

PROMOTING PLACE-BASED DEVELOPMENT IN DECLINING AREAS

THE STRUCTURED DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE PROCESS AS A TOOL OF PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

CASE STUDY/ THE LIMASSOL WINE VILLAGES LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROJECT: THE CONTRIBUTION OF HERITAGE TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Table of contents

- 1. Introduction – EU Planning, the place-based approach and public participation**

- 2. Cyprus planning system and public participation**
 - 2.1 Development Plans and current participatory process**
 - 2.2 Problems of public participation in Cyprus and the role of Limassol LDPP**

- 3. A new opportunity for participatory planning: the Local Development Pilot Project (LDPP) for the Wine Villages in Limassol**
 - 3.1 The LDPP as a European instrument for territorial cohesion**
 - 3.2 The Wine Villages in the Region of Limassol**

- 4. The Structured Democratic Dialogue Process (SDDP)**
 - 4.1 Methodology of the Limassol LDPP Diagnosis phase and the SDPP**
 - 4.2 Designing a Development Frame**
 - 4.3 Co-laboratory Methodology**
 - 4.4 The SDPP Methodology in planning: The Limassol LDPP experience**
 - 4.5 The added value and limitations of the SDDP**

- 5. Conclusions – The added value and limitations of SDDP**

1. Introduction – EU Planning, the place-based approach and public participation

Having in mind the increasing focus of the European Union on development actions with integrated delivery on the ground based on active involvement of citizens, public participation becomes an important subject of investigation. Despite attempts to encourage the involvement of citizens in spatial planning, it appears that numerous problems still exist. Effective participation measures (participatory democracy) must therefore come into play or even representative democracy mechanisms (local democracy) as a way to contribute to Europe's Cohesion Policy.

Territorial cohesion, place-based approach and community-led local development are consecutively inter-linked notions used in spatial planning, where public participation becomes their cornerstone. Firstly, territorial cohesion, added to the twin goals of economic and social cohesion without a straight forward definition, calls for balanced and harmonious territorial development and the equal treatment of regions, based on their diversity and vastly different characteristics (territorially sensitive approach). Secondly, place-based approach aims to unleash territorial potential through development strategies based on local and regional knowledge of needs, and building on the specific assets and factors that contribute to the competitiveness of places. Finally, community-led local development is a methodology, a step-by-step process that helps the territorialisation of priorities, enabling every citizen to participate in, and contribute to, improving the economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their local area. In this sense, this bottom-up process represents a complimentary method rather than an alternative one, deeply related to an integrated area-based strategy.

At the same time, the General Regulation of the European Union Structural and Rural Development Funds proposes new provisions which make community-led local development a key feature of the next programs (2014-2020). In fact, to facilitate the implementation of multi-dimensional and cross sectoral interventions, the Commission proposes to strengthen community-led initiatives, facilitate the implementation of integrated local development strategies and promote the formation of local action groups. Bearing in mind all the above, participation becomes a way to achieve a place-based approach and a means to obtain EU financing in the future.

According to Barca (2009: an agenda for a reformed cohesion policy), place-based strategy promotes the supply of integrated goods and services tailored to context and relies on local knowledge and preferences, triggering institutional changes. It is also exogenously promoted through a system of funds. Place-based approach is in its general level of application:

- Long term development perspective
- Capitalising on locational advantages
- Adaptation of policies to context and territorial needs (proximity)
- Involve a broad collaborative partnership (local elites)
- Supported by multilevel governance and integrated approach

In order to make this approach more comprehensive, communicative and operational, Poland is undergoing a “Survey on how Member States integrate place-based approach into public policies on national, regional and local level”.

The concept of heritage acquires far greater significance with the introduction of the territorial dimension of the Cohesion Policy, with the spread of the international economic crisis, and also with increasing global competition. As innovation and sustainable development are mainly based on the distinctive characteristics a place disposes, declining rural areas require new development models and opportunities arising internally, collectively and from the grassroots, thus avoiding standardisation, banality and failure.

Our contribution to this effort through the present paper is to demonstrate an effective way of public participation that allows the expression of citizens’ knowledge and preferences and articulates their vision along with the steps to be taken to achieve it (following the bottom-up community-led method). Our opportunity to do so, was the ‘Limassol Wine Villages Local Development Pilot Project: the contribution of heritage to local and regional development’, which falls into the Council of Europe’s Local Development Pilot Projects Programme (LDPP). The diagnostic phase of this project, where the ‘Structured Democratic Dialogue’ method for public participation was used, seems to be an instructive case study. At the same time, the Limassol LDPP is expected to contribute in the improvement of planning procedures and participatory practices in Cyprus.

2. Cyprus Planning system and public participation

2.1 Development Plans and participation

The three-tier hierarchy of Development Plans introduced by the 1972 Town and Country Planning Law is based on the concepts of the 'Island Plan' (competence of the Minister of Finance), which refers to the national territory and the regional distribution of resources and development opportunities; the 'Local Plan', which refers to major urban areas, areas of exceptional importance or areas undergoing intensive development pressures and rapid physical development; and the 'Area Scheme', at the lower end of the hierarchy, which in general refers to areas of a smaller scale and is more detailed and specifically project oriented. For all territory where neither a Local Plan nor an Area Scheme is in force, an additional type of development plan was introduced to the planning system in 1992, the 'Policy Statement for the Countryside' (PSC), a legally binding document with more general provisions for the control of development and the protection of the environment in villages and rural areas. All these Plans should be published and amended every five years.

Until recently, the 1972 Town and Country Planning Law did not adequately specify procedures for promoting active public participation in the planning process. However, it did specify how the public may influence the provisions of a Local Plan or Area Scheme at two stages. In the first instance, the public is involved at the plan-making stage through participation in plan-specific Joint Boards¹, the members of which include representatives of local authorities, government agencies and public bodies whose policies need to be horizontally integrated into plans under consideration; representatives of organised citizens' groups and NGO stakeholders with an interest in the area under study; as well as persons of special knowledge or expertise in relation to the study area, as appropriate. This process is essentially consultative and its main objective is to inform the Minister and the Planning Board² on opinions and suggestions in relation to a Development Plan's proposed policies.

After its discussion and approval by the Planning Board, a Development Plan is published and put on deposit for the public's inspection. This is the second instance where the public can influence the provisions of Development Plans. Local authorities, NGOs, and any interested body or individual may at this stage submit objections against any of the plan's provisions. The Minister examines any objections through a structured procedure involving plan-specific consultative committees, submits his suggestions and remarks to

¹ The Joint Board advises the Minister of Interior regarding the preparation or revision of Local or Regional Plans; its members are elected from the local authorities and also include individuals with specialist knowledge or a valid opinion in respect of the Plan. They are appointed by the Council of Ministers (the Chairman is elected by the members).

² The Planning Board is assigned the powers of the Minister of the Interior for the preparation or revision of Local or Regional Plans, and its members include Director Generals of key sectoral Ministries or their representatives, the Director General of the Planning Bureau or his/ her representative, the Director of the Town Planning and Housing Department, representatives from the Union of Municipalities, the Union of Communities and ETEK (the Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber), as well as specialists in the fields of urban and regional planning, the environment and development. They are appointed by the Council of Ministers (the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are also appointed).

the Council of Ministers for consideration and decision, and eventually publishes the approved version of the Development Plan, which remains in force until its following amendment. Through these processes, in many instances local *ad hoc* pressure groups and NGOs have raised issues and questions, which directly relate to spatial planning policy. Political pressure has thus had considerable effects on the implementation of several provisions of published Development Plans.

In order to secure the wider possible public participation, new innovative procedures were introduced in 2007, such as open community meetings³ and written consultations by the public at large (individuals, bodies or authorities) followed by public hearing procedures⁴. These provide for much wider and officially documented citizen participation in the planning process, based on clearly prescribed procedures, whose effects will be seen in the near future, as they have been implemented during the latest Development Plan review process (2008-2011) and during the preparation of new Development Plans under way. Finally, objections against the provisions of the plans that are lodged within a 4-month period are to be examined by special four-member committees, which, for the first time, will advise the Minister of the Interior directly; a representative of the local authority as well as an eminent person with expert knowledge of spatial planning, development and the environment will sit on these committees. It should be noted that both during the preparation and revision of these statutory spatial plans, a special report on strategy and guidelines is prepared by the Minister, incorporating the views of local authorities which complete a questionnaire for that purpose.

On the whole, this practice has brought a much needed upgrading of the planning system's governance framework, especially concerning transparency and participation, while strengthening the integrated and place-based approach.

Figure 1 illustrates this comprehensive procedure involving all actors step by step (the levels of public participation are shown highlighted).

³ Open community meetings take place before Local Authority requests are submitted in the process of Plan preparation or revision, aiming at gathering the views and opinions of the public. Local Authority requests arising from this process are displayed in public and made known to all.

⁴ Written consultations by the public are submitted with a view to strengthening the participatory process and are duly taken into consideration in the planning process. A number of such representative consultations are put forward at public hearings so that the requests are better understood by the Planning Board.

FIGURE 1: LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION PROCEDURE



It is now recommended that new regional and local plans be drawn up in rural areas involving agglomerations of communities, in such a way that gradually all areas of the Island under government control will be covered by these plans, thus replacing the general regulations of the Policy Statement for the Countryside (a general policy document implemented in rural areas where a Local Plan has not yet been adopted), which are applied today; thus leading to more place-based planning.

At the same time, efforts are being made to introduce spatial planning at a strategic and national level, in order to overcome whatever problems have arisen as a result of the de facto division of the Island (the absence of government control in the occupied part of Cyprus was the reason put forward for not elaborating an Island Plan; such a project is nevertheless provided for by law and has fundamentally an economic scope). In that way there will be planning feedback from the whole to the part (from the general to the specific) and territorial cohesion and balanced development will be ensured in government-controlled areas. In parallel, it will be possible to define the role to be played by Cyprus in the broader spatial planning of Europe.

Finally, Action Plans filled the gap which existed at the lowest planning level, in an attempt to draw up a general framework for reviving a large number of rural communities and identifying projects for their improvement. However, those Plans are not yet legally statutory. Although numerous Action Plans are expected to be completed by 2012, they cannot provide a sound basis for planning as they do not take account of the regional dimension and are restricted at community level.

In Cyprus, decentralisation of planning and development control is being promoted at local and regional level, both through the government programme for spatial planning and the preparation of relevant legislation for restructuring local authorities, mainly by encouraging communities' agglomeration.

2.2 Problems of public participation being faced and the role of Limassol LDPP

The delay occurred in the process of decentralisation and restructuring of local authorities in Cyprus had an undisputable negative impact on the exercise of local democracy. The contribution of provisional and ad-hoc committees, such as the Joint Board, facilitated institutional participation but couldn't really substitute a legally bound bottom-up approach based on citizen participation.

Beyond the above institutional limitations, attempts to encourage public participation in spatial planning in Cyprus face problems of citizen behaviour, awareness and know-how. A typical issue is the fact that public at large is not prepared to become involved in discussing matters of strategy and is not willing to place the public interest above personal interests. Another problem of such kind is the inability of local authorities to draw up a real development programme beyond the usual re-zoning requests.

Therefore, the Limassol Wine Villages Local Development Pilot Project represents an exercise of a real bottom-up participation in planning. This could supplement existing processes and lead to the formulation of a more appropriate project vision and development strategy. At the same time, via this process, the project will be backed up by

economic or social measures and implementation programmes, with a view to achieving a more complete result.

3. A new opportunity for participatory planning: The Local Development Pilot Project (LDPP) for the Wine Villages in Limassol

3.1 The LDPP as a European instrument for territorial cohesion

The Department of Town Planning and Housing, part of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, together with the Council of Europe has embarked on a Pilot Local Development Project for the Wine Villages in the Region of Limassol. The Limassol Pilot Project falls within the remit of a wider project of the Council of Europe namely: 'Local Development Pilot Projects: the contribution of heritage to local and regional development' (LDPP).

The LDPP Projects involve the drawing up and implementation of local development strategies. The LDPP helps protect, conserve and enhance the territory's heritage as a factor of socio-economic development, identity and cohesion. It promotes a model of holistic, multi-sectoral and sustainable development, underpinned by the active involvement of citizens.

The LDPP procedure provides an antidote to the homogenisation of territories and promotes place-based development focusing on specific identity and optimum use of locally available cultural and natural resources which are the heritage of the local communities. Among other things it aims to improve the standard of living of local inhabitants, minimise the differences between urban and rural life, and create opportunities for employment and economic development.

As an instrument, the LDPP provides an opportunity for innovative/ fruitful discussion of issues within a well-defined institutional framework. The outcomes of the approach, which sets out a common long-term plan, broad guidelines and strategies for developing and upgrading the territory, as well as implementation measures, can therefore be incorporated in national strategies so that the operational recommendations are applied in practice and in due course and the alternative development models implemented have a potential impact on national policies. The methodology and the procedure of the LDPP could be implemented as preparatory work to planning. The LDPP is therefore contributing to help national, regional and local institutions to examine the long-term potential of the territory and the institutional and legislative frameworks which determine regional policies and decentralisation mechanisms.

The main components of the LDPP instrument are transparency, democracy and dialogue. That is to say, how citizens are involved in decision-making and how decisions taken at local level are democratically transparent. One key component of the LDPP therefore involves organising and facilitating participation and consultation for all the actors, including both local inhabitants and key partners from outside the area.

The Limassol LDPP experiments, for the first time in Cyprus, a real place-based approach and a community-led local development method, which come under the wider agenda of territorial cohesion. The 'diagnosis' phase of the project has just been completed, which establishes an overall, integrated, intersectoral assessment of the spatial, socio-economic and heritage situation that exists throughout the territory. It sets out the territory, the

situation as experienced by the various stakeholders and the reasons for that situation, so that a 'snapshot of the territory' and a 'shared vision' of it can be derived. The 'Structured Democratic Dialogue' method has been used as a participatory tool, with the technical assistance of the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA)

3.2 The Wine Villages in the Region of Limassol

The area under study is located at the foothills of the largest mountain range of Cyprus, Troodos, and falls within the administrative boundaries of the Limassol District. Within this area, 15 traditional settlements are located, namely: Agios Amvrosios, Agios Therapon, Arsos, Gerovasa, Vasa Koilaniou, Vouni, Dora, Kissousa, Koilani, Lofou, Malia, Omodos, Pano Kyvides, Pahna, Potamiou. Most of them date back to the Byzantine period and are more or less well preserved, with a traditional character, densely built on the slopes of hills, with narrow stone-paved streets, and with their religious buildings – churches, chapels and monasteries, often dating from medieval times. The total population is 3369 (2011 Census) with considerable variation in size.

This cluster of villages, covering a total area of 189.7 sq km and in an attitude varying between 430m and 830m meters above sea level, is closer to Limassol town than to other urban areas of Cyprus. It has a character of a functional region, based on physical, historical, environmental and socio-economic similarities between the communities. The villages are scattered in the landscape, connected by cultivated or abandoned cultivated land, vineyards and dry-laid stone terraces.

The area, known for its wine producing tradition, hence the name, is also renowned for its religious buildings, as well as the vernacular architecture of dwellings, strongly influenced by the wine production economy. The surrounding landscape is dominated by a system of terraces. These terraces were constructed to allow the cultivation of medium gradient slopes with vineyards and, to a lesser extent, deciduous orchards such as almond trees. Unfortunately, this cultural landscape is partially deteriorated following the abandonment of vineyard cultivation. The rich fauna and flora, which is an additional environmental asset, has led to the inclusion of some significant parts of the area in the Natura 2000 network.

The larger and more accessible villages, such as Pachna, Pano Kyvides and Omodos, have relatively high living standards, sufficient economic activity, more development opportunities and good quality infrastructure compared to other smaller communities in the area. On the other hand, small and more isolated villages, such as Gerovasa, Kissousa and Potamiou are either abandoned or with very small population.

Some of the main issues faced in the area are the following:

- The process of dereliction, abandonment and depopulation of the most remote and mountainous settlements.
- The abandonment, neglect and deterioration of many dry-laid stonewall terraced vineyards because of the decay of agriculture and its mechanisation.
- The change of the authentic cultural landscape due to the phenomena mentioned above, but also because of the gradual return of natural vegetation, the

destruction caused by frequent summer fires and the erosion caused by winter torrential rain.

- The gradual transformation of the traditional character of settlements, because of the rush of building development in some communities, the loss of architectural homogeneity and the scattered development of single houses outside development boundaries.

All the above characteristics and problems make of the area a unity of space with significant cohesion. The geomorphological uniformity, the picturesqueness of landscapes and architecture of villages, the rich cultural and natural heritage, together with the potential of socio-economic dynamics, provide an opportunity for a holistic/ integrated approach. Additionally, the peripherality indices of this region (isolation, difficulty of access, decline of economic activities and rapid depopulation) ask for a place-based approach and for a 'bottom-up' participatory process in order to unleash territorial potential.

4.0 The Structured Democratic Dialogue Process (SDDP)

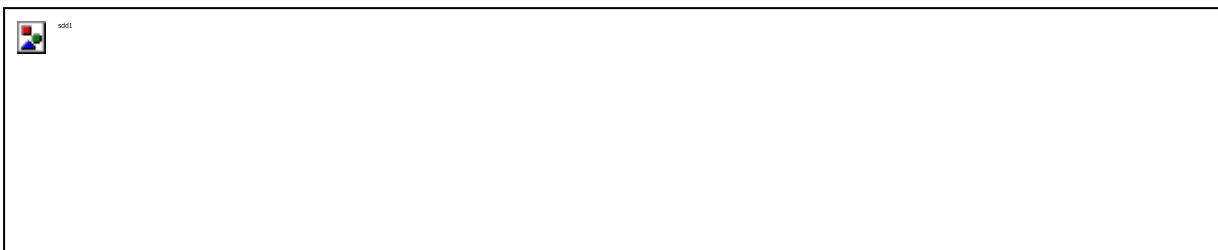
4.1 Methodology of the case study and introduction to the Structured Democratic Dialogic Process (SDDP)

The LDPP will be developed in three phases: The Diagnosis, the Strategy and the Implementation Programme. The phase completed up to now is the Diagnosis. The methodology followed for the Diagnosis phase elaboration, included standard methods, such as data collection and analysis, interviews, questionnaires and thematic SWOT analysis. The main instrument, however, was that of the Structured Democratic Dialogic Process (SDDP). It was selected due to its efficiency in gathering the collective wisdom of a wide range of different stakeholders.

The SDDP instrument was chosen to support the LDPP in structuring the stakeholder representatives' ideas on the current situation (problems), the desired situation (vision) and actions/ options to achieve the goals regarding the sustainable development of the Limassol Wine Villages through the protection, conservation and enhancement of the territory's heritage.

The SDDP supports democratic and structured dialogue among a group of stakeholders. It is especially effective in resolving multiple conflicts of purpose and values, and in generating consensus on organizational and inter-organizational strategy. It is specifically designed to assist heterogeneous groups in dealing with complex issues, in a reasonably limited amount of time. It enables the integration of contributions from individuals with diverse views, backgrounds and perspectives through a process that is structured, inclusive and collaborative. A group of participants, who are knowledgeable and have a stake in a particular situation are engaged in collectively developing a common framework of thinking based on consensus and shared understanding of the current and of a future ideal state of affairs. The participants are selected as representatives of the different stakeholders in order to ensure the legitimacy of the results as well as their ownership of and commitment in the outcome.

The SDDP is planned as a series of iterative learning /design engagements, from Definition through Design to Action.



4.2 Designing a Development Frame

The SDDP is used in the Limassol LDPP to describe and analyze an existing situation and extrapolate it to the future (base scenario), to identify the possible obstacles for reaching a specific topic (Wall of Obstacles) and to develop a shared vision for the development of the specific topic (Tree of Vision). It then converges on a collaboratively developed 'Action Agenda' that will tear down the 'Wall of Obstacles' and nourish the Tree of Vision. It focuses on the distinctions among the 'ought to be,' 'can be,' and 'will be;', as described in the following diagram:

For the elaboration of the development frame the following steps need to be taken:

(a) Co-laboratory I: 'Can be'

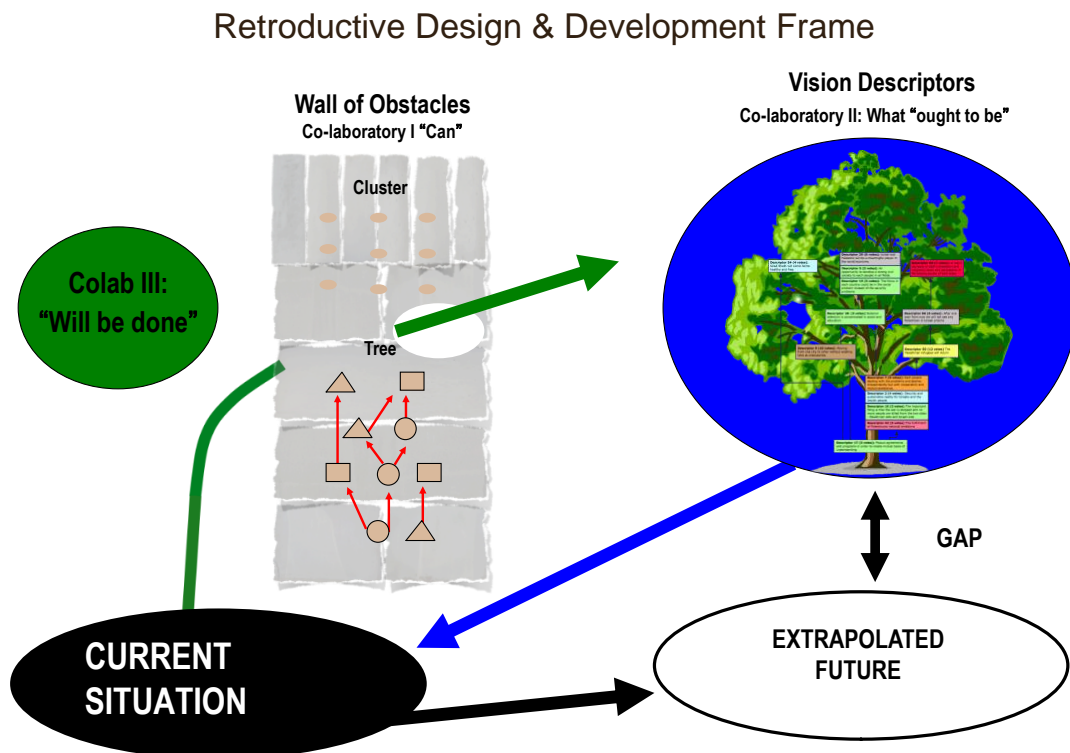
'What are barriers or obstacles to what 'ought to be done' as described in CoLab II?'

(b) Co-laboratory II: 'Ought to be' as a desired and not a necessarily feasible optimum situation

'What are descriptors of a mutually beneficial future?'

(c) Co-laboratory III: 'Will be'

'What are the action options which, if adopted & implemented, will overcome the wall of obstacles & help us create an ideal future as described in CoLab I)?'



4.3 Co-laboratory Methodology

The detailed breakdown of the various stages and phases of the process can be summarized as follows:

Preparatory Stage:

1. Setting up the 'Knowledge Management Team' (KMT): The team consists by the representatives of those experiencing the complex problem, in this case the Local Authorities and selected public or other organisations and by the specialized Facilitators.
2. Identification of relevant stakeholders: This process is initiated some time ahead of the SDDP workshop. It is of paramount importance to invite relevant and appropriate stakeholders. Stakeholders that accurately represent elements of the subject or have deep knowledge and are willing to positively contribute to the process are key to ensuring that the outputs of the SDDP will be of value (local stakeholders and relevant public and semi-public organizations, ngo's etc).
3. Drafting the triggering question (TQ): The KMT is responsible for the engagement and consultation with the relevant stakeholders in order to draft the triggering question (TQ). Due to the importance of the TQ in the whole process, it is imperative that it has been reasoned and reflects the input of the project team as well as the external participants.
4. Drafting of a Report with background material: Following definition of the TQ, it is important to provide the participants with the information required to fully engage in the face-to-face element of the process. This includes provision of any background reading materials, any required resources, the TQ itself, and any information supporting how the TQ is defined.
5. Invitation: The selected participants that represent the various stakeholders are invited. The KMT ensures that all the stakeholders will be represented and sends additional invitations, if necessary. The invitation is accompanied by the above mentioned Report.

SDDP Co-laboratory Workshop:

1. The participants are invited to answer the TQ at a round-table session, through a single and concrete sentence-proposal. All answers are recorded on the Cogniscope™ software, printed and hanged on the wall.
2. The authors of the proposals clarify and describe their ideas. The other participants can ask for additional explanations but discussion and criticism is not permitted.
3. The participants cluster all the answers into groups according to their contents, resemblances and common characteristics. This gives a further opportunity to understand all the various dimensions and perspectives of the different answers and reach a broader consensus.

4. The participants are invited to vote the five more significant ideas. Only the ideas that received votes will participate in the next phase.
5. The participants are asked to explore the links between the selected ideas in order to investigate how an idea could influence significantly another one. If the answer is 'yes' (with an increased majority) then this is recorded using the relevant software, which uses mathematical algorithms to minimize the number of queries necessary for exploring relationships between ideas. These relations are recorded in order for the software to produce an 'influence tree' (Wall of Obstacles or Vision Descriptors)
6. The 'influence tree' is produced and presented to the participants, subject to discussion.

Analysis Stage:

1. The KMT produces the Report of the SDDP Workshop that includes the description of the process, the participants list, the answers to the TQ, the elaborated groups, the voting status and the 'influence tree'. This is further analyzed: the ideas on the base of the 'tree' can be considered as the most fundamental, whereas the ideas at the top can be considered as consequences.
2. The report is disseminated to all stakeholders and other relevant Bodies and Organisations.
3. The KMT suggests the planning of further steps.

The diagram below, describes the SDDP process schematically:

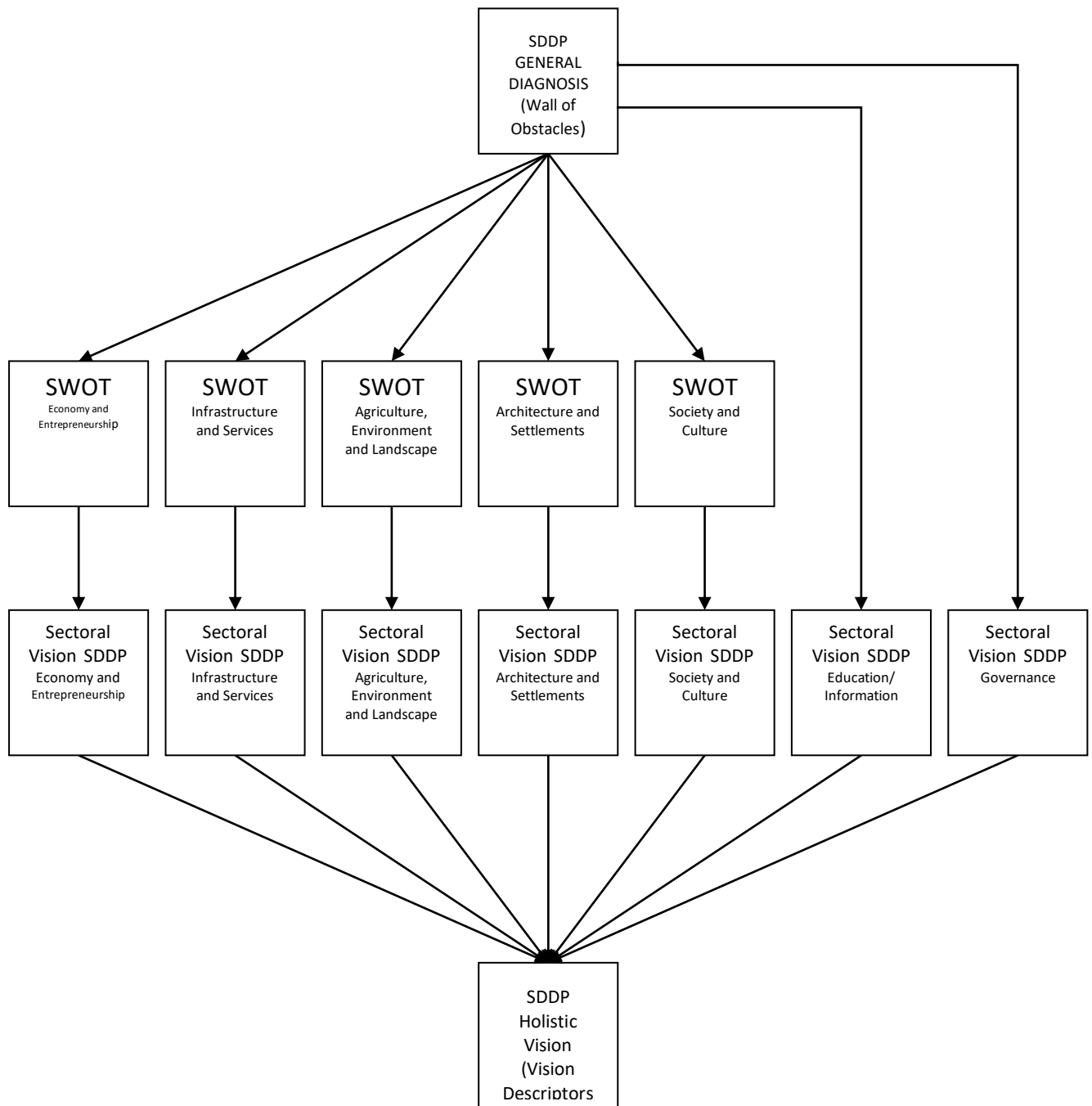


Figure 2 (source: Wikipedia)

4.4 The Limassol LDDP experience: Participation in Planning

The Road Map of the Diagnosis Phase of the LDPP process is made out of consecutive and participatory approaches that allow for the overall and the focused analysis of the area. This process, based on the SDDP, Wall of Obstacles is summarised in the diagramme (Figure...), where, as described below, in the first step, a common Wall of Obstacles (root cause map) was designated by Co-laboratory I. In the second step, seven thematic working groups elaborated a SWOT analysis and/or a Sectoral Common Vision for each theme, representing a group of obstacles. Finally, in the third step, a holistic vision of the area was drawn out of a synthesis of the previous thematic work, by Co-laboratory II.

1st Step



2nd Step

Figure: LDPP process

i. First Step: "Wall of Obstacles"

3rd Step

For the development of the 'Diagnosis Phase' of the LDPP, the first step selected was to produce the 'Wall of Obstacles'. Following the above described methodology, the KMT selected as a TQ: 'Which are the obstacles for the development of the Wine-villages of Limassol?'. The 27 participants, representing 26 stakeholders gave 71 answers to this question. The answers were then clustered into 7 categories.

Then the participants were called upon to vote which five barriers they consider as the most important. The result was that 16 barriers were collectively considered as the most important. Finally, the participants explored possible correlations between the 16 different barriers by answering the question: If we manage to deal with factor A, would this significantly assist us in dealing with factor B? The result was to determine the

fundamental barriers upon which all other barriers rest and compile an influence tree or the 'Wall of Obstacles'. The method allows the differentiation between the notion of the "importance" and "fundamentality" of an idea when compared and evaluated in relation to another idea. The final result depicts the interrelation between the different characteristics.

The 'Wall of Obstacles' depicted that the current forms of governance and administration are the fundamental issues that prevent the development of the region. More specifically, the issues of governance were raised in local level, concerning firstly the incompleting process of the institutional agglomeration of the local authorities (clustering of local authorities in order to form larger/supra local entities) and secondly, the low level of the management capacities of the existing local authorities and the lack of effective cooperation between government departments. In central level, the lack of adequate interest for the area by the central government is also raised as a governance barrier.

These fundamental barriers lead to other important barriers to development that include endogenous factors such as limited cultural and environmental awareness, the lack of a regional brand of origin for local products (branding) and inadequate access and connections between settlements. Another set of barriers were exogenous and concerned the lack of effective financial incentives for the return of emigrants and for agricultural production and environmental conservation.

In addition, a number of other issues were identified which constitute symptoms of the fundamental barriers, namely the out of date structure of the District Administration, the lack of individual entrepreneurship and innovation, rigid bureaucracy, downgrading of agricultural production and of the cultural landscape, inadequate use of architectural heritage as a tourist product, the lack of aimed development and supervision, the lack of basic infrastructure and services and the flight to the cities.

The actual "Wall of Obstacles" is depicted as Figure 3.

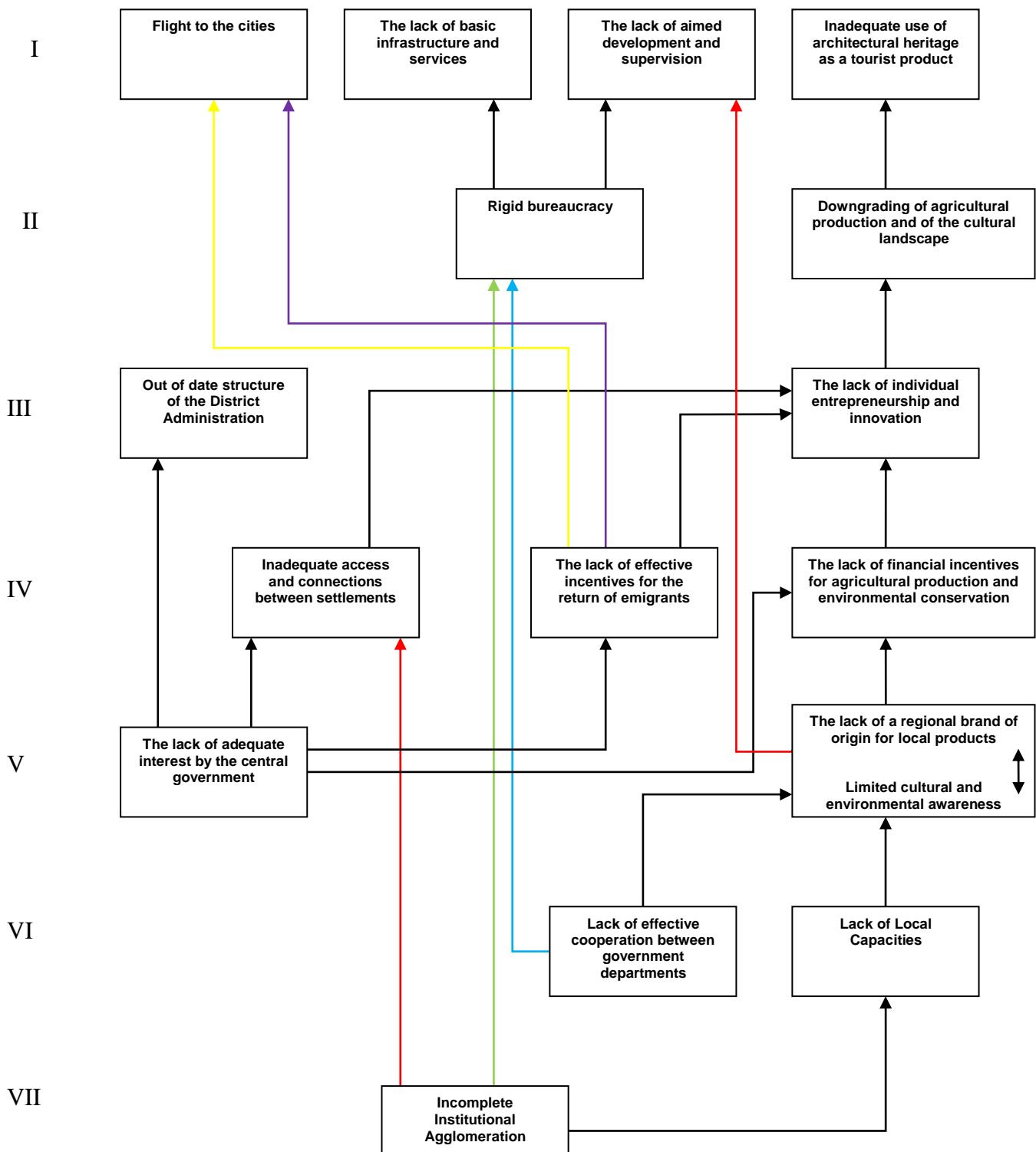


Figure 3: 'Wall of Obstacles'

ii. Second Step: Theme Working groups

Following the workshop, 7 major themes were identified for further investigation, of sectoral (thematic) or strategic nature, namely:

Sectoral (thematic)	}	1.	Society and Culture
		2.	Architecture and Settlements
		3.	Economy and Entrepreneurship
		4.	Infrastructure and Services
		5.	Agriculture, Environment and Landscape
Strategic (thematic)	}	6.	Education and Information
		7.	Governance and Administration

The Report of the Workshop as well as the proposal for the Themes to be elaborated separately was discussed with the KMT (including relevant Local Authorities public or semi-public organizations active in the area) of the LDPP. For the development of each Theme, a Working Group with members and leader was designated by the KMT. This enabled the stakeholders' base to drastically enlarge.

The Working Groups task was to proceed with a SWOT analysis for the five sectoral themes, in order to obtain a better understanding of the area's real limitations and potentials at local and macro regional level. On the grounds of this thorough and shared understanding of the territory, a sectoral common vision through the Structured Dialogic Design Process was established for each of the seven Theme Groups. The TQ was '*What are the descriptors of the desired situation for the sustainable development of the wine villages in the field of...(relevant thematic) ?*'.

The Theme Working Groups identified an average of 60 descriptors for each Thematic, selected and average of 15 more influential descriptors and produced seven separate "Vision Descriptors".

iii. Third Step: Vision Descriptor

The KMT with the collaboration of the Working Groups' leaders analysed the separate Vision Descriptors and identified the most influential factors. Finally, a common workshop with representatives of each thematic working group was organized with the aim of establishing a common, integrated, holistic vision for the area.

In the last workshop, the 44 most influential factors of the different Thematic were discussed, and 18 were selected as the most important. Their interrelations were then explored.

The 'Vision Descriptors' depicted that the most fundamental action towards the sustainable development of the area is the institutional agglomeration of the local authorities.

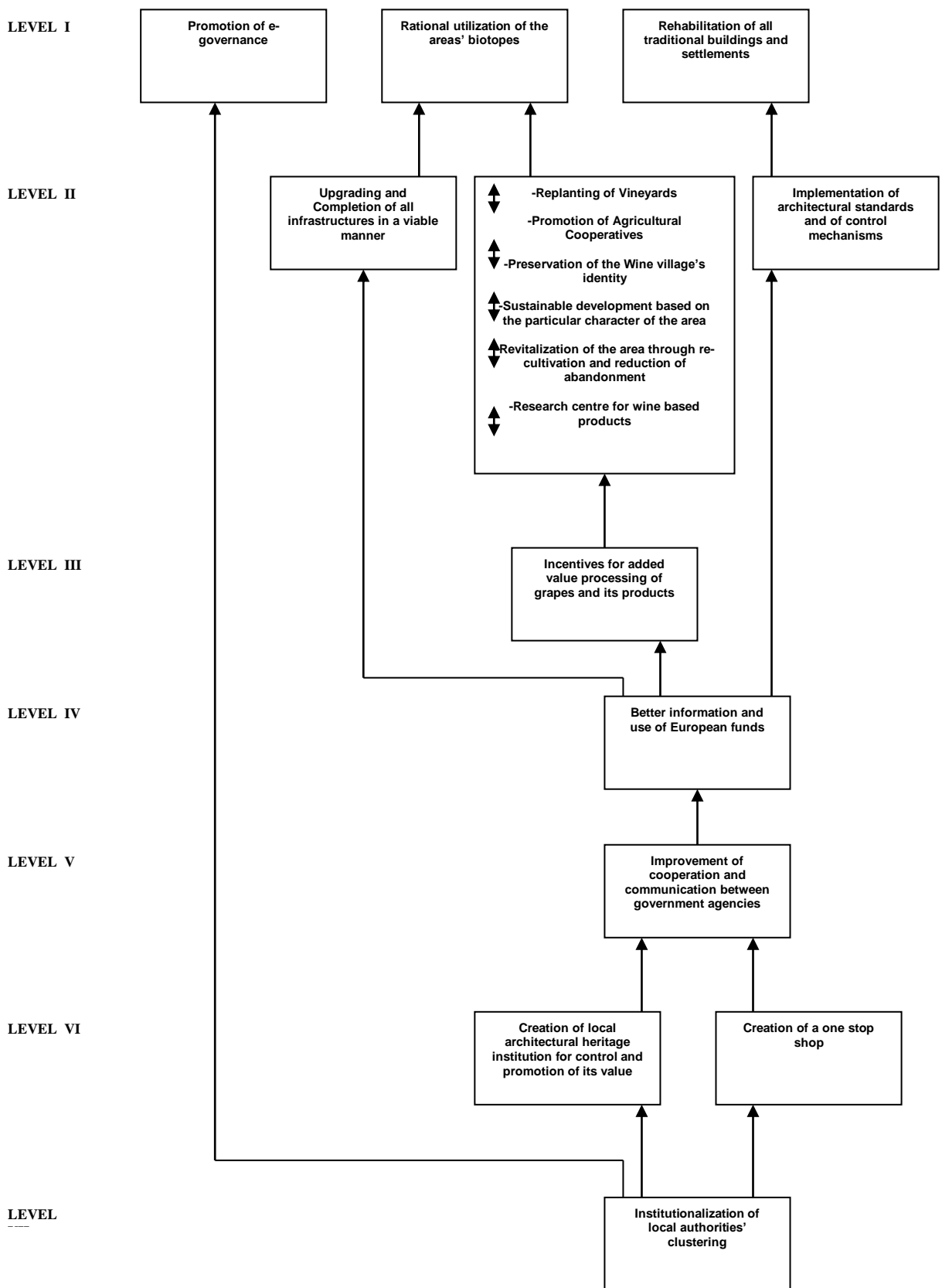
The institutional agglomeration of the local authorities will facilitate the creation of a number of local initiatives such as a one-stop shop for facilitating development and

private investments, as well as an agency for the promotion and control of the architectural heritage of the area. These will have a consultative role while contributing to the amelioration of the cooperation and communication of both the local authority and individuals with the relevant governmental departments. They will also be important driving forces for the accomplishment of the vision for the area.

The better exploitation of funding opportunities of programmes, projects and actions from the European funds is considered to contribute financially for the creation of incentives for added value processing of grapes and its products, upgrading and completion of all infrastructures in a viable manner, the replanting of Vineyards, the promotion of Agricultural Cooperatives and the establishment of a research centre for wine based products. Moreover, it will contribute to the implementation of architectural standards and control mechanisms as well to other standards resulting to the preservation of the Wine villages' identity, the revitalization of the area through re-cultivation and reduction of abandonment leading to sustainable development based on the particular character of the area.

The final results of the above is expected to be, in the field of administration and governance, the promotion of e-government, and in the field of the environment, the rational utilization as well as the rehabilitation of the man-made environment, the traditional settlements and buildings of the area.

The actual "Vision descriptors" is depicted as Figure 4.



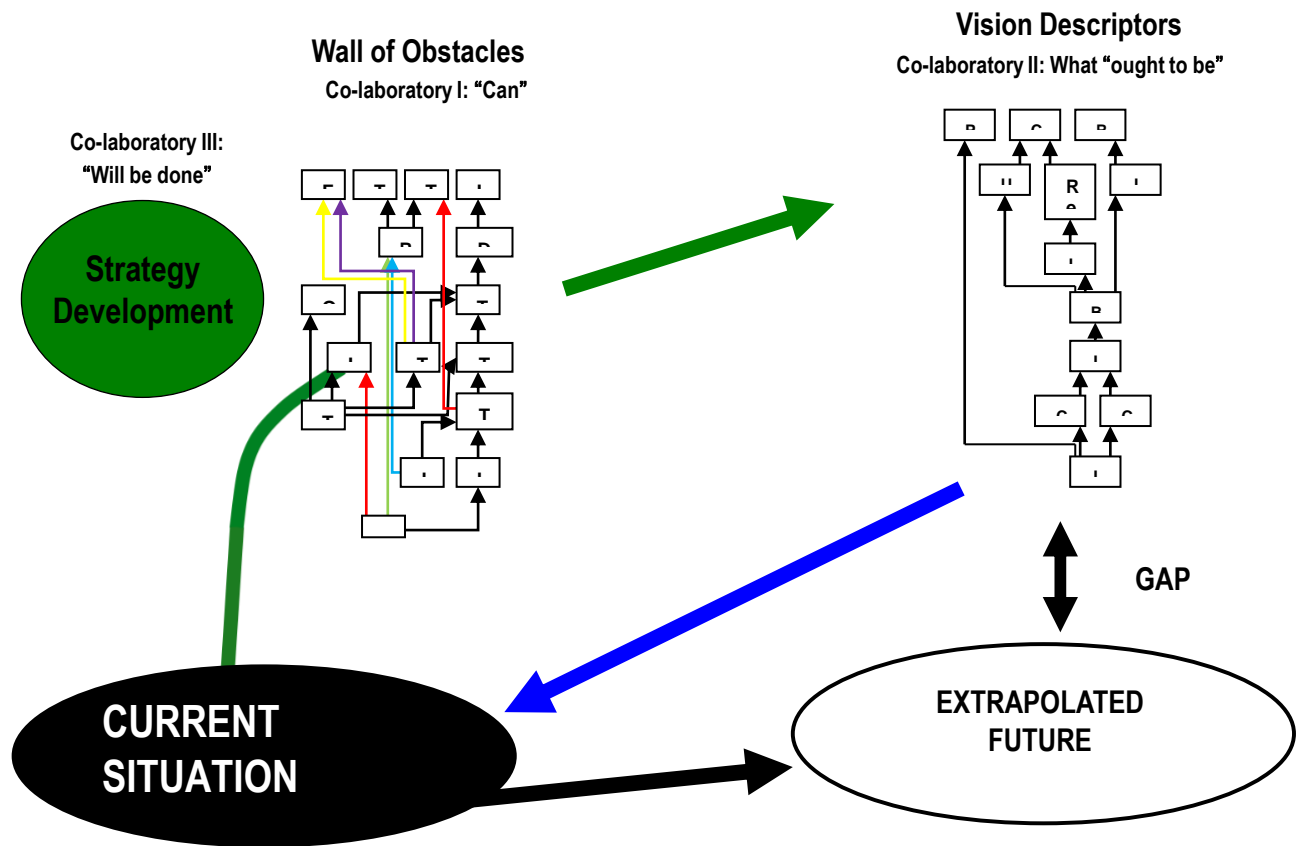
When comparing the results of the root cause maps of the two co-laboratories, the institutional agglomeration of local authorities is confirmed as the most fundamental factor, being at the root of the diagramme in both cases. The importance of this result is reinforced by the fact that it came out as a common understanding and as a wish of all local authorities to work together for the benefit of the area as a whole.

These results also manifest the coincidence between obstacles and aims which appear on the top of the respective diagrammes, ie in the fields of infrastructure and architectural heritage.

iv. Next steps

The Diagnosis Phase included the elaboration of the Wall of Obstacles and the Vision Descriptors, whereas the Co-laboratory III ('will be done') is the subject of the Strategy Development Phase that will follow.

Retroductive Design & Development Frame



Insofar 150 individuals from 75 different stakeholders' groups were involved in 12 SDDPs and 5 SWOT analysis workshops. The methodology used enabled to make a snapshot of the territory, combining a set of actual (through data collection) and perceived (through public participation) reality in different sectors. This wide representation allowed drafting a shared vision for the territory through consensus building. The Vision will be used as a roadmap to establish the Collaborative Action Agenda, in the framework of the Strategy Development.

4.5 . The added value and limitations of SDDP

The added value of the SDDP together with its limitations are briefly described below.

Added value

Strategic character of the dialogue, where stakeholders are involved in the policy process and in the formulation of the vision along with the strategy and explicit objectives.

Promotion of a place-based and bottom-up approach, since it allows people with a connection to a particular place to have a territorially sensitive approach and to elaborate a common project, without any real top-down interference.

Consideration of not only territorial, but also social and economic aspects, in an integrated development approach, where the dialogue is with various sector policies.

Fostering identity and heritage, since the trademark of the region, promoted by the project, relies on the area's specific identity and heritage, especially in a period of economic crisis.

Long-term and even very long-term outcomes rather than immediate quantitative and qualitative outputs, deriving from the resilience of the process and the fact that the communities are better able to meet their own needs.

Networking and capacity building, especially among neighbouring communities which instead of being competitors, can invest on mutual confidence, activate local partnerships, reach economies of scale and eventually end up with an official cluster of villages for securing future development and growth.

Legitimacy of the actors and their work, based on the careful selection of stakeholders and the widest possible institutional and citizen participation.

Stakeholders engagement and the sense of collective ownership, since the participants commit their selves to the project and its results, and they are supported to lead the processes from the outset.

Empowerment of community members by ensuring they obtain all necessary information, have full knowledge of the area's assets and have the necessary competencies to participate in the dialogue, assessing and evaluating at the same time their own processes and attitudes.

Participation on equal basis and respecting the autonomy of all participants due to the equal representation, to the ability to express opinions on equal basis, to the facilitation of even the weakest stakeholders to express their views and interests, and to the fact that the results are thus better perceived, accepted and embraced.

Facilitation of mutual understanding and multilevel cooperation, since participants, within the process, gain better understanding of community needs, exchange their views and aspirations and seek to reach an agreeable result regardless their diversity.

Limitations

Time consuming process, since there is a difficulty of systematization or standardization, due to the fact that management tools and processes have to be combined in an adequate way according to the characteristics of the territory.

Training requirement of participants and facilitators, since the tools employed have to be learned and shared among various groups, whereas the software used by facilitators needs training.

Need for involvement of a substantial number of participants, bearing in mind the need to have the wider possible representation and interaction among institutions and civil society, and the allotment of tasks in thematic working groups.

Need to achieve a state of mutual trust which is a prerequisite of collective action, leaving behind the antagonism between local authorities and the usual cautiousness towards government departments.

Need for coordination between various government agencies which are relevant to the project, since they have to be represented in the process and reach a consensus by reconsidering sometimes their priorities.

Need for long-term commitment of institutions and local people, bearing in mind that the process needs many and long meetings of working groups at several instances, during both the diagnostic and the strategic phase of the project.

5. Conclusion

The Limassol LDPP has proved to be a unique opportunity to experience a place-based approach together with its complementary method of community-led local development. The study area presents a cultural and environmental endowment, and the numerous stakeholders were carefully selected and were really enthusiastic and actively involved. The preliminary outcome of the whole process is more than satisfactory since it is the product of a common effort that is consolidated and uncontradicted.

The Structured Democratic Dialogue Process is undoubtedly an effective instrument of community-led local development. It is a qualitative, creative and comprehensive method of achieving results, designed in such a way as to encounter complex issues and to harness the collective wisdom of all participants, regardless of their educational and cultural background. But there is no question that the method needs systematisation, in order to surpass some of its limitations.

The application of this instrument in the preparation of development plans is still in progress, and has to be further experimented throughout all steps of planning. For the moment it has been used to identify obstacles and define vision descriptors, leading to the collective vision for the region of the wine villages of Limassol.

Thus, the priority now is to customise this method in spatial planning as a possible substitute of Joint Boards, aiming to improve planning procedures and participatory practices. The legal umbrella of the process has to be also well defined, in order to be implementable not only in physical planning terms but also in socio-economic planning.

It remains to evaluate the Limassol LDPP within the overall LDPP Programme and to measure its contribution to the concepts of place-based approach and territorial cohesion.

The experience of the Limassol LDPP seems to be a useful teaching tool for the whole Programme, since it drove deep into the question of methodology and participation. It has introduced a comprehensive mechanism of dialogue amongst stakeholders from the outset, based on a real bottom-up approach (SDDP). It also records the scrutiny followed when selecting the various actors who experience the complex issue of the area's decline. In this sense, the findings of the project could be disseminated to the rest of the network (LDPP Programme). The prevailing enthusiasm of participants during the first phase of the project is encouraging to go further into the crucial phase of implementation.

Finally, the Limassol LDPP is perhaps a revelation, a new aspiration into what models of development we should seek after in the future, especially during this period of economic crisis. The involvement of the locals in the place-based approach, in the way which has been experienced here, encourages a certain type of life: a more clear understanding of the place, a recall to quality values, a return to what heritage is all about. This could become an opportunity to reassess EU's development paradigm and a source for redefining EU's society for the future, always keeping in mind the quote 'Nothing for us without us'.