



Equipment and support
for simultaneous interpretation
in multilingual gatherings

[bla] is a non-profit autonomous collective formed and maintained by volunteers involved in grassroots activist groups and networks across Europe. We work with the principles of horizontal self-organisation, consensus decision making, as well as DoItYourself and open-source tools. We mainly speak English, German and French.

[bla] wants to help fighting domination and power systems linked to language. We consider that every person is involved and active in different power systems which lead to oppression and privilege, based on social categories (such as class, race, gender, age, culture, language abilities, ...). We believe neutral positions do not exist in such power systems and that these dominations are present and active in group discussions. We want to help reduce language domination and power systems linked to language knowledge/barriers by making them visible, and by using [bla]'s technical equipment so people can listen and express themselves in a language in which they feel comfortable understanding and speaking.

Language is power

Because some languages were, and still are, brutally imposed by colonial power relations (like English, French, Spanish, ...), these languages and people who speak them still dominate in multilingual transnational meetings. Participation of people speaking 'minority' languages is often limited due to understanding issues and/or lack of confidence in using dominant languages. We are also aware that 'on the spot' interpretation techniques (consecutive interpretation, whispering) have limits: fewer languages can be spoken in discussions and meetings are longer and more tiring.



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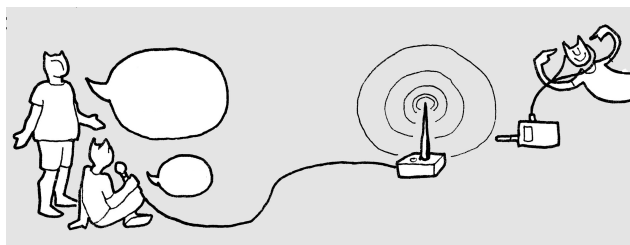
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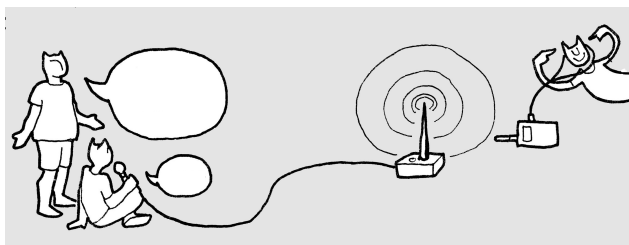
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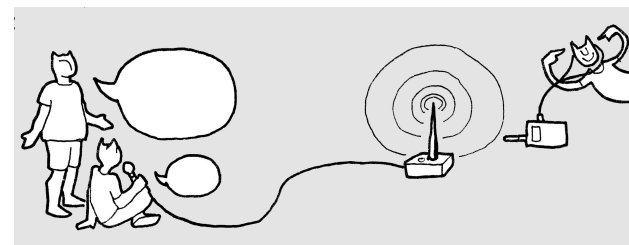
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english version



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From our experience we think simultaneous interpretation is a way to facilitate horizontality in decision making processes and to include people speaking minority languages.

[bla] makes equipment for simultaneous interpretation in different languages available, and helps with coordinating interpretation.

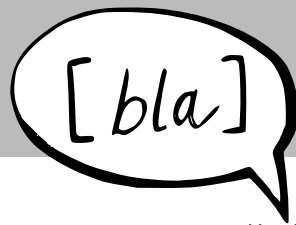
We use two different techniques depending on the context. For small groups sound is spread through wires from self-made electronic boxes called 'spiders', to headphones for participants. For bigger groups interpretation is spread using radio waves, and each person can listen to the frequency of their desired language with a portable radio.

When we support an event we take care of bringing and managing the equipment, we help interpreters and participants to use it and to get familiar with simultaneous interpretation. **We do not provide interpretation skills:** people organizing an event are the ones looking for interpreters. Languages that will be spoken depend on interpreters availability and skills. Interpreters do not have to be professional, volunteers can usually manage it well.

[bla] aims to support horizontal, self-organized groups and collectives active in social movements and struggles; especially those opposing capitalism and struggling against domination and power systems



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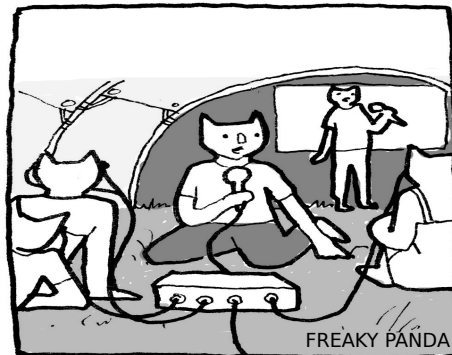
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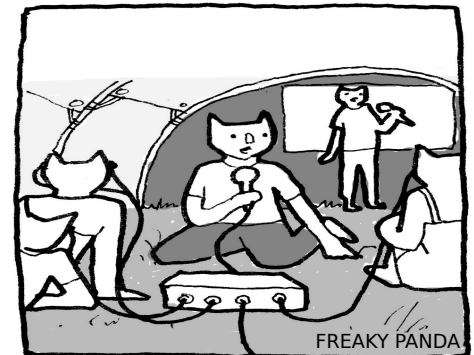
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