



Harvest **Participatory Leadership** in Practice

Vitsa,
Zagori
15-20
July 2013

Participatory Leadership in Practice

How to build and run a political party in a liberal era

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This document is a record of the first 3 days of the training in Participatory Leadership and the outcomes that emerged from the conversations that took place

Welcome – Mr. Nikos Giannis

Mr. Nikos Giannis welcomed the participants, organizers, speakers and the Mayor of Zagoria. He highlighted that this is the first time that a 6-days seminar of high quality is taking place in Epekini Chora, (the Land Beyond) and in the village of Vitsa. He presented that at the “Land Beyond” dialogue and practices are developed through a) reviewing the relationship between human and nature b) human interest and need c) human and multicultural coexistence. He expressed his belief that the seminar of Participatory Leadership in practice is fully aligned to all three axes.

Introduction to Participatory Leadership- Ms. Maria Scordialos

Ms. Maria Scordialos introduced herself and her co-hosts Mr. Odyssea Velentza (host) and Nikolao Rovaki (Graphic Facilitator) as members of the Art of Hosting Network. She mentioned that the participatory way of working, can be applied in diverse contexts, from the European Commission, where she often works, to local communities even to places such as Israel where she works bringing together Israelis and Palestinians. She stated that Participatory Leadership can only be learned in practice and through experiential methods. Therefore the next days we include a direct experience of the tools of participatory leadership while at the same time discuss issues that are of our common concern like the current situation of our country.

Welcome – Gavriel Papanastasiou Mayor of Zagoria

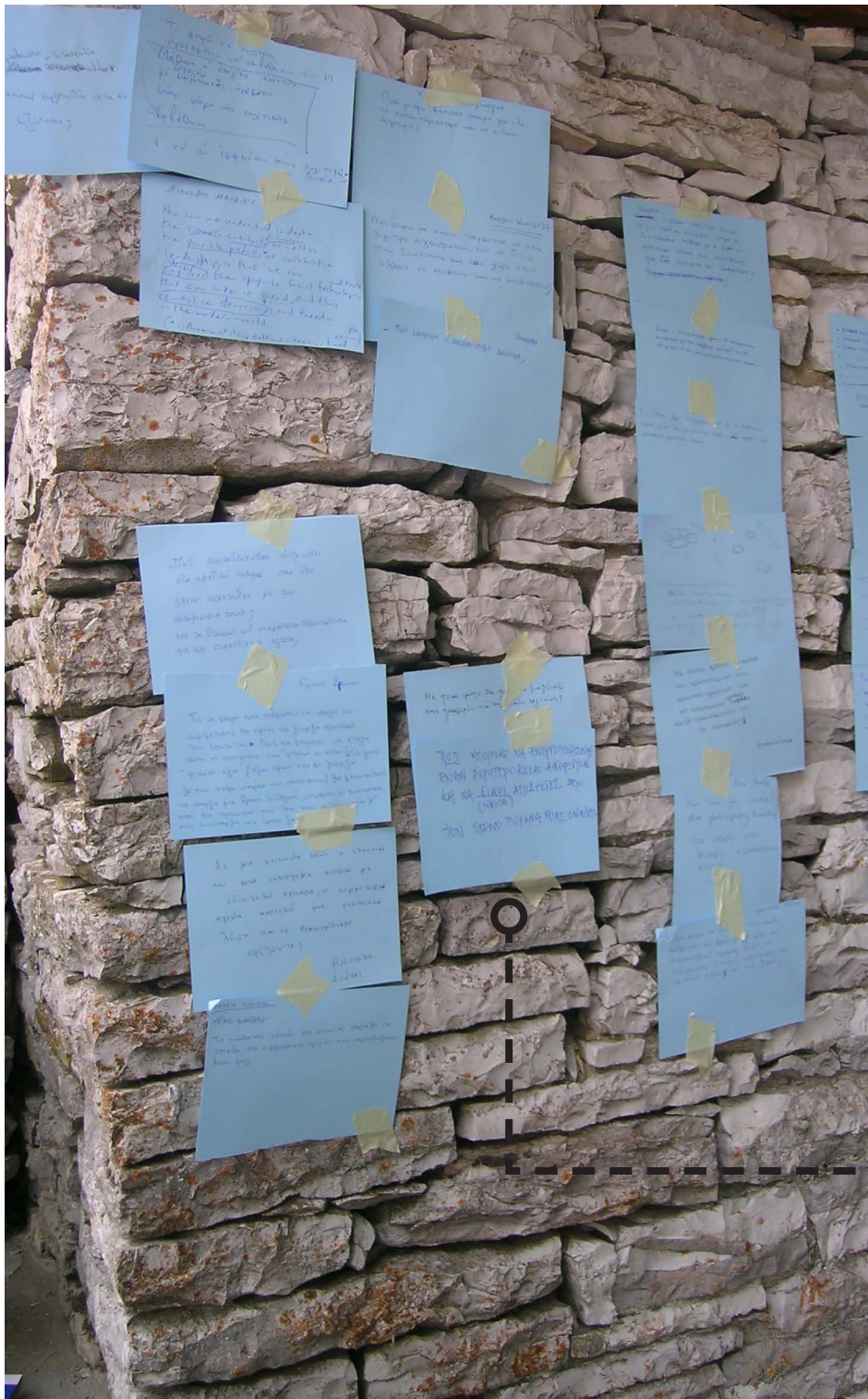
The Mayor Gavriel Papanastasiou welcomed us to the central municipality of Zagoria, saying that the borough is one of the largest in Greece. The region keeps its tradition, especially the architectural beauty. He emphasized the breathtaking natural beauty of the area which attracts tourists. He underlined though that tourism has fallen sharply in the recent years. He finally expressed that he is very happy for the “Land Beyond” that organize such seminars and activities because in this way more people are able to learn about and visit the region



Getting Acquainted – Participatory tool Circle

Ms. Maria Scordialos invited each participant to introduce themselves by sharing their name, where they are from and which is the main reason for attending this workshop. She offered in the center of the circle a shepherds crook as a talking piece so that the person who holds it speaks and the rest listen without interrupting.

From the conversation in the circle, emerged the collective motivations of why we as a group wished to attend the workshop. The space both as a natural environment of Zagoria and as what the "Land Beyond" holds was one of the main reasons. Participatory leadership as a topic, how it can be applied as well as the perception that there is a leader within every person was another motivation. The idea of active citizenship was another reason combined with the current situation in Greece and the belief that we must do something about it. Finally an important role to attend the workshop was the dialogue, political thought and two way transmission of knowledge and experience.



Identifying learning objectives of education - Participatory tool Appreciative Inquiry

Ms. Maria Scordialos introduced the basic stages of Appreciative Inquiry. The stages are the discovery of what is going well in an organization, the dreaming of new potential futures, the design of realizing these futures and finally the application. The method is based on the simple process of interviews between participants. Maria invited the participants to find and formulate a question from what they wanted to learn in the coming days. Participants were divided into pairs and though the format of interview attempted to discover what it is that really interests them. Finally, the questions were grouped by the participants themselves. The themes that emerged were:

- Team spirit, how to keep the interest of a group and if the participatory leadership can energize team members
- Self-awareness so that individuals can be participative and whether this can be taught
- How can we listen better in order to decide more effectively?
- The cultural level in Greece and whether it affects the ability of participatory leadership
- Participatory leadership as a process, how can be applied, what techniques exist and how they can be related to the individual and society
- The connection between participatory leadership and political theory

Creating the Principles of Co-operation – The tennis ball game

Participants were divided into 3 groups with the aim to pass as fast as they can 10 numbered balls in sequence through the hands of all the team members apart from one hand. In this process participants should discuss at the beginning and decide upon the principles on which they want to work, principles that could build a political party.

Some of the principles of Cooperation decided by the participants were Freedom, meritocracy, efficiency, equity, Imagination, Enthusiasm, Diligence



Fundamentals of Participatory Leadership - The chaordic map

Mr. Odysseas Velentzas presented the Chaos, Order and Control mental model. This model is particularly applicable to situations where we need to find new solutions especially where radical change is needed, then we need to work in the field between Chaos and Order. Based on this, the tools of Participatory Leadership where appropriate, offer the minimal structure so that through participatory processes new solutions can emerge collectively.

The discussion that followed revolved around the concept of control and whether there is linearity in the model. One of the ideas that emerged was that each state is interconnected with one another. In this sense there is field between control and chaos and that many times the efficiency requires a form of control to occur.





The context of Greece: Opportunities and Challenges - Participatory Tool World Café

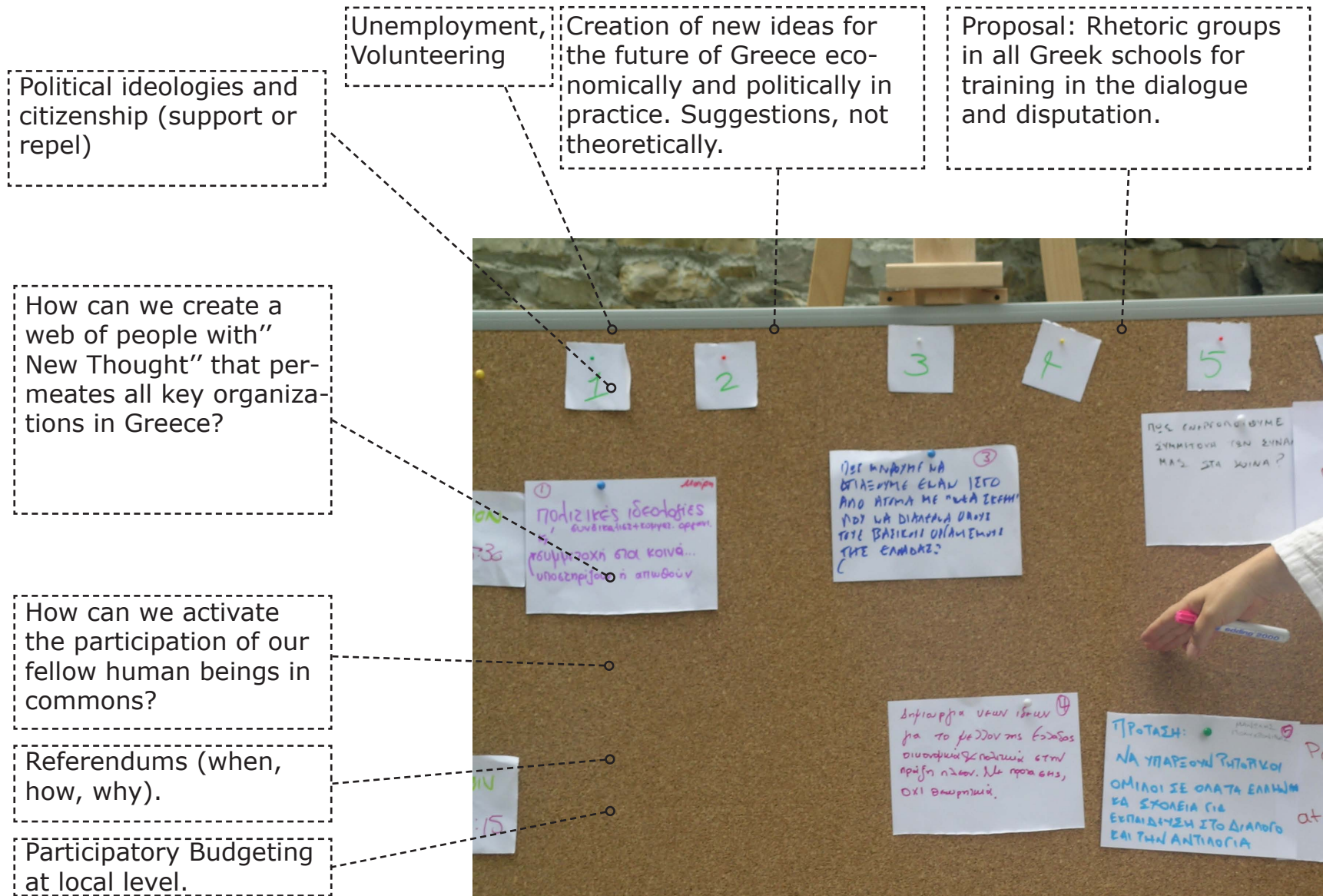
Participants were divided into groups with 4-5 members of each group. Ms. Maria Scordialos explained the basic principles of World Café and invited participants to discuss the challenges and opportunities currently facing Greece, taking into consideration the mental model of Chaos, Order and Control from the previous discussion. During the conversation, the participants moved into new groups so that greater exchange of views could take place. At the end each group was asked to propose two challenges or opportunities, which they considered most important for improving the situation in Greece.

Among the proposals that emerged, there were four collective themes that were considered the most important in order to change the situation in Greece. The main theme was about improving education and in particular social education as this was seen as a root issue of the current situation we are facing in Greece. Another theme was the need for radical change in the Greek culture in particular the corruption faced in leadership. The need for a new institutional framework had also been extensively discussed on the basis that in order to make structural changes the proportional change in legislation is required. Finally the need for greater participation by citizens at the local level and the decentralization of governance was discussed.

Ideas for the future of Greece through Participatory Leadership – Participatory tool Open Space

The process invited participants to create their own agenda of the issues they would like to discuss on the question «What are the questions or suggestions we would like to inquire in order to have more civic participation?» Participants had the opportunity to choose the topics they wished to discuss as well as the groups they wished to attend.

The following topic groups were created:





Sharing our Results

All the issues discussed in the topic groups were presented in plenary. The common points from the discussions were:

- The creation of a new social culture based on participation
- The creation of a new kind of local governance where citizens take responsibility to solve their local issues
- The creation of a legal framework that fosters participation of civic
- The creation of a new education system in schools and society with adult education even of elderly
- The establishment of links between government, public sector, private sector and citizens



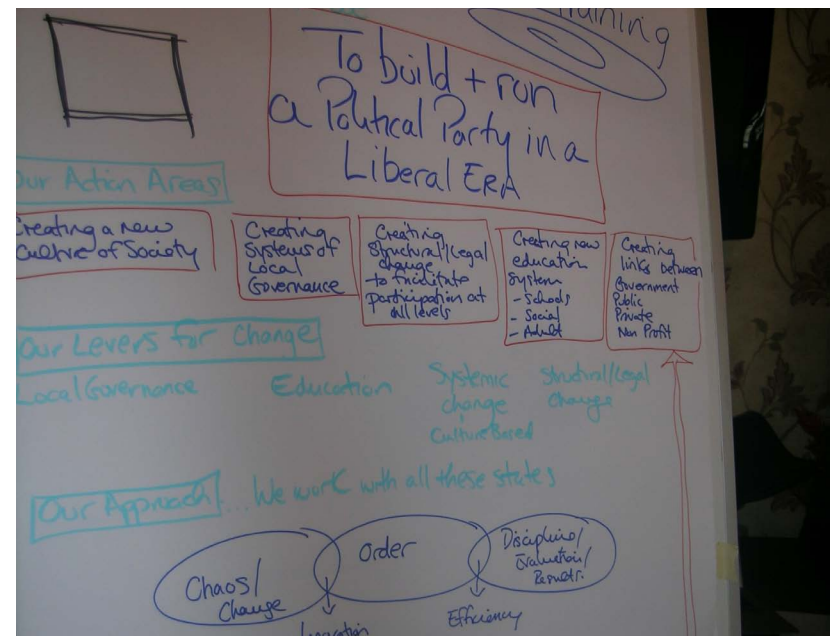
Harvest of the previous day

Ms. Maria Scordialos reminded the group of what we had experienced the previous day and connected the results of the participatory tools to the central question of the seminar «How to build and run a political party in a liberal era?»

The first point was the assumption that participants joined this training around the central purpose of inquiring and exploring the possible creation of a new political party. The second point was that this Party would be based on the fundamental principle of operating through participatory leadership. Thirdly through the Tennis Ball Game the group co-created the principles of cooperation that the Party would operate on. The conversations established the approach on how to build the party. The creation of the party will draw on all the three conditions of Chaos, Order and Control with the last one regarding to evaluation and effectiveness. The World Cafe established the issues that the members of the party decided they would work on in order to change Greece. Finally with Open Space areas of action of the party were formed and actions developed.

Participatory Leadership - Architecture, Process and Design

Ms. Maria Skordialos recounted her personal experience while working in local communities in England. This was her gateway into working with participatory processes and inspired her to co-create Participatory Leadership as a practice which is now being used through a global network. In relating this experience, Maria shared the key elements of translating Participatory Leadership into an architecture where process can lead to new innovation and solutions. This includes creating a core of people who design the overall process and keep an initiative moving and who practice leadership by engaging citizens and stakeholders. At the same time the steps on how to design a project with Participatory Leadership were presented. Then participants were divided into groups with the topic «How could something similar to Maria's experience happen in Greece taking into consideration our culture and reality?»



Results of discussion groups

Development at the local level

This team felt that the best possibility for this taking place in Greece would be at a local level. To achieve this they believed it would be to study and record local problems and then to pilot solving one of the problems collectively so that people embrace the effort. They were working on the fact that in Greece people need to see practical solutions before believing things to be possible so solving one problem would give incentive for solving more difficult ones. This would be achieved through local gatherings, where action groups would be created to address local issues. The problems they foresaw would include corruption, underactive organizations and raising motivation for new enterprising.

Fund for social enterprises.

This groups focus was on setting up a social investment fund for social enterprising that would bring together solutions for some of the social challenges we face with business practice and management. The idea is that business entrepreneurs can provide resources, expertise, investment, proper money management and techniques of survival in a hostile environment. At the same time social enterprises need financing, microfinance expertise and connections. The name will be B.I.G.S. Business Innovation Generation for Society. The role of BIGS will be the interconnection between the business community, the State and society, bringing investment to new social enterprises.

Vitsa

The members of this group chose as their focus helping the village of Vitsa to repopulate to being a village of 500 permanent residents. Instead of offering a presentation on their ideas, this group practiced the principles of participation and they invited the rest of the group to brainstorm ideas of how this could happen. Some of the proposals included:

- Conducting music festivals
- The gathering of friends with different professions needed in Vitsa (farmer, doctor, baker, etc.) to discuss to live together in the village
- The creation of model school in Vitsa
- Hotels in the periods that do not have people to offer free rooms to unemployed citizens with a the prospect that they can learn the place and see how they can live in the village

Community of citizens - Conditions in Greece

In Greece any initiative at local level for practical reasons (funding, license of using public space etc) needs approval from the State or by a political party. Therefore most citizens' initiatives do not move. The first step is to understand why the state refuses cooperation. Such an initiative could succeed if it bypassed the State, even partially, and in doing so showed it can manage without the need of the State. A connection between authorities and citizens in decision-making is needed

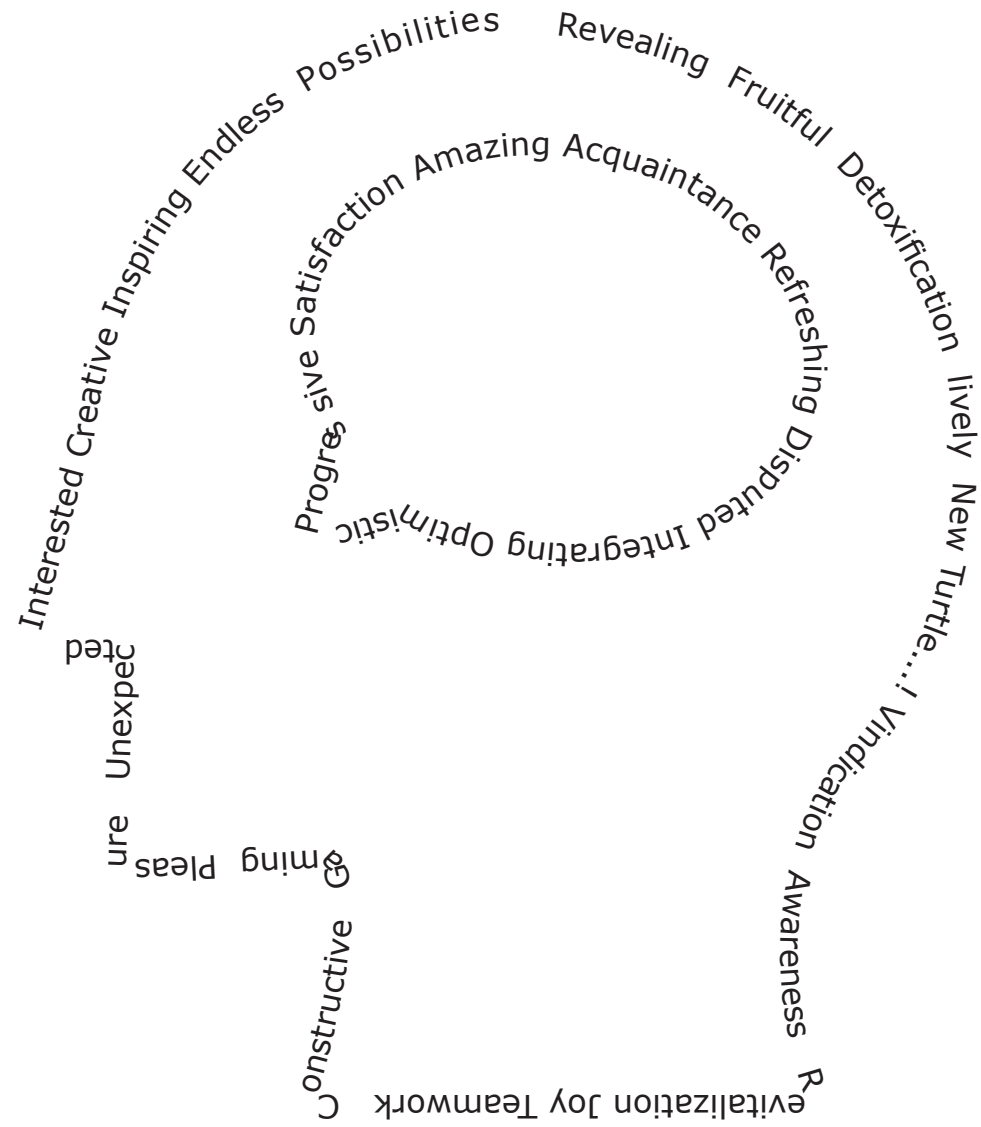


Imaginary Municipality

This group created an imaginary municipality known as the 'Principality'. In order for it to be built, this group saw opportunities using skilled unemployed people to work in the municipality, political parties would not exist, and there is a recognition for the need for cooperation with an increase of Corporate Social Responsibility. In this municipality there is single ballot and each one can be elected up to 2 times. It also has make a mapping of NGOs, sports clubs, businesses, etc. so be grouped and then identified through the township. There is common planning and good practices are shared. A percentage of the city council is conscript and there are local referenda. Finally, the communication of the municipality is creative.



Words spoken in the
last circle based on
what we experienced
these days



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