



MeDevNet

**Capacity and Synergy building among NGDOs and LAs in
Greece, Cyprus and Malta for development**

SDDSM co-laboratory

InterContinental Hotel St. Julian's, Malta

22-24 March 2011



www.medevnet.org

Document Details

Project:	MeDevNet
Title:	SDDSM co-laboratory, Intercontinental Hotel St. Julian's, Malta
Version:	V.01
Component:	C II: Capacity Building & Networking
Activity:	A 2: Organise and conduct series of interactive structured dialogue workshops in Greece, Cyprus and Malta with representatives from at least six NSAs and four LAs to develop a concrete strategy of cooperation.
Authors:	Anna-Maria Drousiotou
Editors:	Yiannis Laouris, Tatjana Taraszow, Kerstin Wittig

What obstacles prevent cooperation between Civil Society & Local Authorities in Malta towards achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

A Structured Dialogic Design co-laboratory

Executive Summary

This co-laboratory is part of a cycle of trainings and other activities organised within the framework of the European project “Capacity and Synergy building among NGDOs and LAs in Greece, Cyprus and Malta for development”, MeDevNet in short.

The MeDevNet project is implemented in the target countries Greece, Cyprus and Malta.

The overall objective of the project is to enhance cooperation of NGDO platforms and LAs in the three countries, Greece, Cyprus and Malta in order to become efficient agents of development and to participate in the planning of and the debate over EU development policy.

The estimated results are: Increased networking, communication and structured dialogue among a broad range of actors involved in international development cooperation, NSAs & LAs in partner countries and EU institutions which will lead to the development of a concrete strategy of cooperation. Capacity built in each partner and associate partner organization on networking, lobbying and advocacy with a focus always on international development cooperation issues. Reinforcement of the communication with the developing world through the cooperation with the experts from UCLGA and the migrants forums.

The MeDevNet project is funded by the European Commission under the EuropeAid program.

Further information can be found at www.medevnet.org

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Introduction

This co-laboratory is part of a cycle of trainings and other activities organised within the framework of the European project “**Capacity and Synergy building among NGDOs and LAs in Greece, Cyprus and Malta for development**”, MeDevNet in short.

The MeDevNet project is implemented in the target countries Greece, Cyprus and Malta. The project is 75% funded by European Commission and its duration is 18 months.

The **overall objective** is to enhance cooperation of NGDO platforms and LAs in the three countries, Greece, Cyprus and Malta, to become efficient agents of development and to participate in the planning of and the debate over EU development policy.

The **specific objectives** are to:

- Establish collaboration, networking and coordination among Development NGDO platforms and LAs across Greece, Cyprus, Malta with EU institutions and UCLGA
- Empower and build Capacity within Development NSAs and LAs to create effective strategic actions for Development and Cooperation
- Increase dialogue about Development issues

The **estimated results** are:

- Establish a platform to facilitate capacity and synergy building among NGDOs and LAs in Greece, Malta and Cyprus, as well as to facilitate exchanges of expertise between them in order to develop coherent strategies for Development through structured dialogue.
- Increased networking, communication and structured dialogue among a broad range of actors involved in international development cooperation, NSAs & LAs in partner countries and EU institutions which will lead to the development of a concrete strategy of cooperation.
- Capacity built in each partner and associate partner organization on networking, lobbying and advocacy with a focus always on international development cooperation issues.
- Reinforcement of the communication with the developing world through the cooperation with the experts from UCLGA and the migrants forums.

Partners:

- Development and Education Centre European Perspective
- Future Worlds Center (FWC) – Cyprus
- KOPIN – Malta
- Local Union of Municipalities and Communities of Attica – Greece
- Valletta Local Council – Malta

Associate partners:

- Greek Platform of Non Governmental Development Organizations – Greece
- NGO Platform ‘The Development’ – Cyprus
- SKOP (Solidarjeta u Koperazzjoni) – Malta
- Greek Migrants’ Forum – Greece
- Migrants’ Solidarity Movement – Malta
- The Association of Palestinian Community in Cyprus – Cyprus
- Cameroonian Diaspora in Cyprus – Cyprus
- Municipality of Leukara – Cyprus
- UCLGA – Panafrican

Obstacles that prevent cooperation between Civil Society & Local Authorities in Malta towards achieving Millenium Development Goals

During the the co-laboratory, the participants engaged in a structured dialogue focusing on the following Triggering Question:

What obstacles prevent cooperation between Civil Society & Local Authorities in Malta towards achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

During the SDDSM the participants engaged for three afternoons in a structured dialogue focusing on the above mentioned Triggering Question. The lead facilitator of the SDDSM, Dr.Yiannis Laouris, served as the person coordinating the process. Co-facilitators and CogniscopeTM Operators were Ms.Tatjana Taraszow and Ms. Ilke Dagli.

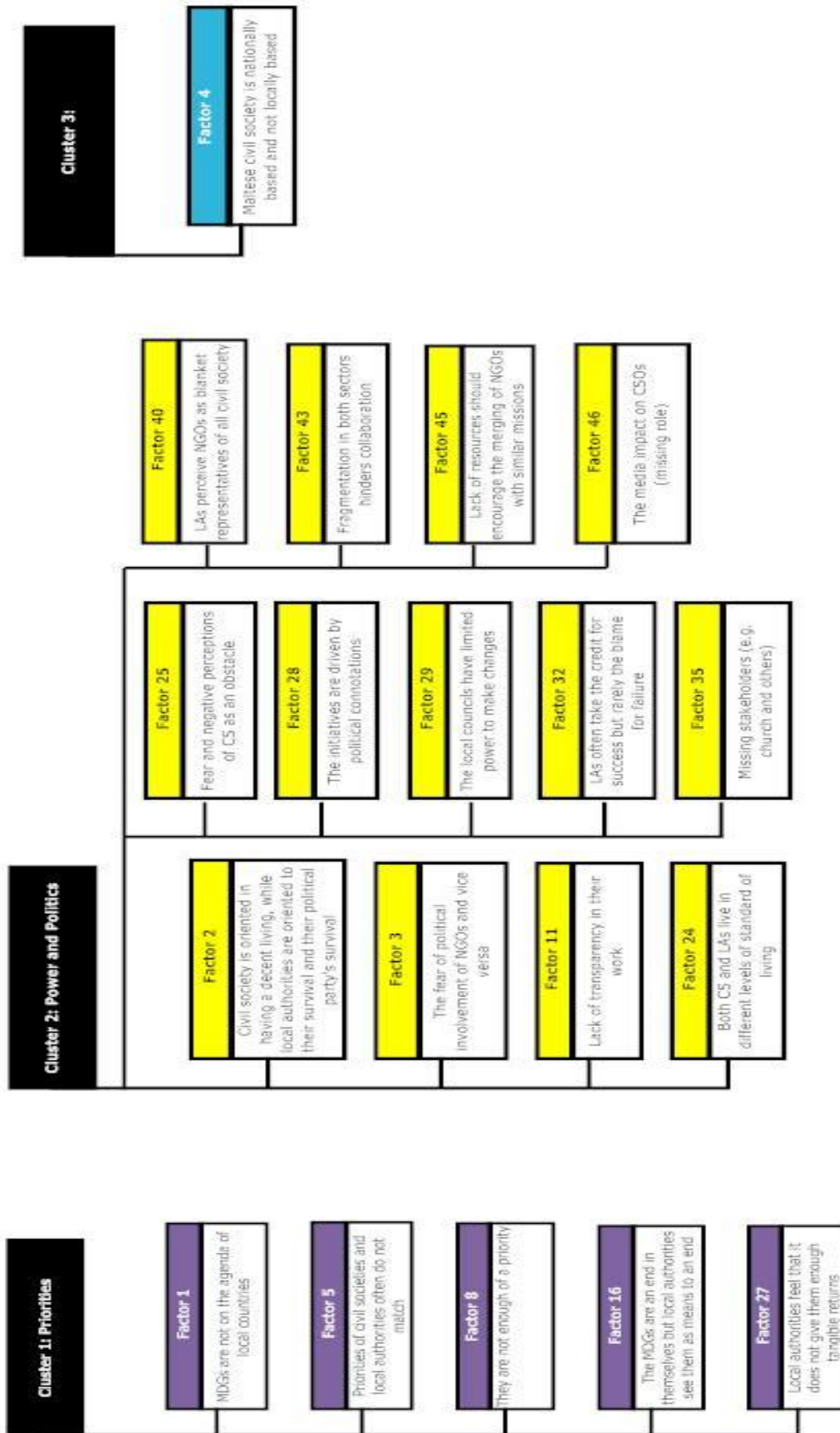
The participants of the co-laboratory shared 47 ideas/obstacles in response to the question. Each idea appears with a detailed explanation in Table I - Ideas with Clarifications (p.15). All ideas and their explanations by the authors are also available online at YouTube.

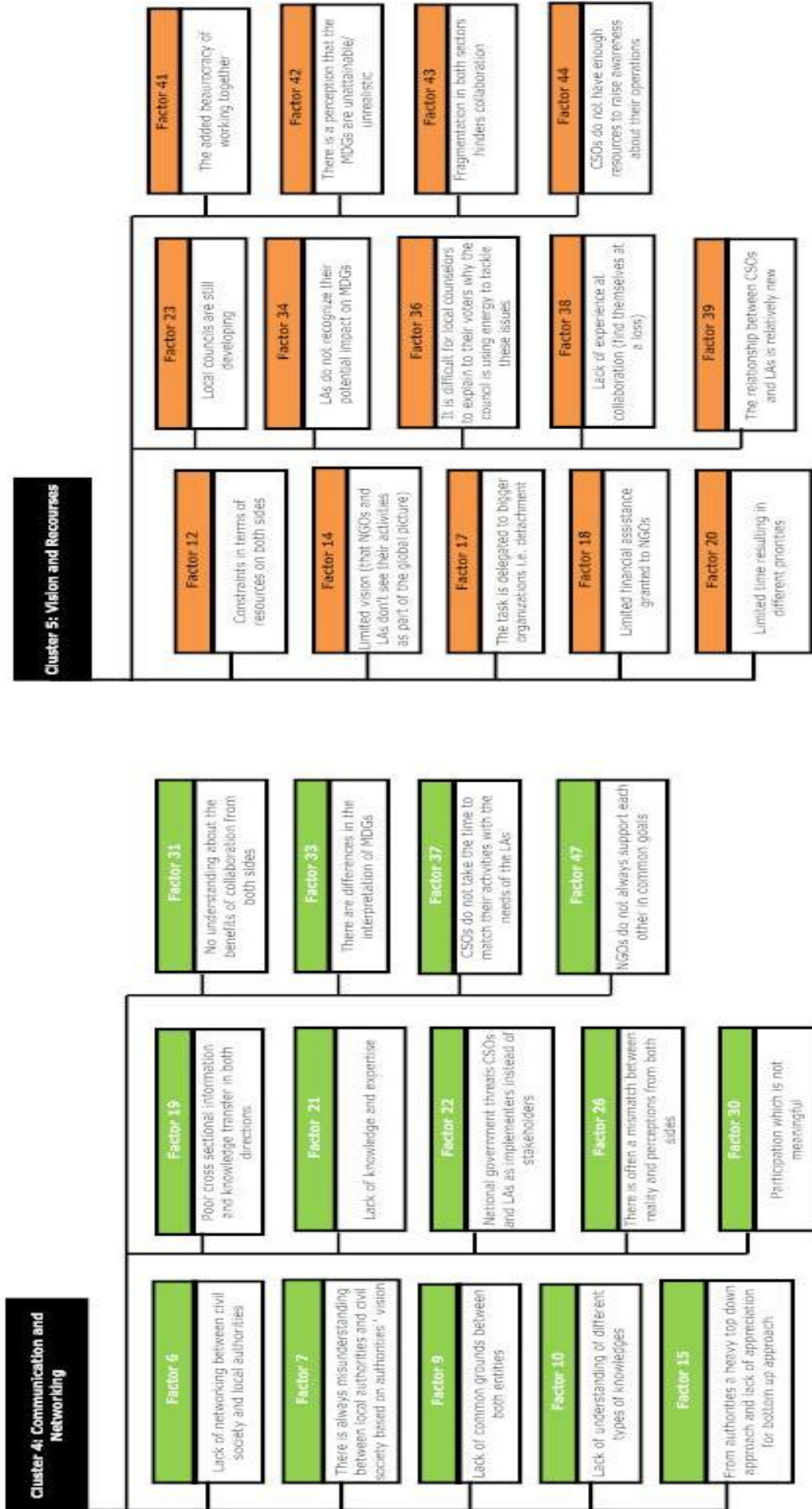


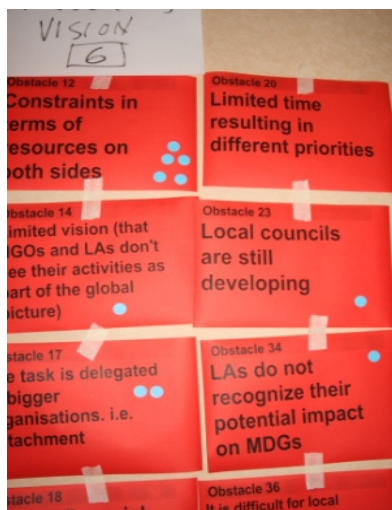
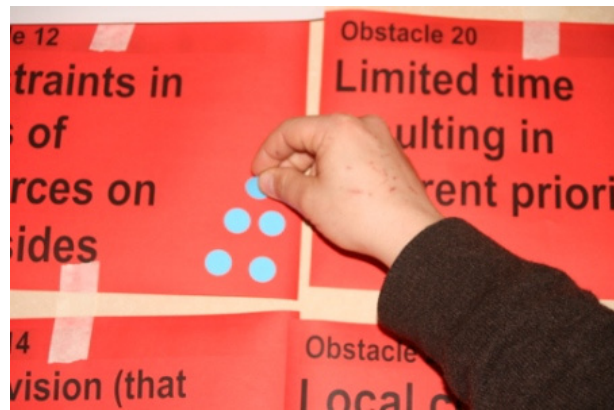
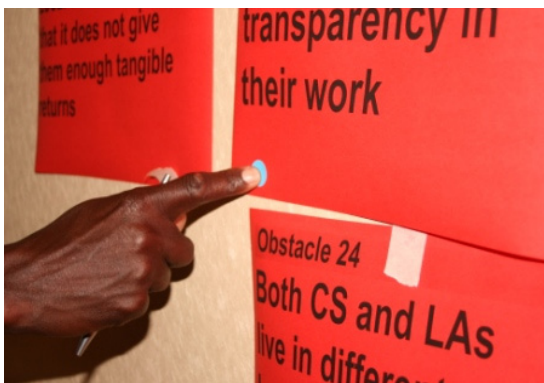
During the following stage, the participants categorized their ideas into the following clusters:

- Cluster 1: Priorities
- Cluster 2: Power and Politics
- Cluster 3: Miscellaneous
- Cluster 4: Communication and Networking
- Cluster 5: Vision and Resources

The following figure illustrates into which of the five clusters each obstacles was categorized.







The participants then cast votes for the three ideas that they each felt were most important. The following ideas received votes:

Idea #15	(7 Votes)	From authorities a heavy top down approach and lack of appreciation for bottom up approach
Idea #12	(6 Votes)	Constraints in terms of resources on both sides
Idea #10	(5 Votes)	Lack of understanding of different types of knowledges
Idea #22	(5 Votes)	National government treats CSOs and LAs as implementers instead of stakeholders
Idea #42	(5 Votes)	There is a perception that the MDGs are unattainable/unrealistic
Idea #43	(4 Votes)	Fragmentation in both sectors hinders collaboration
Idea #1	(3 Votes)	MDGs are not on the agenda of local councils
Idea #6	(3 Votes)	Lack of networking between civil society and local authorities
Idea #21	(3 Votes)	Lack of knowledge and expertise
Idea #9	(2 Votes)	Lack of common grounds between both entities
Idea #16	(2 Votes)	The MDGs are an end in themselves but local authorities see them as a means to an end
Idea #17	(2 Votes)	The task is delegated to bigger organisations, i.e. detachment
Idea #25	(2 Votes)	Fear and negative perceptions of CS as an obstacle
Idea #29	(2 Votes)	The local councils have limited power to make change
Idea #31	(2 Votes)	No understanding about the benefits of collaboration from both sides
Idea #35	(2 Votes)	Missing stakeholders (e.g. church and others)
Idea #37	(2 Votes)	CSOs do not take the time to match their activities with the needs of the LAs
Idea #41	(2 Votes)	The added beaurocracy of working together
Idea #2	(1 Votes)	Civil society is oriented in having a decent living, while local authorities are oriented to their survival and their political party's survival
Idea #11	(1 Votes)	Lack of transparency in their work
Idea #14	(1 Votes)	Limited vision (that NGOs and LAs don't see their activities as part of the global picture)
Idea #19	(1 Votes)	Poor cross sectional information and knowledge transfer in both directions
Idea #23	(1 Votes)	Local councils are still developing
Idea #26	(1 Votes)	There is often a mismatch between reality and perceptions from both sides
Idea #28	(1 Votes)	The initiatives are driven by political connotations
Idea #30	(1 Votes)	Participation which is not meaningful
Idea #33	(1 Votes)	There are differences in the interpretation of MDGs
Idea #34	(1 Votes)	LAs do not recognize their potential impact on MDGs
Idea #40	(1 Votes)	LAs perceive NGOs as blanket representatives of all civil society

Out of the population of 47 proposed ideas, 21 received one or more votes. This is described scientifically by the parameter of **Spreadthink**⁴ or divergence (ST or D respectively), whose value in this case is 63% of disagreement. According to numerous studies, the average degree of spreadthink is 44%. Spreadthink is defined as $(V-5)/(N-5)$ where N is the total number of ideas and V is the number of ideas that received one or more votes.

Based on experience, we can conclude that the participants showed divergence in their ideas regarding the issue, which is higher than the average. This suggests that the participants do not yet demonstrate a high amount of consensus and they might continue to interpret the issue in a different manner.

The results of the voting procedure were used in order to select ideas for the following structural process. The participants were able to structure all 21 ideas which received votes. The resulting “Tree of Influences” demonstrates the most influential ideas, i.e. those which could be most threatening for cooperation between CSO’s and LA’s towards achieving MDG’s. The tree or map is constituted by five levels of influence.



Tree of Influences

The 'tree of influences' or influence map is made up of three different levels. Ideas/Obstacles at the bottom are considered to be the most influential. Making progress or achieving results in the bottom ideas/obstacles makes it a lot easier to address those that lie higher in the map.

In summary, almost all participants agreed that the following ideas/obstacles are the most influential and agreed that further actions on these root causes will achieve the desired results.

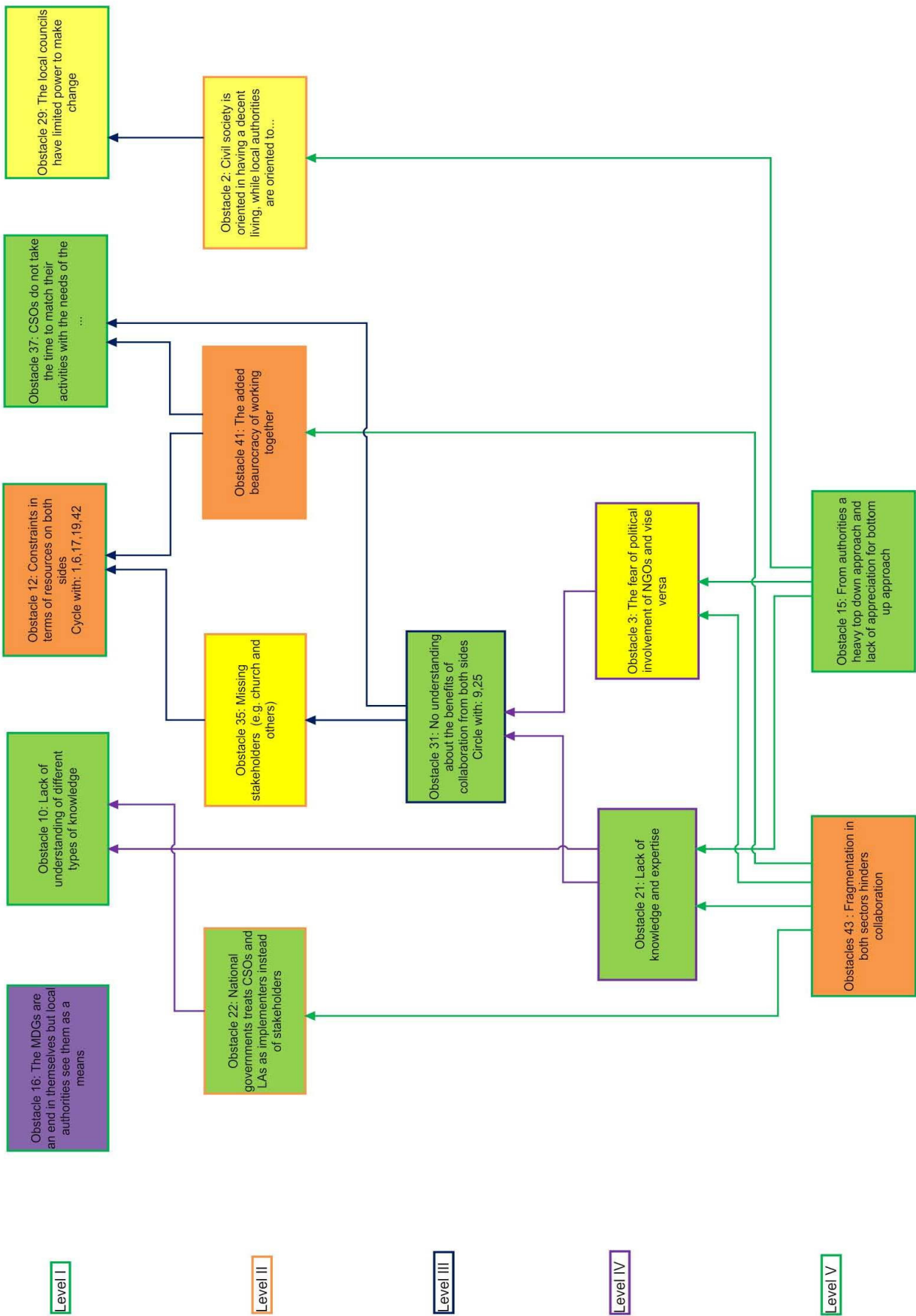
Idea #15: From authorities a heavy top down approach and lack of appreciation for bottom up approach

Idea #43: Fragmentation in both sectors hinders collaboration

The way this tree should be interpreted is that the actions which aim to support these two obstacles will have the greatest influence in achieving large-scale organisational change. Progress made in these two obstacles will create a positive chain of facilitation because they are influencing directly or indirectly practically all obstacles that lie above them.

The two ideas that lie at the root of the roadmap can be addressed firstly by acknowledging these obstacles and working towards a plan/solution by investing in research for access to information and funding and then educating the individuals on ways to contribute to MDG's on local and individual level.





Conclusions

With respect to the goals of the co-laboratory from the perspective of the implementation of the SDDSM process, the following is noted:

1. A list of 47 ideas/obstacles was generated in response to the Triggering Question. This is considered satisfactory, even though the average reported in the literature is 64.
2. The ideas/obstacles were clarified and discussed throughout the SDDSM, thus enabling participants to achieve a better understanding of the views of other members and greatly expand their own and others'.
4. Participants voted for 21 of the ideas/obstacles that they considered most important. They subsequently managed to “structure” 21 of these ideas and produce an influence map.
5. The influence map produced in response to the Triggering Question, containing 21 ideas/obstacles in the form of the Tree of Influence or roadmap comprised of 5 levels.
6. The participants had time to discuss and reflect on the influence map and in general agreed that the arrows in the map made sense to them.
7. More importantly, the structured dialogue process empowered the consortium team to identify the most influential mechanisms in overcoming the obstacles preventing cooperation between Local Authorities and NGO's.

In sum, the application of the SDDSM process supported the Consortium to identify potential mechanisms that when addressed accordingly and productively will bring new perspectives and approaches to the given problem. Of course the methodology itself will only generate the raw data in the form an ‘Influence Tree’ or roadmap and further input and analysis is needed from the participants to find a way forward.

Table I: Obstacles with Clarifications according to Clusters

Cluster I: Priorities

I: MDGs are not on the agenda of local councils LA's

LAs are focused on very local issues which when politicians achieve local targets and are elected to achieve those targets and they see other issues external to their scope. This is the mentality, they first achieve local doable things before embarking on other higher level issues, i.e. eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is an MDG, local council feels powerless to do that because it has local things to solve.

Q: What about the poverty of the area? Is it not important?

A: I come from an area where this isn't a big issue but there are some areas that LA have the power to work. LA's don't have power to do social policy issues. It can organize some activities to raise awareness but in terms of policy it hasn't developed yet.

5: Priorities of civil societies and local authorities often do not match

It has been discussed already.

8: They are not enough of a priority.

The notion of carrying out projects, the impact of which will be felt thousands of miles away is less important than projects the things here and now, these tend to generally come first with those that need to be done in the rest of the world coming later. The goal may seem so huge that it instills distance in local organizations and their capabilities.

Q: Do you speak for both sides?

A: Yes, I think so (both LA and CSO).

Q: Do you believe that because they don't feel any sort of impact?

A: They are quite small in scope so they have limited capabilities they are usually very small NGO's to do something in a third country.

Q: Who are oriented more globally than locally? Big number?

A: List of accredited orgs come to us. The big ones need less financial assistance. There is a substantial number that work globally but not majority.

Q: Organisations are not empowered enough to do these things? Is that why smaller objectives?

A: I think from my personal experience. we try to empower them and give them custom make solutions. They back of or fear to embark on something new. the fear of the unknown keeps them from achieving from more. They don't have enough faith in themselves. But they are all interested.

C: I think its more out of sight out of mind issue. they are usually generous. But they dont know. They can only be genereous if NGOs make them aware of these things.

16: The MDGs are an end in themselves but local authorities see them as a means to an end

They have an interesting value, they are worth fighting for. they see it as a means to an end. They do it for popularity, for exposure. It ties to 5 and 13. The priorities are different.

27: Local authorities feel that it does not give them enough tangible returns

I feel that the real impact of large projects carried out by Maltese actors in developing countries isn't fully appreciated locally, if a huge thing happen in another country you only hear a part of it, a mere sound bite or a few second video clip of it. Since the impact isn't felt in the country of origin it serves as a disincentive to do more of them, it happens once and then it stops there, it's hard to use previous projects to rally support for newer ones.

Q: Would you feel more comfortable to re-formulate the obstacle as: CSO's in developing countries

A: It's a different idea, we can put it in as a new obstacle. I agree.

C: You don't need other effects if the goal has been reached. So what if there is no publicity?

A: It reduces the chances of longevity of an idea. If not a lot of people heard about it, it will stop there.

C: Applying for a tourist site, restoration is more priority than applying for an MDG project.

Cluster 2: Power and Politics

2: Civil society is oriented in having a decent living, while local authorities are oriented to their survival and their political party's survival

Their main interest is to have a decent living, that's what they ask. While local authorities have different priorities. They look forward to their survival and to be re-elected. They represent a political party.

Q: The term civil society - what type of organizations do you mean?

A: People in general, mainly NGO's but people in general.

C: Sometimes there are measures to be taken that are popular. politicians do things that get them the most possible votes.

A: Politicians intention is to be re elected and to be in the government. CSO and people in general they have their own needs.

3: The fear of political involvement of NGO's and vice versa

My experience of NGO's is that of not wanting to be involved with the political parties especially because there is a lack of trust/ NGO's don't trust politicians and the system. I get the feeling that from the side of the political parties and government there is also lack of trust.

Q: What generates this lack of trust?

A: I am not sure. But there is a fear.

Q: Do u think that this lack of trust, especially from politicians towards NGO's can be that they don't want to live up to their duties?

A: It could be. I can't answer definitely. Perhaps traditionally many NGO's were not seen as professional and are not respected as strong and trustworthy.

Q: Do the NGO's see the LA's as the extension of parties?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you believe it is actual fear of political involvement of NGO's into politics, do they judge it without reality?

A: It could be an over-reaction. I believe that more communication and collaboration can overcome the fear though I don't have substantial evidence.

Q: Can this fear be among the public, could it be in a small place who feel actual repercussions of their reactions, like get punished, or lose their jobs etc, because they get involved?

A: I am not sure. But there is a fear.

A: I wasn't thinking of that aspect, not of the individual suffering consequences.

C: In the end the NGO is firm by the individuals if you don't have enough people then you can't perform.

Q: NGO's have the reason to lobby, and they fear that the NGO's will highlight their lackings and some things will become public.

A: I don't think it's that. but that can be the case.

Q: Do you think that because there isn't a difference between being politician and being partisan is the reason? Being labeled as nationalistic is something we don't want. We don't want to be partisan. At a certain level, there is a thinking process of political parties and who the NGO's are supporting. We don't want to be a part of politics but we want to be political.

A: Yes. That is what I mean.

Q: Do you think both sides are aware of these issues, if yes what is the proposal?

A: Yes I think so. But I don't know whether I should go into this now.

Q: Is the fear is about labeling one NGO with one party and not the other

A: Yes. That's the part of it.

II: Lack of transparency in their work

Because they worry about information falling into the hands of someone with a different agenda the work is not always made available to the public. Makes it difficult to cooperate. There may be gaps to be addressed. Causes duplications, distrust.

Q: Both sides?

A: More local authorities because they have more to lose when they make certain information public. But sometimes NGO's as well because they don't want to alienate LA's by saying something. Where the information doesn't exist they say it doesn't exist. It's not the issue of not existing I think. My experience is fear of info getting into the wrong hands. Like press for example. They have their own agenda.

Q: People don't know what info is available. They have to ask for it. LA records are accessible but can't be copied. The gatekeeper might keep the info.

A: Freedom of info act. They can request info, if it's not provided there should be a justified reason.

Q: One of the problems that can raise is that an increase in transparency generates increase in bureaucracy and creates a lot of work. Though I am agreeing with you.

A: I am not sure how it will lead to more bureaucracy. There will be procedures. Some people chose what info to make available. I think it can work but that fear will remain that info can get into wrong hands.

Q: Lack of transparency, do you think is done on purpose? Is it a tactic or is it a strategy?

A: I think its a strategy. people might use it for their own agenda.

24: Both CS and LAs live in different levels of standard of living

National associations, (I prefer to call them that), national government has a lot of say in distribution of finances, I mean that both the admin and CS have different level of standard of living. Highest standard of living and its necessities are different than low standard of living.

Q: What is the impact of this on collaboration?

A: There are some levels of standard of living. Many people are middle class they fell into lower standard of living. Having people with top standard living habits they don't match in terms of demands with people from lower standard of living. This may hinder collaboration. Class differences.

25: Fear and negative perceptions of CS as an obstacle

As perceived from government.

28: The initiatives are driven by political connotations

Practically because political beliefs determine the level of achievement. LA tend to develop initiatives that are more politically driven. The key is integration. Both LAs and CSOs need to integrate to achieve collective goals.

C: Politics is everywhere.

Q: You wish things to be driven by political connotations. In paper they are good policy, they are written down, you should follow it.

A: Its true.

29: The local councils have limited power to make change

It's a known fact, they have limited power, not that they dont want to, but at the end of the day, there is the goverment on x thing on y thing in z amount of time, if you go out of those parameters you pay a fine. Their hands are tight. But the citizens voice their discontent to the LAs.

Q: Do you think LAs want to do more than they are capable, to go beyond and extend wht they can do?

A: It's true. There is reality. But it can also be an excuse not to do anything. Sometimes we have a lot of power but irenocally we don't use it.

Q: Since LA has tight hands, you are the one affected by that, what is your role to help the LA to break this handcufs?

A: We the people, have decided to join together and help the LA to have a bigger voice with ragards to development. To join together and come up with ideas. More stakeholder participation. This can have a ripple effect on other councils. It doesn't only depends on us and the council but interest of the authorities as well.

32: LAs often take the credit for success but rarely the blame for failure

35: Missing stakeholders (e.g. church and others)

There are missing stakeholders on certain issues for example i mentioned the church as an institution. Issue of migration does not involve the church to voice its teachings about migration at an institutional level, ex: detention centres. There are powerful NGOs in Malta, they are a strong authority, who are very silent on MDGs in general.

11: Lack of transparency in their work

Because they worry about information falling into the hands of someone with a different agenda the work is not always made available to the public. Makes it difficult to cooperate. There may be gaps to be addressed. Causes duplications, distrust.

Q: I agree with the issue of migration. I would like the sentence to be more clarified.

A: On MDGs I think they are missing completely. I am talking at a higher institutional level.

Q: If you agree we can add to the sentence.

A: Sure.

Q: Would you include service users in there as well? Such as children or migrants themselves. They are sometimes overlooked as stakeholders.

A: I agree but we need to make a differentiation because there is a difference in terms of level and power and influence. It's a broad term, including all stakeholders but with an understanding of differences in terms of level, power and influence.

Q: I feel that the government is putting x amount of NGOs as a blanket like representing everyone around in the decision making / participation process. But some have different perspectives and ideologies and so on. They have such a broad spectrum. The government wouldn't allow all of them.

A: For instance we are a platform, 22 NGOs have a common position. It's issued public. However, many people represent these 22 NGOs. If the 22 organisations don't agree with the common press release or the position, if all agree it's issued from the platform but if there is a problem and some don't agree, only those who agree sign it.

Q: Where would you put the church? Is it a LA or an organisation? Seems to me that all NGOs are involved in migration, what prevents them to bring the church in?

A: Yes, I've been to meetings where people wish they didn't want the church as an authority. But it is an authority. It needs to be included as a stakeholder and establish a positive relationship. It's a political authority at the same time. A number of organisations, especially those are faith inspired NGOs; I myself have written to the bishop, they approached the religion institution asking for more involvement and a stronger say on the issue, especially detention.

C: Our church is involved but I don't see other churches getting involved.

C: I don't know whose fault is it that they are missing.

40: LAs perceive NGOs as blanket representatives of all civil society

I think we already explained it.

43: Fragmentation in both sectors hinders collaboration

If we take the local councils, I think it is even more evident, such a small island having 65 or 67 councils. We have 68 in total. There is also fragmentation internally on a political level among political parties. Even sometimes within the civil society. I wouldn't go that far but it's enough for networking. This option isn't explored. I do not agree that mergers between NGOs is the best solution, but rather that it would be enough for more networking to take place.

45: Lack of resources should encourage the merging of NGOs with similar missions

Q: You think merging not networking but merging would be a solution?

A: Part of a solution.

Q: They agree on some things but not others, what happens then?

A: Eg. in environmental sector they work together, it wouldn't make sense to be separate, they come under one umbrella.

C: It doesn't always work.

46: The media impact on CSOs (missing role)

Relates to another obstacle. Media i.e. on the issue of migration wasn't playing the role it should play. I have seen CSOs include in how to give this mission on the other hand CSOs try to find a way how many migrants exist. Media wasn't playing a role. CS is confused. Malta is a small island, the job market is limited and few people are coming for jobs. Why the media wasn't playing its role? I think someone has silenced the media. They would tell you that their hands are tied. Media could have done a lot of things. But didn't happen. People are trying to figure out what's going on and how to deal with this issue.

Cluster 3: Miscellaneous

4: Maltese civil society is nationally based and not locally based. I think especially it has to do with the size of the country. Most dev orgs are nationally based. It doesn't come naturally for them to think a local authority as a partner. In the EU you need to have them as a partner. Most NGOs don't go to LAs to partner.

C: Most NGOs who cooperate with councils are usually not locally based. They are cultural or religious organisations.

Q: Do you think this is changing because CS is seeing that they can access deeper through the representatives of their authorities?

A: My experience says no. But today they are examples of it. I don't see this happening.

Q: You see this as an obstacle. Where should the CS be based on?

A: It could be an opportunity to work with a LA for the NGO.

Cluster 4: Communication and Networking

6: Lack of networking between civil society and local authorities

I think our resources, especially NGOs, are very limited. Thus we don't network with other groups. Some of our people are not experts so it is good to exchange knowledge as well. We are not aware of the vision, goals and activities of other groups. We can organize something together and not duplicate.

7: There is always misunderstanding between local authorities and civil society based on authorities' vision

Authorities are always the decision makers. They don't seem to consider CS when making decisions. Which brings confusion. Eg. I have been working with migrants. There is always trouble of integration and integration needs. You are bringing different types of people together.

Migrant numbers are huge in Malta. But CS was not really put in the picture to know what's going on. The vision of the authorities is not known to the local people. They say this is the number of migrants but it's bigger than that. Which links back to no trust. Let people know what is going on. And let them help you to come up with ideas.

9: Lack of common grounds between both entities

They don't follow a common ground. They are politically driven. NGOs are more interested in achieving these goals than local authorities... local authorities are more interested in gaining votes than achieving MDGs. This is why there needs to be a common ground.

Q: Aren't political goals policy goals?

A: This is if they try to provide further info there might be more willingness to work together. They need to have a common ground.

10: Lack of understanding of different types of knowledges

We do understand that there are different kinds of knowledge from our background, worlds, etc. I come across that even though we speak the same language but my own epistemological background and yours becomes a divide. We might be saying the same thing but we don't understand each other because we come from different disciplines. There seems to be a lack of understanding. It becomes a barrier and also a means to start a meaningless debate. Tug of war. To get results it becomes lacking. What we need to try and do is to find common grounds and have a platform like this to talk freely and understand each other.

Q: Is it more about not having objectives on both sides?

A: The objectives might be the same. It may be the same water. Or same MDG. The same objective. But in the end we seem not to agree on how to methodologically come to that objective?

Q: Do you think it is sometimes about power and who is more powerful?

A: What is being used, what kind of knowledges gets used or what is left out of the process itself is also power-- even the way it is packaged or delivered. If some NGOs knowledge goes through the system and comes up. When it's black and white people don't own up to their knowledge. There are these barriers that are not managed.

15: From authorities a heavy top down approach and lack of appreciation for bottom up approach

It's a paradigm clash I think. There is a clash between government officials and the way NGOs work. For example, last Friday we had a conference about migrants, represented 100 interviews with migrants. One government representative dismissed the whole research when discussing health issues. Sometimes they clash. From a governmental perspective, from a top down approach you see it different, it's a birds eye view. From bottom up, from case by case, it's a different vision. It's difficult. We don't understand that our vision and perspectives are different. Some NGOs represent a top down approach as well. People in power feel offended because we criticize and do not appreciate.

Q: Is it almost like they don't like to be criticized?

A: It's when the bottom up approach is critical of them. We give a lot of importance to academia and consultants etc. but when you have the voice of those who do not have power, they are easily dismissed. We have to listen to them. Sure experts are needed but they are equally important. There was a public debate on gay issues. And they said why are you complaining, we have good roads. What does that have to do with gay issues? It's ridiculous.

Q: Do you think maybe there is a need sometimes for NGOs to give this bottom up approach a critical way. Politicians sometimes need to hear that they are doing well too. Do you think NGOs are afraid to do that?

A: I think we have tried to balance the two. Sometimes we didn't receive the data to be able to do that. Let's balance good and the critical parts. I don't know, I don't think NGOs are afraid of mentioning the good things. As a platform we do that. It depends on the ministry. Some are more comfortable with criticism than others.

19: Poor cross sectional information and knowledge transfer in both directions

We dealt with this earlier about info transfer between different parties. Across section, I mean that there is a limited amount of - because of power and different agendas, information transfer and knowledge transfer, local council can tap into local resources of the people or vice versa. There is limited amount of talking between them, thus we don't know the possibilities and capabilities. So it just stops there. Or else, larger organisations take over and small NGOs complain. Without the info transfer and knowledge of possibilities the doors are closed.

21: Lack of knowledge and expertise

From both sides. Lack of expertise to engage in any action related to mdgs and also knowledge and expertise to collaborate and network. Especially when there is different levels of knowledge within the cooperating institutions. It's very relevant from both ends.

22: National government treats CSOs and LAs as implementers instead of stakeholders

I think government doesn't recognise right of initiative of cs especially, and the way the LAs are structured in Malta, also offers very limited scope for the work thus limited funding and responsibilities.

26: There is often a mismatch between reality and perceptions from both sides

The authorities and civil society sometimes contrast, eg. poverty. What is the perspective, extent, the interpretation of statistics. If we cannot agree on the extent of the problem then we cannot agree on the solution. Some say it's a perception that there is poverty. There is a difference between reality and perception.

Q: Is this same as 25?

A: Not really.

30: Participation which is not meaningful

Because representatives who are not able to speak and take decisions on behalf of the organizations are sent to participate, due to a lack of time and different priorities. Sometimes there is an initiative which aims to get cooperation among orgs, they send someone to participate in a meeting who ranks very low in the org and the participation becomes meaning less and they can't contribute.

C: You always find the same faces, widening participating is very important. It can make a difference but people don't realise it. Local council who is active also in the football club, is the same number of people. Maybe it's because it's a small island. But it's the same people.

A. I also mean who participates, some one who has power to speak on behalf of the organisation they can't say anything without checking back with their organisation.

C: Trust issue? I like this, people in this room haven't met each other before. It goes hand in hand. Engaging relevant actors and achieving participation.

Q: Why should someone send who can't speak in the name of the organisation?

A: Because they don't have time to attend themselves. They delegate people. They want to attend the events and have their organisations there but they send someone else because they don't have the time. There are many conferences going on at the same time.

Q: Why shouldn't the person attending that meeting shouldn't have the power to participate in that meeting? I am questioning the power structure.

A: It depends on who you are representing. It may not be something you can decide on yourself.

Q: No person, or individual can take a decision alone. It can be taken there and there in the council. If someone wants to make a complaint or a suggestion, s/he can write a letter and propose etc. Usually it is fast. Then a decision is taken.

31: No understanding about the benefits of collaboration from both sides

I think that for both CSOs and LAs investing into collaboration, sharing of resources and active engagement, it's a process. Sometimes they don't see the benefits of such collaboration and don't appreciate it, but rather fear an added burden on their limited resources.

33: There are differences in the interpretation of MDGs

37: CSOs do not take the time to match their activities with the needs of the LAs

This has to do with planning from the part of CSOs when designing their activities and thus trying to identify those areas where they can find partners such as the LAs who can gain strength and support to those activities.

47: NGOs do not always support each other in common goals

Sometimes NGOs do have overlapping areas of work but they don't share or collaborate to have a stronger voice.

Q: Is it a question of pride, because you don't know that there is another organisation doing the same thing?

A: Eg, there is a platform trying to get organisations working with children in some way. They came from health, education and etc., from different areas. The idea was to find a common interest that unified them all. We had difficulties because some organisations were only interested to push their own agendas forward.

C: I have never seen NGOs work together to collect funds together, two major NGOs in the same sector don't work together.

Q: Do you think there is more competition rather than collaboration or is it the need to understand the benefit of the networking?

A: I think it's more the second one that they don't realise the effects of joining their efforts.

Cluster 5: Vision and Resources

12: Constraints in terms of resources on both sides

It's a very practical approach to the question. At the end of the day lack of financial resources leads to lack of human resources. Practically, this is a major problem that we are facing in the whole world.

Q: Would you see that as an advantage?

A: No. I think more resources mean more cooperation. The only EU officer exists at the Valletta LC to deal with cooperations related to EC projects. Others don't have an officer to deal with these issues.

Q: Do you think there is a sort of critical level where collaboration still won't be able to happen if resources are not made available? Because in theory collaboration should make sharing of resources easier.

A: Level of engagement is restricted due to the limited level of resources.

I4: Limited vision (that NGOs and LAs don't see their activities as part of the global picture)

From my experience, NGOs see their activities as something particular to deal with but not a part of a bigger picture. This limits how far a person can go. They don't see that it's necessarily related to a bigger vision.

Q: Many of the funds or applications have some sections about what is the more far reaching global perspective of your project. In a way you are made to think your global influence or issues.

A: Yes, in a way. Some of them have that. But there is often a difference between what you write in the application and the reality you deal with. You write to satisfy the donor but not what you really feel.

C: It won't extend to Africa. It's usually European perspective not a global one. It's not long term. Vision is limited to one or two years not to five or ten.

Q: Why don't they see themselves as a part of the global picture?

A: I think it's related to the resources available. Smaller NGOs tend to see themselves as not having enough resources to deal with bigger issues. It's easier to deal with small issues. Many NGOs are not confident enough to think big. It's fear.

Q: Do you think if local NGOs will be affiliated with international organisations, would the situation change?

A: I think so. Resources is an important issue

Q: Do you think this limited vision is because the NGO is trying to cater for a specific need or answer to a specific need so they don't have the energy to look bigger?

A: That's why I mentioned resources.

I7: The task is delegated to bigger organisations. i.e. detachment

There are certain delegated bodies that deal with such issues and which have over time gained so much momentum that they have become too big a fish in a small pond such as the UN and the red cross etc... So other smaller organizations simply feel they can't compete, they just give a donation instead of thinking of clever solutions themselves to achieve the MDG's.

I8: Limited financial assistance granted to NGOs

NGOs are the ones taking the initiatives. However they need financial assistance for their initiatives. It is important for the LA to share their action plans.

Q: Don't LAs have enough funds to work on these issues either?

a. that could also be the case. It's useless to grant financial assistance only to NGOs since if they share their ideas, they could easily cooperate.

Q: Could it be that there is a lack of knowledge on how to get these funds? The funds are there and available. Sometimes we don't even know who the people are in the organisation to help us. Rather than the organisation itself it is lack of knowledge that you can actually do something to acquire these funds.

A: This is a problem. Without further understanding you cannot do further action.

Q: Is it still a problem where the government or public authorities are competing with NGOs for funds? That was once a problem. Is it still the case?

A: Government isn't asking for EU funding for such projects. No project is 100% funded/ you find co-funders. This is funded 75%. LAs can have access to funds and the NGO has the expertise. I don't think there is competition. There is mechanism to work together and encouragement.

Q: Eg., I am an NGO, is it because of financial limit or my willingness to achieve my goal?

A: Both, since without willingness there cannot be achievement.

20: Limited time resulting in different priorities

As organisation at times would prefer to work towards their own goals and they see very little benefit in cooperation. They see little benefits in that which takes a long time.

23: Local councils are still developing

It's quite a new concept. LAs are new, they still need to develop their scope and mission.

Q: Do you think this is sometime an excuse? To say that you are not ready?

A: Yes sometimes it is it. There are time constraints. Local council people are volunteers. For the council staff it's difficult to follow up things. Even on local issues let alone international issues.

C: The councils were formed 15 years ago. The system has been the same. Government distributes the budget among LAs and tell them where to spend it. Any additional funds, they have to seek it themselves. For example, cleaning taxes. But government has power and control. There isn't much improvement. There are some funds for investment i.e. for local entrepreneurship development.

Q: Has the local council came up with some suggestion to the government? To change the system and policy that has been going on?

A: Yes. Some things have changed some didn't. It's a process.

34: LAs do not recognize their potential impact on MDGs

LAs are not aware of the local ...

Q: Is there a version local (i.e. agenda 21)?

A: MDGs are quite applicable at the local level. Actions can be adopted. It all relates to the local lifestyles that impact the global level like fair trade and consumption.

Q: What do you think about, if we have to apply this, I am thinking about the excuse part, what influence do we have on the MDGs?

C: Most councils have their own magazines for example, content is sometimes a problem, they can publish relevant articles.

A: I highlighted local authorities because there is a different level. CSOs are more aware of their impact but I think LAs are not at the same level of understanding.

C: If we didn't think we could impact we wouldn't have done the project we have done so far. Development education in schools is implemented for example.

Q: LAs do not recognise the impact on MDGs or they don't recognise they can impact the MDGs.

A: Yes I agree. Let's modify (add potential).

36: It is difficult for local councilors to explain to their voters why the council is using energy to tackle these issues

38: Lack of experience at collaboration (find themselves at a loss)

E.g. it was a project in schools we were approaching LA's and they were interested to participate but it didn't work because we haven't done it before. People are not used to doing things together in this way, even though there was the willingness. It only involved doing something with a school. Schools, LAs and organizations failed to establish a concrete partnership.

C: Sometimes you need to approach it through a friend or someone you know, it might be easier for NGO's.

39: The relationship between CSOs and LAs is relatively new

Something on this line was already mentioned that the collaboration between CSO's and LA's was an imposition of the EC with the specific budget line but it helped us recognize each other as partners. It's a factual statement. It's still a fragile relationship and there is much road still to be covered.

41: The added bureaucracy of working together

I think especially if we don't, CSO and NGO they are mostly volunteer based, especially those working on MDGs, it's quite difficult for them to go through the application form and procedures of the EU. It's probably the same for the LA's.

42: There is a perception that the MDGs are unattainable/unrealistic

Sometimes there is this perception. For example sustainable development, we set so many calendars and set so many dates. Most are very ambitious. Some can be attained in a few years but some can't.

43: Fragmentation in both sectors hinders collaboration

If we take the local councils, I think it is even more evident, such a small island having 65 or 67 councils. We have 68 in total. There is also fragmentation internally on a political level among political parties. Even sometimes within CS. I wouldn't go that far but it's enough been for networking. This option isn't explored. I do not agree that mergers between NGO's is the best solution, but rather that it would be enough for more networking to take place.

44: CSOs do not have enough resources to raise awareness about their operations

Q: Isn't it also the case that they don't have the resources to?

A: Yes it's a contributing factor. It's not a criticism towards CSO's. Sometimes they cannot do it.

Q: Can it be that there is lack of knowledge how the word can get out there? There is so many different media out there that isn't expensive. There might be a lack of knowledge transfer in a cost and time effective way.

A: Definitely, this links with the previous idea as seeing the collaboration between the two as EC imposition and follow this model. But not all can be translated locally because LA's have very little budgets. They can offer us different things other than finances. In a way, this is also lack of knowledge on how to use the collaboration and the relationship to get the most out of it.

Q: Certain development organisations have a track. Once the track is complete they stop there.

A: NGO's have limited resources they focus on the core of that activity and what comes next in the sustainability cycle of promoting their activities is weak.

Q: Don't you think the role of the media is missing here?

Facilitator Team

Main Facilitator

Dr. Yiannis Laouris is a Senior Scientist and President of the Cyprus Neuroscience and Technology Institute. He heads the “New Media Lab”. Neuroscientist (MD, PhD) and Systems engineer (MS) trained in Germany and the US. Publishes in the area of neuroscience, learning through computers, the web and mobile phones and about the potential role of IT to bridge the gaps (economic, gender, disabilities etc.) in our society. He is a senior SDDSM Facilitator and has several publications about the theory of the science of dialogic design also together with its Founder Prof. (emeritus) Aleco Christakis. He collaborated with Prof. Patrick Roe to implement SDDSM co-laboratories for COST219ter and COST298. He also collaborates with the EDEAN and DfA projects.

Assistant Facilitators

Tatjana Taraszow holds an MSc in Psychology with emphases on media, educational, and organizational psychology (University of Tübingen, DE & McGill University, CA). Trained mediator, trained facilitator of structured dialogue, and being trained in non-violent communication. Coordinated two bi-communal projects in Cyprus and published a number of papers, which discuss the results of SDDSM co-laboratories between Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot stakeholders. Research team member of the Cyprus Safer Internet Center - CyberEthics, the EU Kids Online Project. She coordinates the Moblang.eu project. Other research tasks include: study of teenagers’ behavior in social networking sites, validation of video-game-like interfaces, and development of research questionnaires for children, parents and educators.

Ilke Dagli holds a BA in International and European Politics from Northumbria University and an MSc in Security and Development from University of Bristol. As a trained facilitator she has coordinated the bi-communal Civil Society Dialogue project, together with Tatjana Taraszow, that brought together Cypriots from both communities as experts in topics relevant to the Cyprus issue using the SDDSM methodology. She is currently a Project Developer & Consultant for several Cypriot organizations.

Organizer

Anna-Maria Drousiotou has organized and participated in many SDDSM co-labs for FWC. In 2007 she was the project coordinator to set up and run the CyberEthics awareness node and the CyberEthics Hotline. She has an Economics degree from the University of Thessaloniki in Greece. She began her career in advertising and media working with top International brands for 10 years. In 2007 she left the media world to actively become involved in Future Worlds Center and its various projects. Today she is involved in several projects including “MedevNet”, “Civil Society Acts Beyond Borders”, “Teaching MDG’s”, and “Accessing Development Education”.

Participants

Name and Surname	Institution
Yiannis Laouris	Future Worlds Center
Tatjana Taraszow	Future Worlds Center
Ilke Dagli	Future Worlds Center
Sr Victoria Sant	Jesuit Centre for Faith & Justice
Ralph Cassar	LC Attard / AD - Green Party
Joseph Caruana	LC Bormla (Executive Secretary)
Carmel Hili	LC St Paul's Bay (Burmarrad)
Albert Delia	MEUSAC
Etienne Micallef	MFA
Steven Vella	NGO ACES (Aberdeen University)
Louis Debono	NGO Kare4Kenya
William Grech	NGO KOPIN
Dominik Kalweit	NGO KOPIN
Bernardette Mizzi	NGO KOPIN
Mario Gerada	NGO SKOP (Platform)
Sharon Attard	PhD Student / Ex- Commission for Children
Edward Ateem	UNHCR
Bernardette Borg	University of Malta - European Documentation & Research Centre
Roderick Abela	Volunteer

Methodology: The Process of Structured Dialogic Design

The term “Structured Dialogue” is sometimes used to simply denote a dialogue more organised than the simple “talking” and exchange of ideas. In contrast the Structured Dialogic Design¹ (SDDSM) process is a methodology, which supports the generation of truly democratic and structured dialogue amongst teams of stakeholders with diverse views and perspectives. It is particularly effective in the resolution of complex conflicts, interests, and values, and in achieving consensus based on a common understanding and strategy. It is grounded on 6 complex systems and cybernetics axioms and 7 laws from systems science; it has been grounded both scientifically and empirically in hundreds of settings on a global scale for the past 30 years. Scientists and practitioners worldwide are guided by the Institute of 21st Century Agoras².

The Cyprus team has extensive experience in the application of the methodology. They have utilized it in many public debates in order to facilitate organizational and societal change. For example, they have utilized it in many European networks of experts. The COST219ter³ is a network of scientists from 20 countries (18 European, the USA, and Australia) who were interested in exploring the question of how new technologies ambient intelligence and next generation networks can make their services more useful to people with special needs. The COST298⁴ network also aims to make broadband technologies more accessible to the wider public. The scientific communities of Cost219ter and Cost298 utilized SDD in order to outline the obstacles, which inhibit the application of the above technologies on a wider scale. Based on the results of the SDDs, they designed corresponding strategies for the next 3 years. Insafe⁵ is a European network of 27 Safer Internet Centers who used SDDs in many meetings in order to identify the inhibitors, produce a vision of the future, and agree on a plan of action. More information is available on the CyberEthics Cyprus Safer Internet website⁶.

The UCYVROK⁷ network utilized SDDSM in order to determine the reasons for which young people in Europe do not participate in European programs. The results were presented to the European Parliament. The SDDSM methodology was also used in order to ease the dialogue between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots since 1994. This dialogue culminated in the creation of a peace movement. Many reports are still being utilized by the network, and are available on the program’s page⁸.

SDDSM was designed especially so that it can assist non-homogenous groups in tackling complex problems within a reasonable and restricted time frame. It facilitates the annexation of contributions by individuals with vastly different views, contexts, and aspirations, through a process that is structured, conclusive, and the product of cooperation.

A team of participants who are knowledgeable of a particular situation, generate together a common outline of ideas based on a common understanding of the current problematic situation and a future ideal one. SDDSM promotes the focused communication between participants and supports their ownership of the solution as well as their actions towards implementing it.

Structure and Process in a typical SDD Co-Laboratory

When facing any complex problem the stakeholders can ideally approach it in the following way:

1. Develop a shared vision of an ideal future situation. This ideal **vision map** serves as a **magnet** to help the social system transcend into its future state.
2. Define the **problematique**, also known as the wall of inhibitors i.e., develop a common and shared understanding of what are the obstacles that prevent the stakeholders' system from reaching its ideal state.
3. Define **actions/options** and produce a roadmap to achieve the goals.

The three phases are implemented using exactly the same dialogue technique. Each phase leads to similar products:

1. A **list** of all ideas and their clarifications [SDDSM is a self-documenting process].
2. A **cluster** of all ideas categorized according to their common attributes [using a bottom-up approach].
3. A document with the **voting results** in which participants are asked to choose ideas they consider most important [erroneous priority effect = most popular ideas do not prove to be the most influential!]
4. A **map** of influences. This is the most important product of the methodology. Ideas are related according to the influence they exert on each other. If we are dealing with problems, then the most influential ideas are the *root causes*. Addressing those will be most efficient. If we deal with factors that describe a future ideal state, then working on the most influential factors means that achieving the final goal will be easier/faster/more economic, etc.

In the following, the process of a typical SDDSM session, with its phases, is described in more detail.

- First** The breadth of the dialogue is constrained and sharpened with the help of a **Triggering Question**. This is formulated by a core group of people, who are the Knowledge Management Team (KMT) and is composed by the owners of the complex problem and SDDSM experts. This question can be emailed to all participants, who are requested to respond with at least three contributions before the meeting either through email or wikis.
- Second** All contributions/responses to the triggering question are recorded in the *Cogniscope II*TM software. They must be short and concise: one idea in one sentence! The authors may clarify their ideas in a few additional sentences.
- Third** The ideas are clustered into categories based on similarities and common attributes. If time is short, a smaller team can do this process to reduce time (e.g., between plenary sessions).
- Fourth** All participants get five votes and are asked to choose ideas that are most important to them. Only ideas that receive votes go to the next and most important phase.
- Fifth** In this phase, participants are asked to explore influences of one idea on another. They are asked to *decide whether solving one problem will make solving another problem easier*. If the answer is a great majority an influence is established on the map of ideas. The way to read that influence is that items at the bottom are root causes (if what is being discussed are obstacles), or most influential factors (if what is being discussed are descriptors of an ideal situation or actions to take). Those root factors must be given priority.
- Sixth** Using the root factors, stakeholders develop an efficient strategy and come up with a road map to implement it.

Further Information on the science SDDSM

The interested reader who might want to find out more about the underlying science of structured dialogic design may begin by researching the terms “Lovers of Democracy”, “Hasan Ozbekhan”, “Aleco Christakis”, “Club of Rome”, “Structured Dialogic Design”, “Cyprus Civil Society Dialogue”, etc. Available are also two books co-authored by the Father of the science^{9, 10}. A number of wikis are also dedicated to the science^{11, 12, 13}. Selected publications include a Description of the technology of Democracy¹⁴.

There are several publications of the Cyprus group, which describe the application of SDDSM in the Cyprus peace-building process^{15, 16, 17}.

Furthermore, two recent publications provide an easy-to-comprehend introduction to the methodology and the ethical considerations associated with its application^{18, 19}.



Part of the SDDSM process (Mapping)

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Part of the SDDSM process (Mapping)

Acknowledgements

The Facilitation Team that organized the SDDP co-laboratory would like to thank all the participants for their participation, their enthusiastic contributions, time, energy and expertise they brought to the dialogue. Their hard work, perseverance and humour made the workshop's experience both richly diverse and productive.

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Future Worlds Center (legal reg.: Cyprus Neuroscience and Technology Institute)

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The MeDevNet project is a EuropeAid project

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

Future Worlds Center
(legal reg.: Cyprus Neuroscience & Technology Institute)
Promitheos Str. 5
1065 Nicosia
Cyprus
Tel: +357 22873820
Fax: +357 22873821
www.futureworldscenter.org

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