, formulate political proposals in dialogue with the citizens and, not least, work to recruit more members for the Social Democratic Party.

If you have not personally chosen a specific association when you joined, you will become a member of an association in your local area. The associations that are not built on a special interest or the like are sometimes referred to as geographic associations, simply because the grounds of division for the association are geographic.

But the association or club can also work based on interest or operating area, rather than according to where the members live. The "Bygg-sossen" association is based on union-political affiliation. We also have many associations that are based on other common starting points, such as HBT(S) (LGBT issues), Unga (S) (young people's issues) and the Bosnian S association.

The association's area of operation is established in the municipal party organisation's organisation plan. Everyone who can support the party programme of the Social Democratic Party and its party statutes and pays the membership fee has the right to become a member of the association or club. In purely practical terms, it is the association's or club's member meeting that is the highest decision-making body. An annual meeting is held before the end of February, which is when the Board consisting of five members is to be elected.



Photo: Ida Borg

Municipal party organisation

The municipal party organisation is the party's main local organisation. It is a federation for all associations and clubs in the municipality. The municipal party organisation plans and leads the party's participation in general elections in the municipality and develops and coordinates the local union-political activities. It is also responsible for continuously developing the value of membership and work to encourage more people to want to become members of the Social Democratic Party.

The municipal party organisation must have an organisation plan that presents what social democratic associations and clubs are included. It is the Board's responsibility for there being organisations with ties to residential areas and workplaces in the area of the municipal party organisation.

The Social Democratic Party has several sub-organisations that are closely tied to the party: the youth association SSU, the womens' association S-kvinnor, the student association S-studenter and the association known as "Social Democrats for faith and solidarity". In most cases, the side organisations' associations and clubs are also associations in their municipal party or-

ganisation. This provides local SSU clubs, S-kvinnor clubs and so on the same rights to write their motions, have representatives at the municipal party organisation's annual meetings, and propose candidates for appointments like other party associations. If you want to know more about the side organisations, you can read more on their websites: ssu.se, s-kvinnor.se, s-studenter.se, troochsolidaritet.se and hbts.se.

A local union organisation can be affiliated with the municipal party organisation, but in order for the individual members of the union organisation to also become members of the party, they must individually apply for membership.

The municipal party organisation can choose to introduce a representative assembly, to which clubs and associations appoint representatives in relation to how many members they have. If the municipal party organisation has not introduced a representative assembly, all members have a right to participate in the organisation's meetings.

The municipal party organisation's member meetings are the highest decision-making body, as long as a representative assembly has not been introduced. Annual meet-

ings in the municipal party organisation are held before the end of the month of March. Motions to the member meeting or representative assembly can be made by each individual party member or a basic social democratic organisation that belongs to the municipal party organisation, or union organisations affiliated with it.

The Board of the municipal party organisation leads the operations in accordance with statutes and decisions. The Board shall argue for the party and its politics, work out a municipal political action programme and support the activities of the associations and clubs. The Board also has employer responsibility towards the employed staff. The Board of the municipal party organisation should consist of at least seven members who are elected for two years. The chairperson, treasurer, study organiser and union leader are elected separately. Within the Board, an Executive Committee can be elected.

Party districts

The party districts are the party's main regional organisation for all municipal party organisations within a geographic area, which in many cases matches the county breakdown. The party districts should lead the Social Democratic Party's participation in general elections within the district, keep contact with other organisations, develop and coordinate union-political activities and work to recruit more members to the Social Democratic Party. The area that constitutes a party district comprises one or more election districts in parliamentary elections. The district's highest decision-making body

is the annual District Congress. Individual members and basic organisations have the right to submit motions to the District Congress. The motions should first be addressed by a meeting of the municipal party organisation. The motion can then be accepted as the municipal party organisation's own, or if it is not adopted by the municipal party organisation, sent to the District Congress as a so-called individual motion.

The District Congress can establish an elected council for the district, which meets at least once a year. The management of the district's operations is the District Board, which also constitutes the party district's highest decision-making body when the District Congress is not meeting. The District Board consists of at least seven members and an Executive Committee can be elected within the Board.

Party Executive Board

The Party Executive Board leads the party's operations, in accordance with the party's programme, statutes and congress resolutions. The Party Executive Board is the party's highest decision-making body when the Party Congress is not convened. The Party Executive Board consists of 33 members who are elected at the Party Congress every four years. Of these 33, seven ordinary members are elected to the Party's Executive Committee in a special decision. In addition, the Party Congress elects eight deputy members of the Executive Committee and 15 deputy members of the Party Executive Board.

Why is the municipal level of the Social Democratic Party called an "arbetarekommun" in Swedish?

When the Social Democratic Party was founded, today's municipalities, or "kommuner" in Swedish, did not exist in the sense of something that provides service to the residents of the municipalities. The municipalities of the day were middle-class conservative. There was no welfare, no civil rights to speak of, and far from all municipal residents had the right to vote. Calling the new local political organisation an "arbetarekommun" or "workers' municipality" was an indication of what society should be like: democratic, equal and where the workers were entitled to rights.

The party organisation in Stockholm, Gotland and Gothenburg

The description of the party organisation that you just read about applies almost everywhere in Sweden, but not quite. There are a few exceptions where the Social Democratic Party is organised differently at the local level. The Stockholm municipal party organisation is both a municipal party organisation and a party district. The same is true of the Social Democratic Party in Gotland and Gothenburg. In these cases, the regional organisation is both a party district and a municipal party organisation.

The chairpersons of S-kvinnor, SSU, Faith and Solidarity, S-studenter and HBT-S have the right to speak and submit proposals at the Party Executive Board's meetings, but not the right to vote.

The Party Executive Board holds an annual meeting in April and also meets when the Executive Committee convenes a meeting or when at least five members of the Party Executive Board request one.

Executive Committee

The immediate management of the party's operations is handled by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is responsible for implementing the decisions made, and bears the employer responsibility for the employees of the Party Executive Board's office. The Party Congress elects the Chairman and the Party Secretary in the Executive Committee separately. The chairpersons of S-kvinnor, SSU, Faith and Solidarity, S-studenter and HBT-S have the right to speak and submit proposals at the Executive Committee's meetings, but not the right to vote.

Programme Commission

The party programme of the Social Democratic Party includes visions and guidelines for the party's policies, and describes how the party wants society to develop. It is the Party Congress that adopts the party programme. The Party Congress also appoints members to the Programme Commission, which proposes changes in the party programme and drafts a new proposal to the party programme when the Party Congress so decides. The Programme Commission consists of five members and five deputy members.

Party Congress

The party's highest decision-making body is the Party Congress, which consists of 350 elected representatives. Every party district appoints representatives in proportion to how many members it has. The congress representatives are elected by the members of the district.

Party congresses are held every two years.

The right to speak and submit proposals, but not the right to vote is also held by:

- members of the Party Executive Board
- representatives of the Social Democratic Party's parliamentary group
- representatives of the Social Democratic Party's group in the European Parliament

- the auditors
- members of the party's Programme Commission
- chairpersons of the party districts
- representatives for the party group in the Board of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR),
- a representative for each of the associations S-kvinnor, SSU, Faith and Solidarity, S-studenter and HBT-S.

The party can also have extra party congresses between the ordinary party congresses. An extra party congress is held when decided by the Party Executive Board, or after a vote among the party's members. An extra party congress can only address issues taken up in the notice convening the congress, which the Party Executive Board decides on.

Motions to the Party Congress

All party members, basic social democratic organisations and party district boards have the right to submit a proposal, a motion, to the Party Congress. A motion can address a political issue where the person who writes the motion wants to get the party to make a decision in a certain direction. This may involve clarifying or changing the party's politics in some respect or changing the party's organisation. The motions from individual members or basic organisations shall be addressed by the municipal party organisation, which can adopt it as its own, send it in as individual motion or reject the motion.

Nominations and cooperation

One of the things that the party organisation does is nominate candidates for political office. Both positions in the party organisation, and in public bodies such as the municipal or city council or Swedish parliament. There are different rules that apply to how this is done, depending on what items it concerns. Candidate nominations for elections to the European parliament, the Swedish Parliament and the municipal council take place in different ways. The Social Democratic Party has a principle of interspersed lists, with every other man and every other woman. The party has this principle to achieve an even gender distribution in the appointments.

In addition to this, there are also rules for the cooperation between those who have been given positions of trust for the party and the party's different organisations. There are likewise provisions on the responsibility that the members have.



Photo: Anders Löwdin

The statutes give the organisation a solid foundation.

Just like many other organisations, the Social Democratic Party has statutes, a collection of rules about the roles of different parts of the party organisation, and how different processes should take place. No member and no part of the party organisation may violate the statutes. It may seem formal and a bit rigid sometimes, but the statutes are important – they provide stability to the organisation so that everyone knows what rules apply. For example, the statutes establish how far in advance a notice convening the Party Congress or documentation for an annual meeting must be sent out, and who has the right to vote.

So the statutes are an internally democratic guiding principle.

Of course, it is important that the party's statutes reflect the development in the organisation and society, and therefore the statutes are sometimes changed. However, this always takes place after careful consideration and thought.

As a new member, sometimes it is not always easy to understand the point of the formal parts of an annual meeting for example, and sometimes those of use who have been involved a while forget to explain how things are done or why it is good to do something a certain way. If this happens to you – ask!

Discussion questions



- Is it important for you as a new member to get an understanding of how the whole party organisation works? Why or why not?
- Have you found a social democratic association you like? Have you been contacted by anyone in the association that welcomed you and invited you to a meeting?
- What kind of political work do you think seems most important? Being out and meeting citizens and telling about the Social Democratic Party's politics, having a public appointment in a tribunal, or discussing a political issue with other members and then writing a motion about what you arrive at? What seems to be the most fun?

Suggestions of activities: Write a motion!

3.

Popular movement work, campaigns, elections

Popular movement work

The meeting between people is the life force of democracy and the engine of very many organisations. For the labour movement, this meeting has always been of central importance. From the beginning, it was an opportunity for our leaders to work for their ideas and get the message out. It was how knowledge of what the Social Democratic Party stood for was spread. New members were recruited, and supporters and sympathisers were informed. Perhaps this was why these meetings were seen as a threat.

It quickly became harder for the movement's pioneers to rent meeting rooms and police often intervened by forcing the participants at the meeting to disperse. In response to the need for their own meeting places, Folkets Hus och Folkets Parker, a democratic association of venues and meeting places, was founded and quickly became an important part of the growing labour movement. Here, room is offered to study and educate oneself, as well as to enjoy oneself and have an opportunity to relax. To meet the need for knowledge and education, and so that everyone would have the right to it, the movement's own culture and education organisation was created – ABF, Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (Workers' Educational Association). In the study circle, the participants contribute knowledge and experience, the leader provides educational guidance and possible materials provide a theoretical point of departure. In this process, new knowledge and insights arise both individually and collectively.

Today, the meeting between people is just as important as when the Social Democratic Party was founded. Classic

meeting places and meeting formats live on side by side with new, often digital meetings. They often effectively tie into each other. Online communication by e-mail or social media is used to mobilise participants and provide information about a classic popular movement activity, like an open-air rally, door-to-door campaigning or seminars.

The online activity then aims to increase involvement and activity out and about and in neighbourhoods and workplaces. In addition, digital meeting rooms are used, often when longer political texts are to be addressed. Good knowledge about new meeting places and meeting formats is crucial to our development as a popular movement.

Member recruitment

The members are the foundation of our party. The more members we have, the greater our possibilities of developing the politics, having a presence out in the local society and thereby bringing about change.

When we have large numbers, we can reach out to many people, locally, regionally and nationally. Everyone who shares our ideas of liberty, equality, openness and tolerance are welcome as members of our party. A first step is recruiting members. 70 percent of everyone who voted for the Social Democratic Party in the last parliamentary election would consider become members. What an opportunity! Only when we ask about membership will our numbers grow. Recruiting and then welcoming and engaging new members is therefore an important task for everyone.

The role of the meeting:

- Open meetings that welcome everyone: Can have an agitating and/or member recruitment role.
- Member meetings: often aim to formulate new politics, form opinion and plan outreach activities.
- The annual meeting: Evaluates the activities done, elects representatives and decides on future activities.
- The Congress: Establishes political guidelines and elects central representatives.

All of these meetings are important to shaping democracy and ensuring that we are in constant movement.



Photo: Anders Löwdin

Campaigns



Photo: Martias Vepsä

If it is in election campaigns that politics and the political parties are really put to the test, it is in between the elections that the foundation must be laid. People's view of the Social Democratic Party is the sum of innumerable impressions. Everything from the political proposals that representatives communicate when they appear in the media to what the individual members say and the materials they provide campaigning door-to-door. The Social Democratic Party – is all of us together and the sum of everything we do. During election campaigns and in between them.

It is through action that we best can show what our politics mean. A practical activity directly in people's everyday lives is unbeatable as opinion building. How better to demonstrate what solidarity, liberty, social and gender equality are than by showing examples of good activities. We don't just talk, we act too.

If a social democratic association wants to work to combat child poverty, the members of the association can both draft political proposals, such as writing a motion for higher maintenance assistance for single parents, and do something practical, such as organising homework tutoring in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, or providing free leisure activities, family parties and the like.

Our main message should always be clear. We want to build a stronger Sweden where everyone has the opportunity to develop and take new steps in life. Knowledge and expertise are the small country's key to success in competition. We will therefore never accept the conclusion that more insecurity and larger gaps between people would lead Sweden forward. And we will therefore always present other, better and more credible solutions.

It should be seen and heard that the Social Democratic Party is a cohesive party, from the individual member to the social democratic associations, the municipal party organisations, the party districts and the Party Executive Board. In addition to this, of course we want and need to catch important issues.

At several places in Sweden, the Social Democratic Party successfully carried out discussion campaigns on various local issues in the periods between elections. This is a good way to ask, listen and thereby establish support for the political proposals in people's everyday lives. It is also an excellent way to show how political involvement works in practice and invite more people to become members of the party.

Common campaign methods and activities:

• Facts and arguments for our politics

It should always be easy to argue for our politics. This is why different kinds of documentation, facts and arguments are produced for the party's politics. This documentation mainly aims to strengthen the knowledge about our own concrete proposals, but also helps make the alternatives in the politics visible. The website socialdemokraterna.se is an important source not only of information and news, but also knowledge, facts and arguments about our politics.

• Media

The news reporting in the media runs around the clock and thereby plays a major role when people gather information about the political alternatives. The development of the Swedish media landscape, where there are constantly more channels to monitor and more channels to reach out through, demands well-functioning media management. This is media work that means that we clearly present our politics, provide answers and comments in on-going discussions and correct incorrect information when necessary.

• Door-to-door campaigning

According to our experiences and international research, door-to-door campaigning is the most effective method to get in touch with voters. Many of those who go door-to-door also find it to be an enjoyable method that leads to good, rewarding conversations where we can learn about people's ideas and opinions. In many cases, door-to-door campaigning is therefore used today as a part of the work of developing our politics in important areas.

• Telephone contact

By calling people on the phone, we get the chance to have a conversation about politics that we would not



otherwise have. It becomes possible to meet people individually and personally without being next to one another. At several places in Sweden, members have gathered, like before any other outdoor rally, and phoned together.

• Online campaign work

Over the Internet, not only can we enable and encourage dialogue with voters, but we can also quickly communicate with our own members and sympathisers. There are many of us who are interested in politics and have a message who blog or otherwise make our sympathies visible in social media. Through these personally formulated debate pages on the Internet, politics are discussed and news is gotten out. Comment fields and digital questionnaires are also used daily by the Swedish media. There too, it is important that there are many of us who make our voices heard.

After every major debate or interview, we are offered the opportunity as media consumers to rate the participants' efforts. The results often become headlines both on news bills, in the papers and in online versions. The questionnaires thereby become a message channel that reaches more than those who saw or heard the debate or interview.

• Handing out flyers

When attention is to be called to a particular issue, or in connection with larger meetings, debates and interviews, handing out flyers is an effective method. At large workplaces, bus stops, Metro stations and tram stops and at large stores or shopping centres, flyers can be distributed to a large number of people. The flyers can provide information about our politics, but also include an invitation to come to a meeting or listen to a debate.

• May Day – an annual tradition

May Day is a special day for the labour movement that has been celebrated since the end of the 19th century. Its origin was an event in Chicago when police attacked striking workers. It became the International Workers' Day. Every year, a large number of meetings are held, not just in Sweden, but around the world. Here in Sweden, we have a long tradition of demonstrating and meeting to listen to speeches. May Day is the Social Democratic Party's largest member activity by far. In other countries, the celebrations look different and May Day is not a holiday in every country.

Elections

In a democracy, general elections play a central role. Elections are of course also important to a political party like the Social Democratic Party. It is in the elections that the voters can entrust the Social Democratic Party with political appointments, and thereby an opportunity to realise our political proposals.

Election results determine which party can form the majority in the democratic assemblies in the Swedish parliament, municipal councils and county councils. Based on the results, the government, municipal or city executive board and county council executive board are elected.

The campaign work in the election campaign is fun and intense. The political work intensifies and the political debate is given a growing amount of space on the public stage. Then, it is extra important that there are many of us who work for social democratic values and proposals. Everyone can't do everything, but we can all do something. It should therefore always be easy to get involved in the campaign work in an election.

This may involve an organised activity, like going door-to-door, handing out flyers or making phone calls. But it could just as well involve just talking about political issues with a neighbour or workmate. Or writing a letter to the editor or maybe showing that you are taking a political stand in social media.

Most voters are not at all as interested in politics as those of us who have chosen to become members of a political party. More and more voters are changing the party they vote for from one election to the next, and more and more people are deciding late in an election which party they will vote for. This is why the election campaign is important, and everyone's efforts are important.

The Social Democratic Party is Sweden's largest party in terms of the number of members. This is a huge strength. Not least when we are going to conduct election activities, but also because we know that people listen to friends and acquaintances a great deal. As a sympathiser or a member of the Social Democratic Party,

we can make a difference almost every day by listening, asking and telling why we personally chose to take a political stand. Election campaign work can be simple.

Some things that happen in election campaigns:

• **Coordination in the election centre**

In every election campaign, we coordinate activities and messages to be as clear as possible. It may be a matter of campaign efforts to highlight an issue – such as schools, jobs or healthcare. It may also involve setting up a local organisation, an election centre, that takes responsibility for distributing campaign materials in the neighbourhoods and the workplaces. If you want to make a contribution to the election campaign, but don't really know what or how, contact the election centre of your municipal party organisation. There is campaign work you can get started with immediately.

• **Election manifesto or election platform**

The issues the party will focus on in the election campaign are set in an election manifesto or election platform. The prerequisites for the election platform's politics are established by the Party Congress the year before the public elections. There, the broad strokes of the politics are determined for the next few years. Priorities are set and the most important political issues are brought up.

When the politics of the Social Democratic Party are to be made concrete in election promises, it is the Party Executive Board that has the deciding influence. It is there that the national election campaign's messages and campaign methods are formulated. Often, the concrete promises that will be fulfilled in a victory are not specified until the most intensive part of the election campaign begins after the summer.

• **Flyers and printed materials**

In an election campaign, we hand out various kinds of campaign materials to voters, and generate attention for the Social Democratic Party. This involves, for example, meeting posters, election posters, flyers and brochures

that we use in outdoor rally activities. The format affects the content. For example, in brochures, we can have more information than we can on posters. The various materials fill different functions. Sometimes we present a political proposal in detail, sometimes we just want to evoke or strengthen a feeling. Together, the various materials strengthen the main message that the Social Democratic Party is running on.

- **Information in advertising space**

The Social Democratic Party is also visible in the election through information in paid advertising space, such as ads in newspapers and online, TV, film and radio advertisements and election posters on purchased large format boards or in public transport.

- **Politician interviews**

Interviews of party leaders in radio, TV and the newspapers' online reporting are always important in an election campaign since many voters follow them. It is also an important checking point for the party's own election organisation for finding out which of its own arguments stand up the best and studying the opposition's tactics. Media, sometimes more media than those that held the interview, often follows up with interactive follow-up questions to readers and watchers that provide the possibility to rate the efforts of the person interviewed.

- **Debates**

Debates have a given place in every election campaign. The most traditional has long been the party leader debate that is broadcast on Sveriges Television on the Friday before the election. There, all of the party leaders have an opportunity to present their politics to the viewers. In recent years, several other debates have also been held. Main political opponents often meet in duels around the country. This is a good way to clarify the differences between the alternatives the voters can vote on and tell about the party's politics. When central representatives, such as party leaders, party secretaries or the economic policy spokespersons meet, readers and viewers almost always have an opportunity to rate the participants' efforts online.

- **Large election meetings**

The Social Democratic Party has a long tradition of large election meetings. These events provide important new energy to the party's own election workers and welcome new sympathisers. Large election meet-

ings are also a way to show that we are a large popular movement. You could say that these meetings frame our party and our organisation in the eyes of others.



Photo: Mattias Vepsä

- **Polling huts**

The polling hut is a meeting place for the party's election activities in the neighbourhood or city district. Here, we talk with people who either pass by or themselves seek out the party's polling hut to get information on the politics of the Social Democratic Party. If you are involved and work in the polling hut, you hand out materials and answer questions. There is often a phone number you can call if you get a question that you do not know the answer to. Sometimes we hold smaller meetings at the polling hut, often together with a local elected politician.

- **Election posters**

Putting up posters by an organisation in a Swedish election may begin on a given date at a given time. A special poster organisation is therefore necessary. The mission is to ensure that posters come up and are maintained. Posters that are hanging askew or have been vandalised harm our communication and must be replaced. Often a central reposting is also done in the middle of the election campaign when new posters are presented to further raise the temperature of the campaign. This demands a high level of flexibility.

- **The final spurt pays off**

The voters decide what party they are going to vote for late. It is therefore important to conduct election campaigning in the final weeks before election day. In the final spurt of the election campaign, people open their minds to the politics and there is a stronger chance of informing about and arguing for social democratic policies.

• Election day activities

On the actual election day, ballots are handed out at the polling stations. This virtually technical election act was long the only activity that political parties conducted on the actual election day. The parties did so to give the voter time to reflect before the decision. But as the information exchange in society in general has strongly increased, the election campaigns have also expanded. Active political election work until the polling stations close is now the song of every political party.

• Election night party – waiting for the election results together

When the polling stations close, the election campaign is over. Now, all we can do is wait for the election results and see the effects of all of the campaign work during early mornings, weekends and late nights. You may have even had time for some night time poster rounds. At many places in the country, social democrats gather at an election night party. It is a nice way to round off the election campaign, and celebrate success or share disappointment together. If your municipal party organisation or association is not holding an election night party, it is actually no more complicated than you holding one yourself. In-

vite your friends and fellow party members to a simple bring-your-own get together and watch the TV broadcast election coverage and follow the vote counting at val.se together.



Photo: Anders Löwdin

Discussion questions



- Have you participated in open political meetings and other activities? What activities and meetings did you personally find the most fun to participate in? Why?
- What activities and meetings do you think work best to make our party and what we stand for visible?
- What can you do as an individual member and what can the Social Democratic Party do locally to recruit, welcome and engage more members?
- What can we as individual members do to develop our activities and meeting formats?
- What can our party, as an organisation, do to find new meeting places and develop our meeting formats?
- Have you participated in an election campaign before? If you have, what did you do and what was most enjoyable? What are you most looking forward to doing in the next election campaign?
- How can we increase how many of us make an effort for the Social Democratic Party in an election campaign? What methods do you think are the most effective to reach out to people who are not politically active themselves?
- What impressions do you have of the Social Democratic Party's election campaign work? Does the party work well, or are there things that can be improved? How?

Suggestions of activities: Conduct a campaign, going door to door, with online communication and/or meetings, on a locally important issue.

Study guide and suggestions to the circle leader

This is a study guide that will help you hold a study circle about the organisation of the Social Democratic Party. The objective is to deepen the knowledge about the party organisation and provide suggestions and inspiration for campaign work and election work. The target group is new members of the Social Democratic Party, but of course other interested social democrats as well.

These study materials are only available digitally, but anyone who wants to can of course print out the materials to be able to read them on paper.

What is a study circle?

A study circle is a format where people regularly meet to study, discuss or practise something together. From an educational perspective, it is ideal when there are between seven and 12 participants including the leader, but there can be between three and 20 participants in a circle.

In a study circle, you participate freely and voluntarily. There is no set course syllabus, and all participants are involved in determining the contents and the set-up. In a study circle, work is done based on the needs of the participants and everyone's experiences are utilised.

The study circle is a democratic format for study and discussion that is based on everyone's active participation. Respect for each other is important. Nobody may dominate the discussions. Everyone should have the opportunity to speak and should be given about the same space. Decisions should be made in an open and democratic spirit.

The circle leader serves as a guide and provides inspiration and leads the group's work forward. But new knowledge grows forth in the interaction between the circle leader, the participants and the study materials.

You should register the study circle with ABF. There are some formal requirements in order for the study circle to get financial support from ABF for material costs or anything else. The circle must comprise at least nine hours of study (one hour of study = 45 minutes) divided into at least three sessions. Three participants including the leader are a minimum.

A good study circle...

- Gives all of the participants about the same amount of space.
- Utilises everyone's experiences.
- Combines a search for knowledge with dialogue and problem solving.
- Adapts the level of ambition to the participants.
- Lets different perspectives come up in the discussion.

Role of the circle leader

The circle leader is responsible for coordinating the work in the circle, obtaining the study materials and maintaining contact with ABF. In some circles, the circle leader is already chosen in advance and sometimes the group appoints one of the participants to lead the study circle.

The circle leader is a member of the group, not somebody who has to possess all of the subject knowledge. It can be helpful for this person to be a source of inspiration and share his or her knowledge, but the leader should not get stuck in a lecturing role.

Circle leadership is very much about creating a good mood in the group, getting the conversations and discussion started, getting everyone involved, making the choices clear, handling any problems, working out disagreement in the group, and leading the circle towards a common goal. The keyword is dialogue, and circle leadership is often more about asking questions than giving answers.

Suggestions for a good circle

As a circle leader, you can contribute to getting everyone involved, nobody taking over, and the dialogue being constructive.

Here are a few suggestions that may be of help:

- Make a round in the group. Give everyone the chance to say something and everyone gets about as much space.
- Use a speaking ball/baton that gives the right to talk. The person who is done talking passes it on.
- Are there more than eight of you? Then, it may sometimes be good to divide the circle into smaller groups of two or three, with feedback in the large group. This will give everyone the courage to participate.
- Ask targeted questions, like “Anni – what do you think?” Some people need to be given the floor to say something. At the same time, one naturally has the right to pass.



Photo: Ida Borg

- Ask a follow-up question to draw out more from a participant who gives short answers.
- Act as the “joker in the deck”. Introduce thoughts and ideas that are not otherwise in the group.
- Try to guide the discussion back to the topic if it has gotten off track. Ask a follow-up question.
- Keep supportive notes so you can summarise the discussion around each issue.

How you can work in the circle

Feel free to let one or more of the participants briefly give an account of what they have read and what impressions they have had at the beginning of each session. Everyone should have read before the session.

The most important element is the discussion. Begin with the suggested discussion questions or formulate your own. Feel free to discuss the questions in groups of two or three and then report in the large group. It may be good to invite an expert, organisation representative, teacher or somebody else who can answer the participants’ questions and participate in the discussion.

Getting started

Begin by making a quick round where everyone says their name. Then bring up what the study circle should be about and what the set-up for the day looks like.

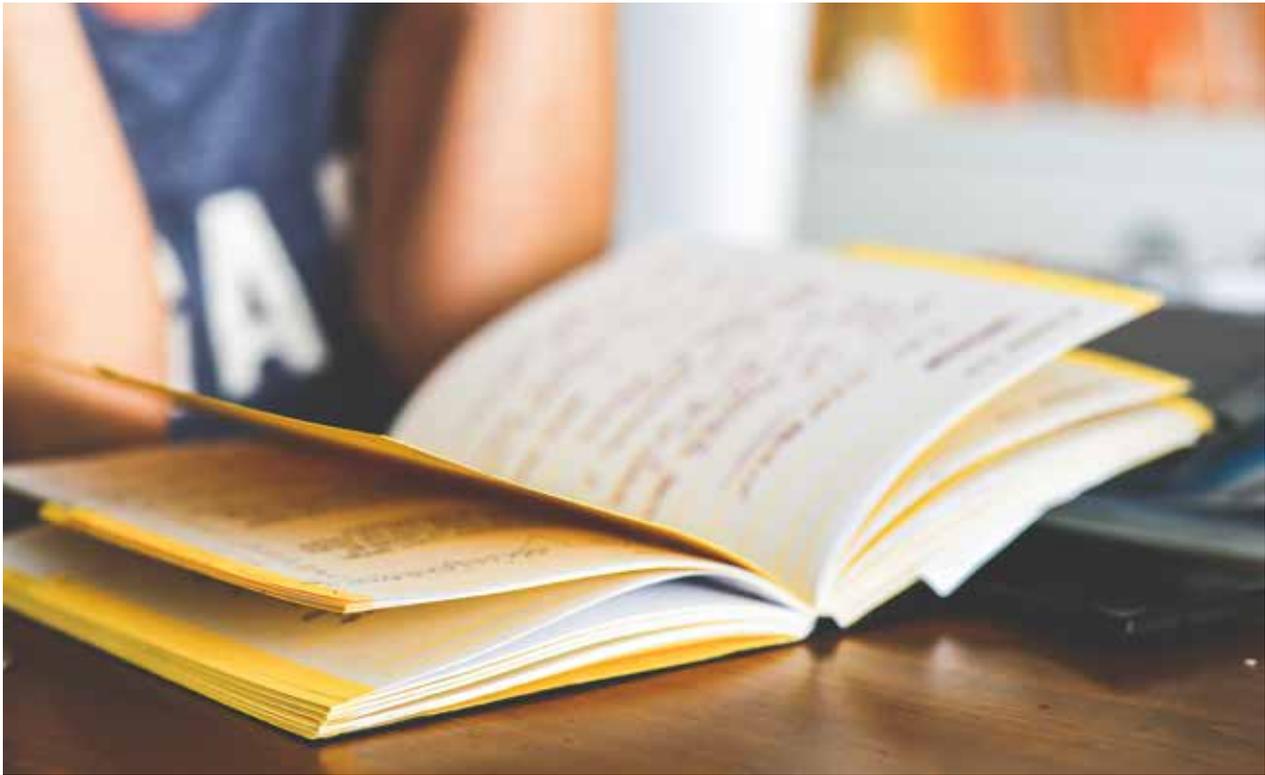
Talk over and decide on practical matters – when you will meet from here on out, how the participants should report absences, arranging coffee for the sessions, etc.

Talk about what a study circle is and how the circle can be constructive and participatory. Agree on how you should treat each other and work together.

If the participants do not know each other very well before the beginning of the circle: Let the participants interview each other two and two (for around five minutes each) and introduce each other to the rest of the group. A few things to find out in the interviews are: name, place of residence, occupation, leisure interest, political involvement, and last but not least expectations of the study circle.

Gather together the participants’ expectations and talk about them for a while – how can they be met?

Based on the expectations, you can formulate goals for the study circle. Go through the study materials so that everyone gets an overview. Decide on the arrangement of the rest of the circle.



Suggestions on literature for further reading and deeper study

”Massmedier: press, radio och tv i den digitala tidsåldern” (Mass media: press, radio and TV in the digital age)
Stig Hadenius, Lennart Weibull and Ingela Wadbring, Ekerlids 2011.

”Modern svensk politisk historia: konflikt och samförstånd” (Modern Swedish political history: conflict and consensus)
Stig Hadenius, Hjalmarson & Högberg 2008.

”Vad är Socialdemokrati – en bok om idéer och utmaningar” (What is Social Democracy – a book about ideas and challenges)
Ingvar Carlsson, Ann-Marie Lindgren, Förlaget Idé and Tendens, 2007.

”Netroots – en progressiv blogg-rörelse som sätter agendan” (Netroots – a progressive blog movement that sets the agenda)
Johan Ulvenlöf, Bilda Förlag, 2010.

”Alla kan blogga en handbok för dig som vill börja blogga” (Everyone can blog - a handbook on beginning a blog)
Rosemari Södergren, Bilda Förlag, 2007.

”Jämlikhetsanden: därför är mer jämlika samhällen nästan alltid bättre samhällen” (The spirit of equality: why more equal societies are almost always better societies)
Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, Karneval Förlag, 2010.

”Mellan dröm och verklighet” (Between dream and reality)
Daniel Lind, Premiss Förlag 2009.

”The Revolution Will Not Be Televised” (Pocket)
Joe Trippi, HarperPaperbacks, 2008.

**You can find all of our study materials at:
socialdemokraterna.abf.se**

