

REPORT



What challenges do we face in our effort to help all stakeholders understand how cultural heritage could facilitate socio-economic development?

A Structured Democratic Dialogue conducted in the rural village of Kvemo Machkhaani





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This report has been developed in the context of a **Structured Democratic Dialogue** conducted at the **rural village of Kvemo, Machkhaani** on the 4th of Oct, 2017 on invitation of **Mr. Hakan Demir** on behalf of the **Council of Europe**.

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The setting

The rural village of Kvemo Machkhaani is located in the Signaghi municipality of the Kakheti region, known for its unique architecture. Kvemo Machkhaani, a small village with ancient buildings, is unique for its singular architecture and history of mobilisation. There are 2 buildings recognised as cultural heritage monuments in the village, but more than 10 buildings, also built by Machkhaani citizens, are waiting for inclusion into the Georgian national cultural heritage monuments list.

The most impressive is the theatre of Machkhaanitheatre, which plays an important role in village life with its singular history and stately architecture,.

Local citizens built the Kvemo Machkhaani Theatre with their own resources. The Theatre opened in 1899. From the day it opened, the theatre has been held in high esteem by the local population. Because of this, it is the only one of the 13 cultural buildings in Signaghi's municipality that survived robbery and looting in the 1990s. According to a survey conducted of the 147 residents of Kvemo Machkaani, one of the most important community challenges identified by the village population was the condition of and lack of resources available for the Machkhaani Theatre. This priority was second only to unemployment.

The Civic Initiative, has been working on popularising the history of Machkhaani Theatre since 2014 as a prime example of civic organisation in Georgia's history. This history of self-mobilised fundraising and prioritisation of culture within the community is confirmed by archives of the Iveria and Droeba newspapers.

Thanks to this recently-unearthed history and the community's interest and investment, it has been possible to open the theatre hall again for the first time in 2015. The Symphony of Georgia also organised a charity concert in Tbilisi in honor of Machkhaani Theatre. Since then, various groups have been invited to perform to raise awareness and funds for the Theatre.

Five theatrical performances have been organized since 2015, electric wiring and windows have been replaced, a film screen was built, and stage lights, an audio system, and heating were installed.

In June and July, this year the "Civic Initiative", in collaboration with six performing choirs from 3 countries, organised the inaugural International Theatre Festival at Machkhaani Theatre.

The Festival required substantial human resources, and was executed on a very small budget. The festival enabled us to raise awareness of the Theatre's history, however, the funds raised through the festival and similar charity events is not enough to sustain permanent cultural programs for the Theatre. In addition, further rehabilitation of the building is greatly needed.

The team's efforts are not enough to sustain the cultural life of the theatre in the village. The local and central governments need to provide adequate financial and human resources for rural and economic development in the region.

The Civic Initiative set the first steps of development into motion. Now, the pioneers are working to do the same to revitalise cultural and educational life in other towns and villages within Signaghi municipality. To help support this, they have also opened "the Knowledge Café," a social enterprise focused on producing a space for culture, knowledge, and non-formal education in the center of the Signaghi municipality.

Faro Convention Labs

The Faro Convention Labs are organised with the participation of interested member States and communities to further explore the Faro Convention principles and their effective implementation. The Labs include a series of events for a period of 2-3 days based on the availability of the host community, and involve stakeholders at national, local and community levels. The labs intend to expand a group of participants from each country so they can work together on their return to promote and implement the Faro Convention. While the specific topic of each Lab is decided together with the host community, overall objectives include:

- Promotion of the Faro Convention with local and national stakeholders
- Becoming familiar with the Faro Convention approach
- Enhancing the Faro Convention Network
- Skill building for the implementation of the Faro Convention principles

Through experiential learning, participants will gain first-hand experience of the implementation of the Convention. The Labs include various techniques including introduction of good practices, discussion groups, promotional events and workshop modules.

With the inspiration of the Faro Convention Labs, participants are expected to follow up the implementation of the Faro Convention principles through local initiatives by heritage communities and preferably at the national level by further promoting the ratification. During the workshop a specific session is dedicated to work on action points to take place after the Lab.

The Faro Convention Lab in Georgia primarily worked with countries that have signed and ratified the convention and are in the process of identifying various ways to implement the Convention. In addition, member and / or observer states, which show interest in better understanding the Convention, were invited.

At the local level, together with a local initiative in the Machkhaani village (Sighnaghi municipality), the lab explored a community-based, democratic socio-economic model for community engagement through Faro Convention principles and approach.

The specific workshop session was designed using the SDD methodology to facilitate:

- Dialogue to foster collaboration between local and central government, local people and local business and other local actors;
- Democratic Socio-Economic models (including the business community) for community engagement.





The Aim of the Dialogue

The project was implemented using Structured Democratic Dialogue (SDD). The dialogue was conducted by two experienced SDD Facilitators on an invitation of the Council of Europe to provide support to the local community engage all relevant stakeholders and help them understand and appreciate how cultural heritage could facilitate socio-economic development. At the same time, the experts of the Council of Europe wished to experience the application of the SDD process in order to consider its inclusion in the pool

of methodologies used in analogous events. In addition, the SDD methodology is based on scientific laws, which have been repeatedly validated, empirically and scientifically, in the arena of practice. This methodology supports groups of diverse stakeholders with conflicting opinions and interests to effectively discuss a matter of joint concern, integrate their knowledge, and democratically redesign their socio-organizational systems and practices reaching consensus agreement for effective collaborative action.





SDD

The application of Dialogic Design Science requires Facilitators to strictly comply with 7 Laws, which evolved within the community of theoreticians and practitioners between 1995 and 2006:

Requisite:

- (1) Variety (Ashby)
- (2) Parsimony (Miller)
- (3) Saliency (Boulding)
- (4) Meaning and Wisdom (Peirce)
- (5) Authenticity and Autonomy (Tsivacou)
- (6) Evolutionary Learning (Dye)
- (7) Action (Laouris)

References:

http://futureworlds.eu/wiki/Structured_Democratic_Dialogue
<http://dialogicdesignscience.wikispaces.com/Laws+%287%29>

The science is axiomatic and is grounded on empirically validated axioms:

- (1) Complexity Axiom
- (2) Engagement Axiom
- (3) Investment Axiom
- (4) Logic Axiom
- (5) Epistemological Axiom
- (6) Boundary-Spanning Axiom

References:

http://futureworlds.eu/wiki/Foundational_Axioms_of_Dialogic_Design_Science

About Structured Democratic Dialogue

All discussions between participants were facilitated using the Structured Democratic Dialogue (SDD) methodology. The SDD uses a strict and structured facilitation process supported by technology to capture the authentic opinions and views of participants. Specially designed software helps shorten the time needed to explore the influences that one idea might exert on another using an intelligent optimization algorithm known as Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM).

For about 3-4 hours participants submit single sentence responses as well as long clarifications in response to a specific Triggering Question. In the Co-Laboratory (this term is preferred over 'workshop' to emphasize the fact that participants explore and discover together). Triggering Question was:

What challenges do we face in our effort to help all stakeholders understand how cultural heritage could facilitate socio-economic development?

During the first hours, other participants may ask for clarification, but not express judgments. A bottom-up approach is subsequently applied to cluster all statements into groups according to similarity and then participants are asked to choose the five they consider most important. The Statements that receive two or more votes enter the final discussion in which participants explore influence relations such as:

If we make progress in addressing Challenge (or Action) X
Will this help us SIGNIFICANTLY address Challenge (or Action) Y?

Since the number of combinations is on the order of several hundreds, the ISM algorithm is applied to reduce them on the order of a hundred using inductive logic, thus making it possible for the participants to explore the full spectrum of the issue. The result is an Influence Map, which is a tree structure that represents the collective wisdom of the participants and their consensus as to which Challenges (or Actions) are the most influential, i.e., ideas that end up at the root of the map are much more influential when it comes to addressing the overall challenge.

The SDD approach emerged in the '70s out of the works of the Club of Rome founded by Aurelio Peccei an Italian Industrialist (1970). John Warfield and his group are credited for developing the ISM algorithm, the scientific grounding within a Science of Generic Design, and the first version of the methodology, which was known as Interactive Management (IM) (Warfield, 1976, 1982; Warfield & Cardenas, 1994). IM evolved into SDD through contributions of Aleco Christakis and the 21st Century Agoras Group (for books and comprehensive reviews: Christakis and Bausch, 2006; Flanagan and Christakis, 2009; Schreibman & Christakis, 2007; Laouris 2012). Hasan Özbekhan, co-founder and first director of the Club of Rome wrote the original prospectus for The Club of Rome, The Predicament of Mankind (Club of Rome, 1970), which served as vision for systems scientists addressing issues of energy, overpopulation, depletion of resources and environmental degradation (1969, 1970).

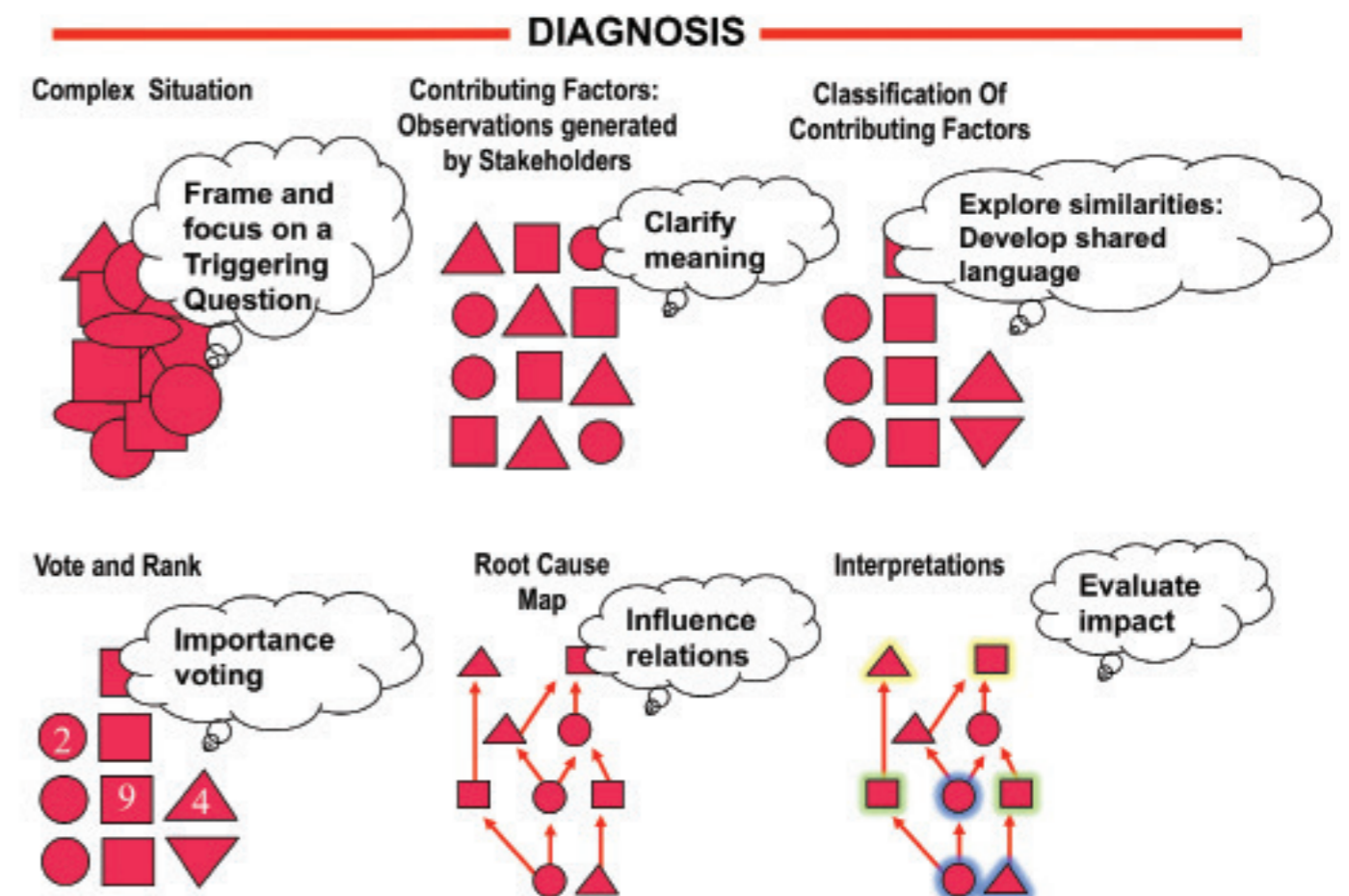
Özbekhan is credited for the formulation of the Axiom of Engagement, which states “it is unethical to design action plans for complex social systems without the engagement of the community of stakeholders.” The SDD evolved into its present format with contributions of Yiannis Laouris and his group at Future Worlds Center. They have introduced a hybrid version, i.e., partly face-to-face and partly synchronous, and they developed a free App known as IdeaPrism, which allows the collection of contributions (both text and video) as well as their evaluation using multiple criteria (e.g, SMART; Delphi method, etc.).



They have also developed Cogniscope v3 using requirements proposed by the international community of practitioners for a next-generation tool (conducted as virtual SDD in 2012; Laouris, Y., Christakis, A. N., Dye, K. M., et al., 2012), ISM Parallel, and other advanced tools used in the SDDs of this project (see section: Using Cutting Edge Technologies).

Laouris is credited for the Law of Requisite Action, which states that “the capacity of a community of stakeholders to implement a plan of action effectively depends strongly on the true engagement of the stakeholders in designing it. Disregarding the participation of the stakeholders the plans are bound to fail.”

The graph illustrates the steps of implementation of a typical SDD process.



The SDD methodology was chosen over other options for a number of reasons, such as (a) its current format makes extensive use of technology, thus making it more efficient and attractive to young people, (b) the results of the discussions reflect the genuine views and authentic opinions of the participants (i.e., no “editing” of what is said is permitted), (c) the implementation of SDD introduces and cultivates important aspects of democratic processes, and (d) the project coordinators are world pioneers, have extensive experience and have implemented co-laboratories worldwide using SDD.

Using Cutting Edge Science & Technologies

For the implementation of this Co-Laboratory, several cutting-edge technologies and scientific methodologies have been applied. A brief summary of relevant technology is provided.

SDD: Structured Democratic Dialogue

A dialogue conducted in compliance with the Dialogic Design Science. Also referred to as Structured Democratic Dialogue Process, or Structured Dialogic Design Process (SDDP).

ISM: Interpretive Structural Modeling

Invented by John N. Warfield (1989). Provides a structured method for dealing with complex situations: generates a visual map of the situation (or problem) that is used to obtain new insights, and construct new approaches to the problem at hand. Incorporates pairwise comparison, transitive logic and concept synthesis to construct an influence map. ISM is embedded in the CogniScope v3.2 Classic.

http://reinventdemocracy.info/w/Interpretive_Structural_Modeling

DDS: Dialogic Design Science

DDS is the theoretical foundation of the Methodology. The actual implementation process is described as Structured Democratic Dialogue.

Cogniscope v3.2 Classic

Software that supports the implementation of face-to-face dialogues designed in compliance with the requirements imposed by Dialogic Design Science. The original CogniScope™ was designed by Aleco Christakis and developed by CWA Ltd. The requirements for CogniScope v3.2 Classic were developed by theoreticians and practitioners from across the world, that participated in a virtual SDDP organized by Future Worlds Center and the Institute for 21st Century Agoras in 2012. The Classic v3, developed by Ekkotek Ltd., runs on Windows and Mac computers, and includes almost all requirements requested by the community. <http://ekkotek.com/index.php/products/wisdom-tools/cogniscope3>

IdeaPrism

This free cutting-edge App has been used during the Co-Laboratory to video record all Participants' contributions, thus making them available in a fully authentic form at all later stages. Available as App and on the web, it facilitates the implementation of face-to-face as well as asynchronous and hybrid dialogues. The only tool that allows video clarifications, App-to-App communication, voting using multiple criteria as well as real-time virtual projections of all SDD outputs, either as web walls or as illustrations ready to be projected using a beamer.

<http://www.ideaprism.net>



The Co-Laboratory and its Triggering Question

The Co-Laboratory took place in the rural village of Kverno Machkhaani on the 4th of Oct 2017. Thirteen of the FARO Lab participants attended a full-day session, thus accumulating a total investment of almost 100 person-hours (i.e., 13x7). The process was facilitated by Marios Michaelides (Cyprus Academy of Public Administration) and Yiannis Laouris (Future Worlds Center). The Structured Democratic Dialogue Methodology requires the formulation of a Triggering Question, which enables the production of ideas and kindles the discussion.

What challenges do we face in our effort to help all stakeholders understand how cultural heritage could facilitate socio-economic development?

Challenge 3
Preference for the interest of investors and not for the community ✓

Challenge 4
Priorities of local-public administration ✓

Challenge 5
Lack of trust with government ✓

Challenge 6
Misunderstanding of personal benefit ✓

Challenge 7
Lack of identity ✓

Challenge 8
Lack of understanding of what cultural heritage is ✓

Challenge 9
Peoples' hopelessness ✓

Challenge 10
Poor socio-economic conditions ✓

Challenge 11
Sense of powerlessness of society ✓

Challenge 12
Stereotypes in the way of thinking and doing ✓

Challenge
Limited (resources) dream big

Challenge
Different interpretations same history/culture heritage

Challenge
Lack of open exchanging authorities community institutions investors

Challenge
Lack of finding the right investors for the right program

Challenge 17
Difference in individual perception of the subject ✓

Challenge 18
Lack of special knowledge (marketing, fund raising etc.) of the members of communities ✓

Challenge 19
Negative experience of participation in the heritage management ✓

Challenge 20
Limited recognition of potential of cultural heritage ✓

Challenge 21
Lack of awareness ✓

Challenge 22
Political emphasis to rapid development ✓

Challenge 23
Choosing the priorities ✓

Challenge 24
To identify the key, most active representatives of stakeholders ✓

Challenge 25
Not accurate legal environment ✓

Challenge 26
Financial possibility is not directly related to their needs ✓

Challenge 27
Absence of experience in the collective activity ✓

Challenge 28
Lack of understanding of what sustainable development is ✓

Challenge 29
Lack of education in what sustainable development is ✓

Challenge 30
Lack of appropriate physical public spaces to form the community spirit ✓

Challenge 31
Resistance to development for fear of exploitation ✓



Idea Generation

After carefully examining the Triggering Question and briefly discussing the ideas submitted previously on Idea-Prism, the participants were asked to state their ideas in response to the TQ, using a single sentence statement. In this phase, the Facilitator asked one by one, in a round-robin manner, all participants for their statements. The process continued in multiple rounds until all ideas were collected. The ideas were recorded using the Cogniscope Classic v.3 software. In parallel, and during the short break before the next stage, the Technical Assistant copied the ideas in IdeaPrism and matched them to their corresponding authors. The participants were asked to stand in front of all and actually “pitch” their ideas for 1-2 minutes. The decision to put them in front of an audience and a camera was a conscious one based on the fact that this generation grew up with digital devices, video messaging and more public sharing. There is also a thesis of the project that in order to achieve tangible impact in transforming need to verbalize and share their concrete ideas widely. Subsequently, others were given the opportunity to ask clarification questions. At this stage, no judgemental statements were allowed, in compliance with the SDD theory and practice.

Clarifications

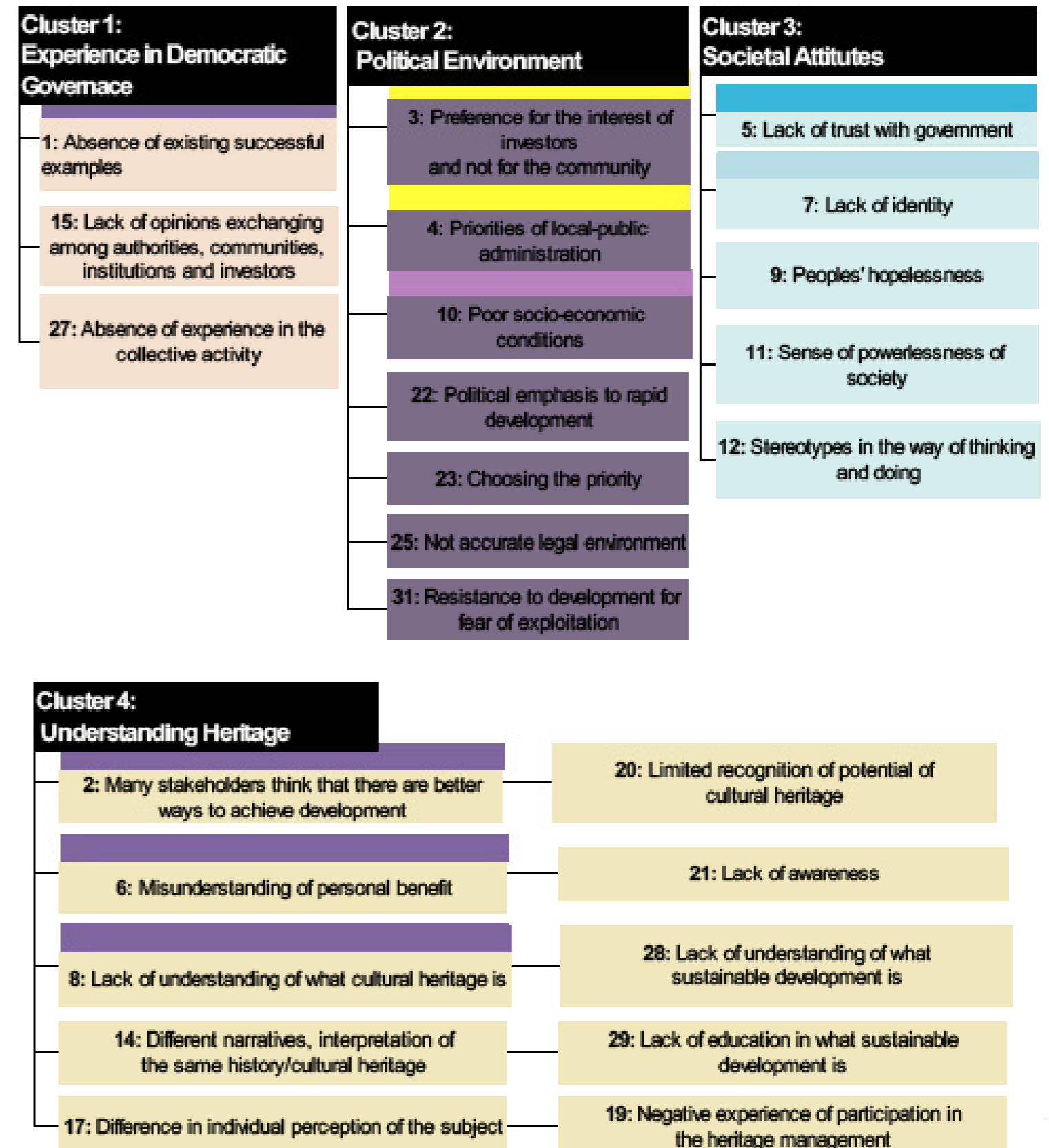
In the following stage, each participant was given the floor to explain his/her idea(s) to the rest of the participants. The goal was that everyone was clear about the meaning. Clarifications were now recorded directly through Idea-Prism and available on YouTube, for others or co-participants to have the possibility to watch them at a later stage.

The participants produced **31 Ideas** in response to the Triggering Question.

Clustering - Ideas into Groups

The ideas were clustered into 4 categories based on similarities and common attributes as shown in the diagram.

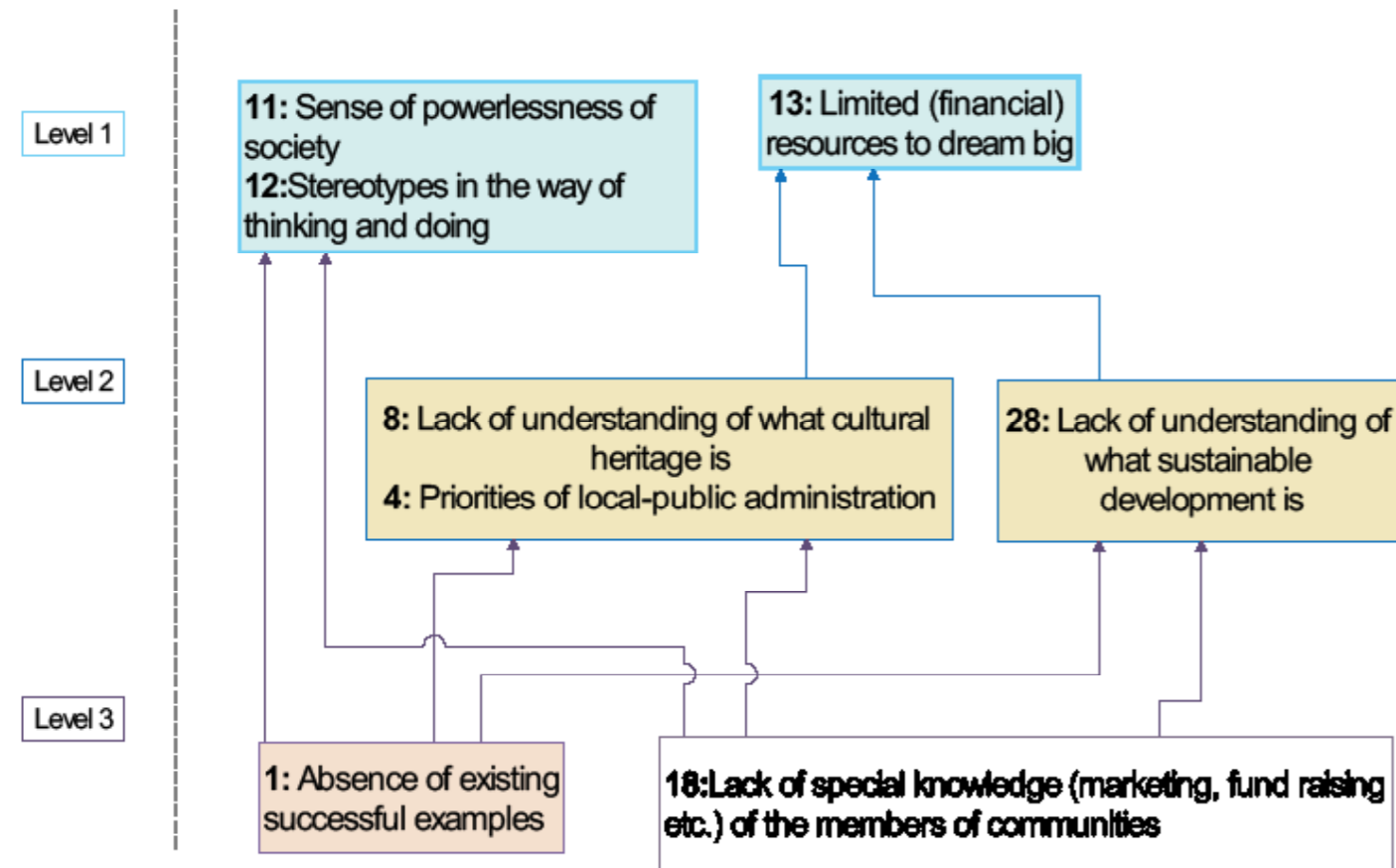
Clustering Challenges



Structuring Challenges in an Influence Map

At this stage, participants were asked to explore influences of one idea on another. They were asked to decide whether making progress in resolving one Challenge would SIGNIFICANTLY make the resolution of another Challenge easier. If the answer following a structured discussion was “Yes” with a great majority (67%), an influence was established on the map of ideas. The participants structured first those challenges that received four or more votes. Then three more challenges were selected. Those five challenges are highlighted in the voting table opposite this page and all appear in the Influence Map.

The resulting Influence Map, consisting of three different levels, is shown below. The way to read such a tree structure is that Challenges at the bottom are root causes. In this structure Challenge #1 and Challenge #18 are the most influential. It is recommended that the focus should be on addressing these challenges first in order to leverage progress on the other challenges.



#1: Absence of existing successful examples
#18: Lack of special knowledge (marketing, fund raising etc.) of the members of communities

#	Votes	Challenge
1	8	Absence of existing successful examples
8	8	Lack of understanding of what cultural heritage is
18	8	Lack of special knowledge (marketing, fund raising etc.) of the members of communities
4	7	Priorities of local-public administration
11	7	Sense of powerlessness of society
12	3	Stereotypes in the way of thinking and doing
13	3	Limited (financial) resources to dream big
28	3	Lack of understanding of what sustainable development is
20	3	Limited recognition of potential of cultural heritage
23	3	Choosing the priorities
22	2	Political emphasis to rapid development
25	2	Not accurate legal environment
26	2	Financial possibility is not directly related to their needs
2	1	Many stakeholders think that there are better ways to achieve development
15	1	Lack of opinions exchanging among authorities, communities, institutions and investors
24	1	To identify the key, most active representatives of stakeholders
30	1	Lack of appropriate physical public spaces to form the community spirit

For the situation to change, the most effective approach is for change makers to identify and use successful stories (Factor #1) and to seek and acquire more knowledge on marketing, fund raising, etc., within the members of the concerned communities (Factor #18).

The influence of a challenge is a more impactful way to prioritize what to do than the initial votes. We note that not only are #1 and #18 the most influential, they were also judged to be two of the three most important challenges to address. However, Challenge #8 which also received one of the highest importance votes, was not judged to be as influential as #1 and #18. Challenge #28 which only received three votes was judged to be more influential than #11 which had more than twice the importance votes. The deeper investigation of influence led the group of participants to learn and refine their priorities.

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Lead Facilitators



Marios Michaelides has more than 20 years of experience in applying SDD with diverse groups of people. Marios was a member of the Cyprus Conflict Resolution Trainers Group and a founding member of Cyprus Intercultural Training Initiative. Since then, he served as advisor in many boards for Future Worlds Center projects, Civil Society Dialogue, Act Beyond Borders, New Media Landscape Now!, etc. Marios is currently Senior Training Officer at Cyprus Academy of Public Administration. He studied in the US and worked for two years at the NYC Department of Sanitation. During the last 10 years, from his post in the Government's Academy, he has been applying SDD with key members of the public system.



Yiannis Laouris is a social and business entrepreneur, a neuroscientist, a systems engineer, and a peace activist currently serving as Executive Director of Future Worlds Center (www.futureworlds.eu). He is founding member of the Cyprus Society for Systemic Studies, Board member of the Institute for 21st Century Agoras and of several high-tech companies. He is one of the 12 authors of the ONLIFE Manifesto drafted on behalf of the Digital Futures Task Force of the European Commission, which now guides EC funding priorities, as well as political and societal priorities in the hyper-connectivity era. Yiannis is an international leader in the theory and application of the science of structured democratic dialogue (SDD) and conducts research towards developing systems to enable scaling up participatory dialogic processes to engage asynchronously thousands of people in meaningful authentic dialogues, thus accelerating institutional and societal change.



Participants

The Knowledge Management Team who organized the SDD co-laboratory would like to thank the participants for the time, enthusiasm, and wisdom which they dedicated to this dialogue.



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KHATUNA TSERTSVADZE



HANNA TALALAEVA



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