

SheDecides.

SheDecides is a **movement** centered on **bodily autonomy**, focusing on the ‘Stand up, Speak Out’ pillar by: **shifting narratives and norms, engaging new audiences with accessible language and content, and actively disrupting gender and power dynamics**, towards a world where women and girls decide about their bodies, their lives and their futures – without question.’

SheDecides Movements are kick-started and developed by bold collectives of diverse people from around the world, who envision to co-create a new, dynamic, vibrant and empowering space for many to join, Stand Up, Speak Out and take action for a world where SheDecides. Movements are guided in their journey by the [SheDecides Movements Guide](#) with the assistance of the **SheDecides Movement Essentials Checklist** and the support of a SheDecides Regional Movement Builder from the [SheDecides Support Unit \(SDSU\)](#). Movements are **encouraged to develop based on 5 criteria for health and vibrancy**: Shared Identity & Vision; Collective Action; Sustained Engagement; Scale & Growth; Grassroots Activity. The SDSU bases its work on feminist movement building, organizing and campaigning frameworks, as the Movement co-designs its Theory of Change (TOC) and agrees on its core movement building values.

What is a SheDecides Open House?

A **SheDecides Open House** is a fun, dynamic and inclusive space for SheDecides Movements to open their doors to diverse voices and grow by **inviting new people to join the Movement and connecting them with established SheDecides activists**.

A **SheDecides Open house** convenes people using creative expression. It’s a joyful and exciting gathering where artists ignite a conversation about bodily autonomy, the right to decide and what it means to be pro-choice in your context. It’s an opportunity to creatively contribute to shifting narratives, engaging new audiences and disrupt power dynamics.

Why should you organise a SheDecides Open House?

A **SheDecides Open House** is a great way for you to **grow your Movement’s core team and diversify your network of activists and change-makers**.

By bringing together a diverse range of perspectives and new stakeholders, you will establish a stronger collective voice, and with it the ability to stand up and speak out more effectively. With this in mind, the conversations and activities that take place within your Open House must contribute to the roadmap of what the Movement wants to do in your country as part of SheDecides.

As part of [ArtsForAbortionRights](#), some Open Houses will focus on why access to safe and legal abortion is particularly urgent now, wherever you are in the world, under the hashtag [#WhyAbortionWhyNow](#).

Hearing the individual insights and experiences of different people will be crucial in shaping your Movement’s focus and building energy for the next step in its development - taking action.

What does a SheDecides Open House look like?

How an Open House takes shape depends on **what will work best for you and your community**. There are a few core requirements listed below, but **as the organisers it's up to you** to make the event uniquely yours.

For most of us, these events will for now be happening online. Depending on the Covid-19 situation in your country though, it may be possible to host an in person gathering¹.

First, here are a few examples of what an Open House does *not* look like:

- A closed door, roundtable meeting between representatives of different organisations and the Movement's core team.
- A curated series of formal speeches given by the usual suspects (heads of NGO's, UN agencies and government officials), with vague promises and messages of self-congratulation.
- A slow, over regimented space in which people don't feel comfortable to speak, and leave feeling unable to take shared-ownership of SheDecides in their country.
- A space where young people and marginalised communities are only included to tick a box. Participation should be inclusive, active and meaningful.
- An event in which the only attendees are people who are already part of the Movement.

As SheDecides activists we disrupt existing power dynamics, we don't reinforce them.

If the space isn't open for new and diverse people to join, speak their mind and ask questions as equal partners – then it isn't a SheDecides Open House.

Here's a draft Open House programme to get you started:

- 1. Welcome and setting the scene:** Introduce SheDecides. Who we are, the manifesto, and how we're trying to organise in a way that breaks from convention and challenges the norms that people might be used to. In this space, everyone is equal and will be heard if they want to be. Everyone is free to use the SheDecides manifesto and brand in their activism.
- 2. Hold break out rooms:** Put people in groups of 2-3 and ask them to complete an icebreaker exercise. Getting to know some of the other people in the call will help everyone to feel comfortable in the collective space and ready to take part.
- 3. Get Inspired:** Have an intervention by artists or performers talking about bodily autonomy and abortion rights. This could be anything - from music, theatre and poetry to visual arts inspired by the conversations in the Open House as it happens, or created based on insights people submit in advance.
- 4. Set the context:** Share some facts which help to ground the conversation in your country context. For example: What are your country's current abortion laws? What are the rates of unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortions before and now after Covid-19?
- 5. Open the Mic. The personal is political:** What was it like for the participants growing up in their country and community? What are the challenges that they and particularly women in their

¹ When organising gatherings, the SheDecides Support Unit encourages you to follow the World Health Organisation's guidelines on social distancing and hygiene, so you can continue to stay safe and healthy while boldly standing up & speaking out.

community currently face? How is their experience different from their parent's experience when they were young? Make sure you check out the [SheDecides Open Mic guide](#) as well for extra tips and tricks.

6. **Get Focused:** Collectively discuss and assess the Movement's in country focus and next steps. What particular issues are affecting the participants and their wider communities? What is their vision of a #NewNormal where they are free to decide, and how can the Movement help make that change happen?
7. **Fired up? It's time to take action:** Encourage participants to take action. Share some of the activities listed in the [ArtsForAbortionRights](#) playbook so everyone knows some of the immediate steps they can take. And let them know how they can continue to get involved with SheDecides in your country!
8. **Wrap up:** When you finish the event, have an email ready to send to all participants within the next hour. This should provide a clear summary of the core-team's next steps. It should also thank everyone for their attendance and encourage them to sign the SheDecides manifesto.
9. **The day after:** Remember to have your next steps ready, and the message that will people receive to let them know what the next call to action will be.

The core requirements:

Diversity and Inclusion

SheDecides Open Houses are supposed to diversify and grow the Movement in your country, so it's important to be as inclusive as possible.

- **Attendees need to be as diverse as possible.** People of different gender, sexuality, age, religious, cultural, disability and professional backgrounds should all be present.
- **Draft a list of the different people, organisations, networks and collectives that you could reach out to with invitations to spread the word.** Try to engage as many as possible, so that you are able to connect with a strong mix of people who come from different social circles. As you do this, think about the best ways to reach young people in your country and community.
- **Depending on the shape of your event, you should invite well established social media personalities or journalists,** so they can share about the experience with their followers. Work with them after the event to see how you can continue to take action as part of the Movement.
- **If you are gathering in a physical space, there should be some refreshments available for participants.** Depending on how long your event(s) lasts, it's important to make sure there is food and drink (especially water), so participants can remain energised and actively engaged. You also need to ensure you can cater to any dietary requirements that your participants will have.

Platforms for Online Gathering

There are many platforms for online gathering that you could potentially use for your Open House. The SheDecides Support Unit uses [Zoom](#) when organising online events, and suggests that you do the same.

- **As a service Zoom is good for a private and inclusive discussion,** in which people are able to participate in the conversation by using their camera and microphone, or the chat box if they prefer. It also has screen sharing functionality.

- **If using Zoom, you will need to make sure you have sufficient protective settings enabled.** At the least, you should have both a password and waiting room set up so you can confirm each participant is on the guest list before letting them in. You should also have it set up so only the hosts are able to share their screen.
- **If you have another online meeting tool that you prefer, please feel free to use that too.** The only requirement is that it is conducive to hosting an Open House and has sufficient safety features.

Safe-Guarding

This should be a space where people can express themselves as equals. To achieve this, people must feel safe and comfortable.

- **In order to keep the space safe, attendees should RSVP in advance. All registrations should be collected using a designated guest list with their name, contact details, profession/organisation and reference for how they heard about the event.** This list should be reviewed by the core-team in advance of the Open House, and any suspicious registrations should be flagged for follow up. Ensure you leave a day or two between the closing of the registration process and the event itself so that you can follow up directly with any suspicious registrations and verify them.
- **To ensure you are being as inclusive as possible, the registration process should be open to the public.** Alternately, if you believe having an open registration presents a risk of getting too much unwanted attention, then you could strategically send direct invites (with an RSVP link) throughout your existing network and to potential new individuals, organisations, networks and sister-movements that you identify as being a strong addition to SheDecides in your country.
- **At the event itself, a few members of the core-team should monitor the waiting room as people join.** If a person's name isn't on the list and their identity cannot be verified, then they should not be let in. This is important to prevent unwanted Zoom-bombers from hijacking the space, disrupting the conversation and making it feel unsafe. It's best to ask people to start joining 15 minutes early so that you have time to do this, and it doesn't delay proceedings. It's a good idea to have a message prepared which you can broadcast to the waiting room so they know they might need to wait a few minutes before being let in.
- **Facilitators and the people managing the technology should be quick to respond if a Zoom-bomber does make it through.** They should be quickly identified and removed from the call. If the guest list and waiting room are well managed though, this shouldn't be a problem.
- **At a time of increased backlash on human rights it is important that intimidation, threats and attacks are reported** and that plans are put in place to safeguard activists defending abortion rights. Please take extra care on International Safe Abortion day and when taking action with the [#WhyAbortionWhyNow](#) campaign.
- **Please report any incidents to Lewis Emmerton (He/Him/His) Policy Advisor, SheDecides Support Unit with the subject line [ISAD Opposition]: safety@shedecides.com**

Designating Roles and Responsibilities

It's important that you have designated roles for people to ensure the event run on time and remains engaging.

- **There should be at least two facilitators throughout, who are dynamic and high energy.** This is to ensure that when one person is facilitating the conversation, the other is monitoring the chat. Each activity should ideally be led by a different person, so people get to see the diversity of people who form part of the core-team. As soon as you have decided on your two facilitators, please let the SheDecides Support Unit know who they are. There will be training sessions provided to them, to help them prepare.
- **There should be at least one person responsible for the technology.** This includes screen sharing, setting up breakout rooms, monitoring the chat and troubleshooting issues as they arise.
- **If interpretation is required, this should be set up in advance.** The interpretation channels should be enabled and tested before the event begins.

Setting the Tone and Purpose

Getting the right tone will be important to ensure everyone stays engaged but also feels comfortable to speak up and join the conversation. Setting out the purpose of the event will be just as important too. This is to ensure you maximise the outcomes you want to achieve.

- **The Open House should be a joyful and exciting gathering,** where artists help to start the conversation, and leave everyone feeling inspired and ready to take action.
- **Facilitators should be respectful,** open minded and patient with participants at all times. The activists should feel they can express themselves and tangibly help shape the direction of the Movement in their country.
- **Set out some ground rules for participation.** As a basic rule, when one person speaks everyone else must be respectful and listen to what they have to say. Outside of that, depending on how your Open House takes shape it is up to you to determine what other rules might be needed.

SheDecides Open House Checklist:

To help you plan, here is a quick checklist to tick off and fill in as you go.

Inviting Participants: Are you being as inclusive as possible?

People of Diverse Backgrounds:	Check List
Gender and sexual identities	
Ages	
Religious backgrounds	
Cultural and ethnic backgrounds	
Disabilities	
Other Marginalised communities e.g. Sex workers, People living with HIV, etc.	
Languages	

Stakeholder Type	Categories	Check List
Government	Embassies of SheDecides Government Champions	
	Embassies of Foreign Governments	
	Executive (e.g. Ministry of Health)	
	Judiciary (e.g. Judges)	
	Legislative (e.g. Congresswomen in Healthcare Committees)	
	Multilateral Agencies (e.g. UN)	
Arts and Media	Academia	
	Artists	
	Data Scientists	
	Designers	
	Influencers	
	Journalists	
	Media Groups	
Civil Society	Local Representatives of SheDecides Champions	
	Activists	
	CSOs / NGOs	
	Political Parties	
	Sister Movements	
	International Organizations	
	Student Unions	
	Worker's Unions	
	Youth Networks & Organisations	
Market / Private Sector	Small Businesses	
	Corporations	
	Funders/ Foundations	

Designing your SheDecides Open House:

What goals and outcomes do you want to achieve from the Open House?

What art and performance will your Open House be built around?

What activities will take place in your Open House?

What will your Open House budget be? And what will you need the funding for?

What challenges will you need to prepare for?

Facilitation:

Who will be your facilitators, tech support and artists?

What are the particular needs of all participants that you should be aware of?

The online platform/venue:

If you're not using Zoom, what platform will you host your Open House, and why?

How many people can the venue comfortably hold?

What audio/visual facilities and materials will be needed?

Thinking about who your participants are, how can you help make the space feel safe and welcoming?

What safety/protective features will you have enabled to prevent opposition and Zoom-bombers from joining?

Spreading the word:

Thinking about the safety of the space and your participants, should you publicly advertise the Open House or circulate invites directly?

How will you reach people and invite them to join?

How will you particularly reach out to young people and marginalised communities directly?

Which organisations and networks will you ask to circulate your invite?

Don't forget to ask your SheDecides Friends for ideas, and regularly check out the SheDecides social media channels and newsletters over the next six months for inspiration from around the world.

Together we will create a **#NewNormal**. Where **#SheDecides**. **#WithoutQuestion**.