



AGIRRE LEHENDAKARIA CENTER  
for Social and Political Studies



# Co-creating Urban Transformation

## A Guide to Community Listening and Engagement for Future-fit Cities

This Guide discusses the importance of co-creating urban transformation portfolios to address the complexity of cities as systems, because traditional linear approaches to urban development are not sufficient to solve the interconnected and complex problems that cities face. The Guide introduces a Social Innovation Approach with Community Listening at the heart. This process involves ecosystem mapping, community listening, collective interpretation, co-creation, and building portfolios of experiments and initiatives on multiple levels. The Guide is developed for municipality staff and other partners working for transformative change at the town and city level.

#### • **City Learning Circle:**

The City Learning Circle is a small, interactive group of practitioners who connect virtually to share experiences, tools, ideas, and challenges to learn ways to grow, expand, and improve their work. The first prototype experience of the City Learning Circle took place from October to December 2022, focusing on Community Listening & Engagement strategy. This prototype was conducted with cities that are a part of the Mayors for Economic Growth Facility, supported by the European Union, and the City Experiment Fund, supported by Slovakia. **To read more about the City Learning Circle, go to this section of the Guide.**

#### • **Tools for Community Listening and Sensemaking:**

This section of the toolkit discusses two tools that can be used in the process of community listening and sensemaking: the Matrix tool and Ecosystem Mapping. The Matrix tool is a spreadsheet that helps keep track of information and systematize data collected through all tools shared in the present guide. Ecosystem Mapping is the process in which the core team of a municipality and their partners identify and graphically represent the key actors and existing initiatives in their region. **To read more about these two tools, go to this section of the Guide.**

#### • **Community Listening:**

Community Listening is a process of engaging with communities through qualitative tools to reveal underlying mindsets and narratives and identify a community's needs, challenges, and opportunities. This process provides a deeper understanding of local dynamics that can be used to co-create and prototype solutions. By identifying diverse narratives, stakeholders can understand what is believed to be possible, what can or cannot be achieved, and even the success or failure of initiatives. **To read more about Community Listening, go to this section of the Guide.**

#### • **Analysis and Sensemaking:**

Analysis and Sensemaking is a process that induces learning and creates more meaning from the experience, in order to have better local decision-making about what initiatives could work or not. It involves the collective interpretation of information generated by systems mapping and community listening. The implementation team should systematize the data collected through quantitative and qualitative listening channels and should include people with analytical and research skills and experience in developing new initiatives around social innovation, community work, and ethnography, among others. **To read more about Analysis and Sensemaking, go to this section of the Guide.**

#### • **Co-creation and Building Portfolios:**

Co-creation is a process of joint problem-solving where different actors come together to develop a shared understanding of the problem and work collaboratively towards solutions. Building portfolios involves the development of a range of initiatives, experiments, and actions that can be used to address the identified challenges and opportunities. The portfolio approach involves experimentation, iteration, and adaptation to ensure that the initiatives are effective and impactful. There are many portfolio approaches available and all can be said to act as an alternative to more standard one sector-led and linear project management. **To read more about Co-creation and**

**Building Portfolios, go to this section of the Guide.**

#### • **Systemic Approach to Urban Transformation:**

The Guide emphasizes the importance of a systemic approach to urban transformation projects and processes. The Social Innovation Approach and the Agirre Lehendakaria Center's theory of change with community listening at the heart are designed to address the complexity of cities as systems of systems. The co-creation process involves three foundational phases: listening to communities, revealing narratives, and rehearsing change. **To read more about this, go to this section of the Guide.**

The Guide concludes by summarizing the importance of community listening and engagement in the process of co-creating urban transformation portfolios. The Social Innovation Approach presented in the Guide is one framework for municipalities and their partners to engage in systemic change efforts. The guide is intended to be a living document, updated regularly based on user feedback, ongoing learning, and changing circumstances.

<sup>1</sup>In the social sciences, the term 'dynamics' pertains to the intricate and multifaceted patterns, processes, and mechanisms that impact the behavior, actions, and interactions of individuals, groups, and societies over time. These encompass a broad range of social, cultural, economic, political, and psychological factors that influence social phenomena.

## What's this guide all about?



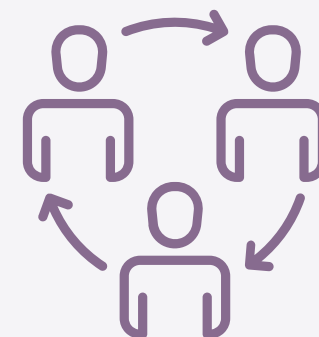
## Welcome & Context



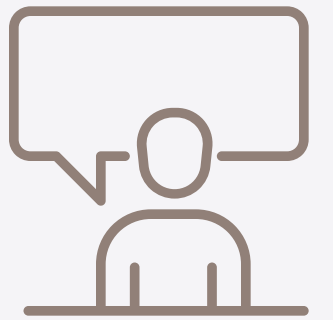
## Introduction: What is the value in co-creating urban transformation portfolios?



## Listening to Communities



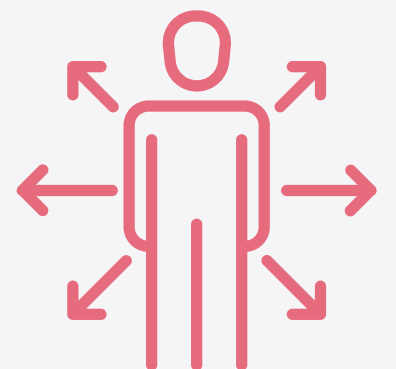
## Revealing Narratives



## Rehearsing Change



## Looking Ahead: What's next?



**“What stood out the most during the whole process is that when you try to make a city a better place to live, it should be an interconnected system coming all the way from the smallest interactions you have with people to the biggest ideas, the biggest buildings and projects, and all of them being at the same level of priorities.”**

—Municipal government participant, City Experiment Fund & City Learning Circle

# 0 What's this guide all about?

## Why this guide?

The purpose of this guide is to show how urban transformation efforts can be improved when co-created with residents and multiple stakeholders. It provides a kit of hands-on tools, templates, and exercises to apply as part of a Social Innovation Approach (note: see glossary appendix) with community listening at its heart. Community listening involves ongoing and iterative processes with city stakeholders that are designed to reveal rapidly evolving narratives of a place and support city governments and their partners in their systemic change efforts, as well as in times of crisis. Community listening on its own has demonstrated the power to bring transformative results. The potential is further amplified and sustained when it includes community co-design of prototypes and initiatives, resulting in urban transformation portfolios that are 'people-powered'--meaning that the portfolios:

- **are responsive to narratives of the city on an ongoing basis and are fit for emerging futures; and**
- **help build cultures of trust, social innovation, resilience, and collective imagination.**

## Who is it for?

The guide is intended for communities and cities, primarily municipal government staff and their local partners. The work involves engaging with multiple stakeholders, including residents, civil society organizations, United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP) Country Offices, universities, businesses and investors, and others by using the tools and methodologies introduced ahead in the toolkit.

## How did it come about?

The guide came about as part of the Mayors for Economic Growth Facility (M4EG) and the City Experiment Fund (CEF) during October to December, 2022, City Learning Circle with four municipalities: Prishtina, Kosovo<sup>2</sup>; Stepanavan, Armenia; and Ivano-Frankivsk and Kamianets-Podilskyi, Ukraine; through a process hosted and designed by Agirre Lehendakaria Center and UNDP. City Learning Circle has been a learning-by-doing co-creation process with colleagues from municipalities, their partners and UNDP Country Offices. It is a first prototype experience for cities to deepen learning and test tools of community listening as part of their community engagement and public consultation processes. The focus is on learning various tools to engage with community listening, rather than immediate solutions, because cities are increasingly realizing that a simple problem-solution approach is inadequate to address well the interconnected systemic challenges and complexity that characterize urban life and environments.

## Why a 'living' guide?

In our ongoing listening to cities, we hear increasingly that they crave rapid, adaptive learning, but that they're tired of traditional toolkits,

which seem often to be gathering dust on shelves, at least in part because they are static and have short-lived usefulness. We have tried to avoid that situation by designing this as a 'living' guide, whose linked tools, exercises and materials will be regularly updated as we learn from those who use them. 'Living' also refers to the intention not only to adapt the guide and materials over time, but also to provide access to live online engagement and follow-up sessions with ALC as well as peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

## How to engage with this guide?

This guide is meant as a resource and contains a set of tools for continuous community listening which can be integrated into the daily work of municipalities and their partners and also as part of co-creating urban transformation portfolios. As a living guide, the many linked tools and documents will be revised periodically based on user feedback, ongoing learning, and changing circumstances. Examples from field experience are provided throughout the guide to assist with practical adaptation and implementation in various contexts. To submit your comments about the guide or tools, add details to [this form](#), or to request coaching from ALC, please [contact us](#).

## We'd love to hear from you!

<sup>2</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

# 1 Welcome from ALC & UNDP M4EG

## ★ From EU

In recent years, efforts for decentralisation and modernising public administration have pushed central governments in Eastern Partnership countries and beyond to increasingly devolve responsibilities to local authorities. However, decentralisation initiatives must be accompanied by i) an adequate level of autonomy (governance, legislation, accountability), ii) capacity development of local authorities and iii) financial resources to cover their responsibilities, based on the needs of its population (all genders). In this context, listening to residents and exploring new methods to increasingly turn the dial from participation to active involvement is important to ensure the most relevance and impact of services and interventions by the local authorities. Listening methods can help capture existing social perceptions on the most significant socio-economic challenges to inform the process of designing options/interventions in real time. It is key to identify the most sustainable options for investing in the long-term growth and resilience of communities.

This listening guide is tested and prepared under the EU's Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG), a strategic partnership with UNDP, with a network of more than 400 local authorities in the Eastern Partnership. The M4EG intends [to strengthen the local authorities' resilience and future-readiness through exploring new trajectories of growth and innovative capability development](#) to face ongoing and future crises. It has a key role to support municipalities in catalysing more public and private funding in support of meaningful investment projects, such as in the context of the EU's Economic and Investment Plan for the Eastern Partnership.

## ★ From UNDP

For UNDP, working in systems is a response to a heightened understanding of how complex and interdependent development challenges are, and that their nature is evolutionary. The pandemic, climate change, conflicts, and inequality are dynamic challenges that continuously change and evolve. Addressing them separately and with pre-existing solutions, which may have worked in a different context, is insufficient. To address such systemic challenges, UNDP is diversifying its form of support to governments, policymakers and partners by applying alternatives to linear planning and standard project management. One method is applying a portfolio approach.

Portfolios are designed to provide expanded options of interventions that are diverse yet coherent, and that can provide intelligence for decision-making to better channel resources, generating insights to better and faster adapt and provide strategic direction. What is presented in this guide is one of many ways of applying adaptive and flexible management to local challenges which keeps communities at its heart.

The Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG), a strategic partnership with the EU, is a network of 400 municipalities in the Eastern Partnership, with the intention to strengthen the municipalities resilience and future-readiness through explore new trajectories of growth and innovative capability development to face ongoing and protracted crises.

While recognizing there are many forms of portfolio or mission driven approaches for transformations, a key feature across the approaches is embedding stronger social cohesion aspects. A key offer under the M4EG is introducing and enhancing the existing municipal practices of social or community listening and community engagement. This entails gradually moving beyond the more passive forms of participation to active co-creation with residents and partners to foster a culture of trust, innovation and resilience. ALC has codified learnings of the social innovation and processes that created the conditions for systemic social transformation. We have now adapted the approaches for diverse contexts around the world and supported cities and regions in 12 countries, including with UNDP in Europe and Central Asia. We were pleased to design City Learning Circle this year to both share the experience of City Experiment Fund partners Prishti-

# 1 Welcome from ALC & UNDP M4EG

na, Kosovo and Stepanavan, Armenia, and also expand the relationship circle to bring in colleagues from Ivano-Frankivsk and Kamienets-Podilskyi, Ukraine. This Guide brings together the experiences, learnings, challenges, and tools tested by partners of City Learning Circle. It is a living guide and the linked tools will be adapted over time based on regular testing and feedback from those who use it.

## ★ From ALC

The heart of our work at ALC (the Agirre Lehendakaria Center) is deep listening and co-creating with communities to build and orchestrate portfolios for social and economic transformation. Our starting point was lived experience of the metamorphosis of the Basque Country – from violent conflict and environmental degradation 30+ years ago to one of the world’s most equal societies and home to the world’s largest network of worker-owned collaboratives.

ALC has codified learnings of the social innovation and processes that created the conditions for systemic social transformation. We have now adapted the approaches for diverse contexts around the world and supported cities and regions in 12 countries, including with UNDP in Europe and Central Asia. We were pleased to design City Learning Circle this year to both share the experience of City Experiment Fund partners Prishtina, Kosovo and Stepanavan, Armenia, and also expand the relationship circle to bring in colleagues from Ivano-Frankivsk and Kamienets-Podilskyi, Ukraine. This Guide brings together the experiences, learnings, challenges, and tools tested by partners of City Learning Circle. It is a living guide and the linked tools will be adapted over time based on regular testing and feedback from those who use it. We are grateful to the city partners and to the UNDP family for the opportunity to work together in creating this Guide, and we hope that it will be of great use to many more cities and regions who are undertaking urban transformation work – at this most critical time in history.

Societies around the world are caught in vicious cycles of distrust and disjointed thinking and action. In many ways and for many reasons that relate in part to shifts in political landscapes, social media incentives, and other parts of information ecologies, it is difficult for communities and societies to listen well to one another, to dialogue, and to understand perspectives of people who have different backgrounds and views and who are navigating the world with polarized assumptions about what is happening and what is true. Societal mistrust is contributing to societal breakdown that shows up in all sorts of ways—from political polarization, to social isolation, to increases in violence and war.

Building cultures of trust and understanding between people and governments begins at the local level and is most effective when it involves deepening understanding of shifting cultural narratives and alongside commitments to robust systems of community co-creation. Community listening involves building understanding of collective narratives that are operating in a city or region. The listening is designed to glean patterns of lived experience of people and how those are shaped by underlying values and behaviors, as well as emerging needs, challenges, and opportunities. The understanding enables the building of collective intelligence, interconnection of existing actions, and better decision making by governments so that their initiatives can connect within co-created portfolios that address systemic challenges in ways that align with residents' perceptions and lived experiences. Community Listening processes are designed to be ongoing and iterative in ways that create cultures of trust, social innovation and inclusion, and thereby, better outcomes for the future, for all.

## Glossary of terms

### Co-creation:

*New ideas that respond to personas (patterns of narrative are shared. It's the collaborative development of new value (concepts, solutions, products, and services) together with experts and stakeholders. Co-creation is a form of collaborative innovation: ideas are shared and improved together, rather than kept to oneself.*

### Co-design:

*New ideas are developed and specified. It's an approach to design attempting to actively involve all stakeholders in the design process to help ensure the result meets their needs and is usable. Co-design involves shared decision making – everyone taking part has an equal level of power and consists of people with the relevant skills and experience coming together to create a tangible product or service.*

### Collective sensemaking:

*Sensemaking can be described as a collective interpretation of the information generated by the ecosystem mapping and the community listening process. It provides a deeper understanding of local dynamics. This process includes a set of qualitative tools that, complemented by quantitative data, can unravel a community's narratives and reveal in depth its needs, challenges and opportunities. Different agents, public institutions, corporates and civil society organizations take part in the sensemaking process.*

### Community listening:

*(also called 'social listening' and 'deep listening'), Social innovation processes that embed a social listening system has the potential to increase social cohesion and community resilience to strengthen relationships between residents to make everyday life better, and so that people are more equipped to work together better also in times of crisis.*

### Ecosystem mapping:

*The compendium of information on key initiatives and agents operating in a territory. That is, knowledge about the general ecosystem of the region and also of the strengths and weaknesses of the current connection of existing people, organizations, projects, and initiatives.*

### Narratives:

*The perceptions that people and communities have about their own lives and where they are going. They are subjective and have a major influence on the actions they believe can, or cannot, be carried out or even become possible.*

### People-powered portfolio:

*A portfolio of multilevel options that are based on a bottom-up listening process, and which connects with existing social dynamics operating in an area.*

### Perceptions:

*Opinions, ideas and perspectives people have about specific topics.*

### Social innovation process:

*Processes and enabling systems in which residents are involved in sharing, working and learning together to create visions and initiatives that lead to better, more inclusive futures. Social Innovation processes provide collaborative spaces for creation of new tools to understand social dynamics and perceptions in greater depth. Social Innovation has the power to build legitimacy, collective intelligence, and ideally, collective wisdom with transformation capabilities.*



## 2.1 What is the value in co-creating urban transformation portfolios?

Increasingly cities are understood as systems of systems – in fact, they are the most complex systems built by our species. And just as innovation processes cannot be understood as linear or predictable, it is perhaps even more so the case with cities. Cause-and-effect relationships are extremely difficult to establish in cities, because problems and trends cannot be isolated; cities are not places with lab-like experimentation conditions. Rather, they are ever-changing environments of people and life forms whose social, digital, natural and built infrastructures intertwine with transportation, housing, legal, education, health, and economic systems. There are numerous civic interdependencies, emergent and relational systems at work with consequent externalities and spillovers.

For these reasons, urban transformation projects and processes need to be seen through a systemic lens. They can be organized as portfolios of interventions that are co-created by municipalities together with multiple stakeholders, and in ways that can be iterated and benefit from ongoing learning and listening to the changing needs of people, conditions and narratives of city life, crises that occur, as well as possibilities that emerge. We note that a portfolio is not merely a grouping of projects, but rather interconnected interventions and options that municipalities can learn from, and as such is a complementary approach to standard project management. Traditional approaches are not sufficient for problems that are intertwined and complex, and since common definitions and solutions may not be clear up front, there is a need to go on a discovery and learning journey. The portfolio approach is but one way to go beyond business as usual.

Co-creation of urban transformation portfolios is a journey that in-

volves processes to add value to city life at every stage, from community listening and engagement, to analysis and collective interpretation of what is heard as part of an iterative portfolio development and implementation process. The following three phases are foundational to the value-add approach.

### Listening to communities:

Mapping the ecosystem of actors and initiatives in a place and then opening listening and dialogue channels to tune into lived experience and strengthen relationships of trust, understanding, and empathy. Learn more in Section 3.

### Revealing narratives:

Analyzing the listening results, visualizing the narratives, and facilitating groups of people to make sense of the patterns of narratives that are operating in a place and that affect what is challenging and possible in terms of urban transformation, thereby creating shared language and hope. Learn more in Section 4.

### Rehearsing change:

Generating new ideas and co-creating initiatives based on narrative patterns and possibilities, and then co-designing with multiple stake-

holders portfolios of interventions – prototyping and scaling those interventions that are most promising. Learn more in Section 5.

**This set of processes can be called a Social Innovation Approach.**

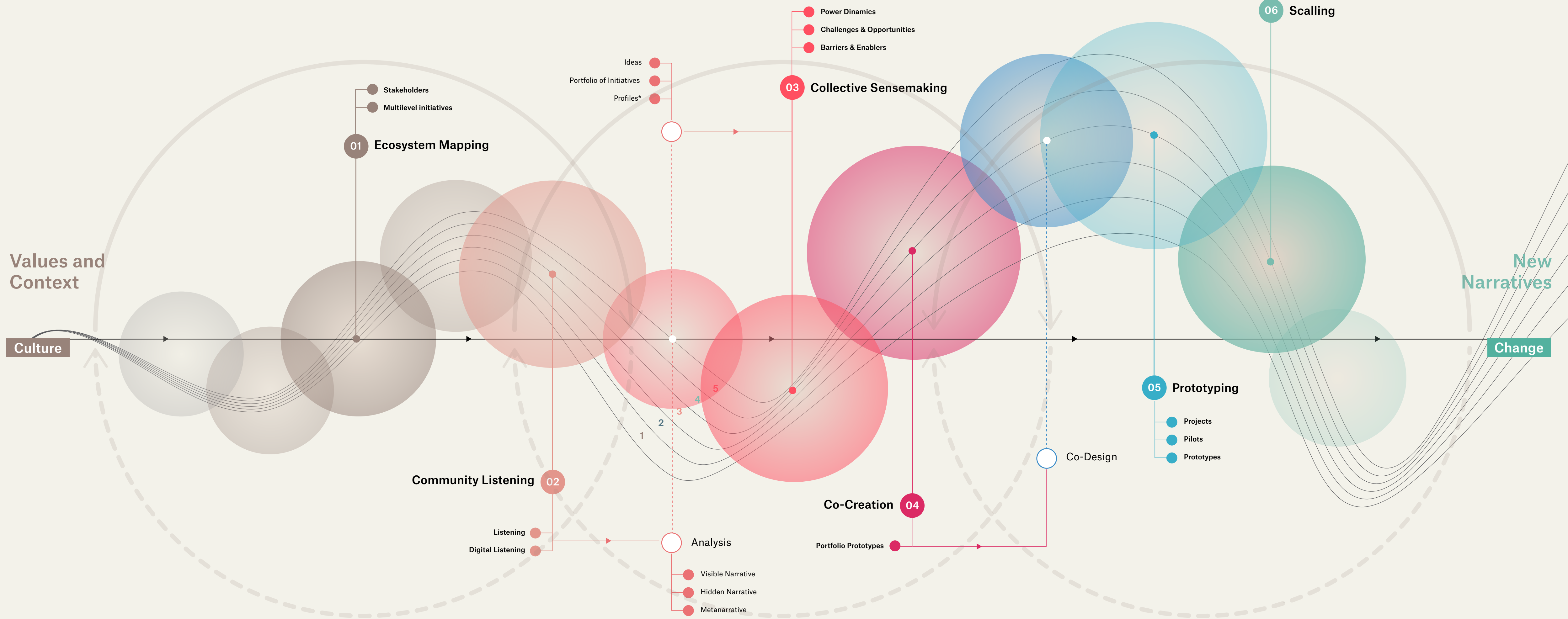


Diagram 1: ALC Theory of Change

## A Theory of Change with Community Listening at the Heart

Community listening is a part of an open and collaborative process that is sustained over time. This process focuses on the cultural dimension in community listening, co-designing, implementing, and evaluating social innovation systems for urban and social transformation. The system of approaches together supports partners in an ecosystem to co-create 'people-powered portfolios'. This work has evolved based on experience and research on systems transformation to address complex challenges that society faces today. Grounded in the [Basque case](#), ALC's founders have direct lived experience in the social and economic transformation of the Basque country over the past several decades.

- ★ The following elements are inherently interconnected and iterative since they are repeated in the process based on feedback loops that integrate what is learned in listening processes, which allows going deeper into the information obtained.
- ★ The basic interconnected elements allow the development of **new capabilities** through which to move **from traditional and linear innovation logic to a complex logic and development of a portfolio of interconnected initiatives**.

Our Social Innovation approach involves carrying out iterative processes of ecosystem mapping, community listening, collective interpretation (also called sensemaking), co-creation and co-design, and building portfolios of experiments and initiatives on multiple levels. The main aspects (also depicted in Diagram 1) include the following:

### Ecosystem Mapping:

Mapping is the compendium of information on key initiatives and agents operating in a territory. That is, knowledge about the general ecosystem of the region and also of the strengths and weaknesses of the current connection of existing people, organizations, projects, and initiatives. The existing local initiatives (projects and pilots) identified during the mapping stage will interact with the experimentation phase to develop prototypes, all based on and interrelated to the narratives identified in the listening process.

### Listening & Collective Interpretation spaces:

A deeper understanding of local dynamics requires a strategy of deep community listening. This process includes a set of qualitative tools that, complemented by quantitative data, can unravel a community's narratives and reveal in depth its needs, challenges and opportunities. The analysis of the narratives and key ideas are validated in deliberative and sensemaking spaces with local stakeholders.

### Co-creation:

As a zone for experimentation, the platform creates space for the collaborative creation and design for specific responses that can address systemic problems and improve or complement existing initiatives and projects. The set of existing initiatives and the new ideas that emerge

contribute to the necessary knowledge to build new or strengthen existing processes of social innovation in the territory.

### Experimentation at 5 levels of impact:

Complex social problems can only be well-addressed if at multidimensional scales and levels of intervention. Therefore, ALC's systems approach involves developing portfolios with projects and interventions that are conceptualized and integrated across five levels of intervention and impact: (i) community innovation, (ii) support for start-ups (small and medium scale), (iii) large-scale public-private/civic partnerships, (iv) redesign of public services and (v) new policies and regulations. As with co-creation and prototyping practices, this portfolio approach also requires new capabilities to design, manage, and evaluate the interconnected and integrated sets of projects with a holistic view. A portfolio ideally consists of multiple kinds of initiatives: **1) Projects**—initiatives that have already been tested and are high innovation and/or low risk; **2) Pilots**—ideas that we adapt from experience in other cities, so some clear innovation and fairly low risk; and **3) Prototypes**—new ideas that we incorporate in the portfolio and where the main purpose is learning and not necessarily impact, because uncertainty and risk are higher.

## 2.2 City Learning Circle: a practical example

**City Learning Circle is a multi-city learning community designed as a prototype to test and co-create listening tools.**

It is a prototype learning series co-designed and organized jointly by Agirre Lehendakaria Center (ALC) and UNDP. It has been created as part of Mayors for Economic Growth Facility—a joint initiative of the EU & UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Europe and Central Asia. City Learning Circle taps into the work of selected cities participating in the City Experiment Fund — an initiative under the Slovak Transformation Fund, implemented in partnership with the Slovak Ministry of Finance. The learning circle was created to engage UNDP Country Offices and municipalities and their partners in the region in testing tools for community listening and engagement as part of a co-created urban transformation portfolio.

We asked two core questions with this prototype City Learning Circle:

- ★ How can the community listening tools co-created during the City Learning Circle be improved and adapted to assist cities in Eastern Europe and regions beyond that want to learn these practices as part of a social innovation system that helps build a culture of trust and social innovation?
- ★ How can the structure and method of a multi-city, transnational City Learning Circle provide an effective way to engender peer-to-peer learning and stronger relationships between cities?

We addressed the first question directly through every stage of City Learning Circle, which ran from September through December 2022. We held three sessions with all four cities, and in between sessions, we held follow-up meetings with cities individually to provide support and guidance in tool testing and processes and to learn how the tools could be improved. The iterated tools are those presented throughout this Guide.

Regarding the second question, cities reported that they benefited through the City Learning Circle process in technical, relational, and visceral ways. First, the cities with more direct experience in multi-stakeholder engagement in community listening processes provided learnings to help other cities leapfrog some of the challenges encountered early on. Secondly, cities learned from one another’s municipal contexts to deepen analysis about how to most effectively engage in these community listening and social innovation approaches. Thirdly, cities drew on support and energy from one another, and felt less alone in their challenges. Ukrainian cities in particular appreciated the solidarity **from the City Learning Circle participants** ([see this blog by ALC and UNDP for more information about the experience of Ukrainian cities in City Learning Circle](#)).

Further details about the curriculum and aims are set out in the [City Learning Circle Welcome Packet](#), which also includes contributions from the four municipalities about their cities and participant information.



## What is the City Learning Circle?

The City Learning Circle is a small, interactive group of practitioners (ideally 8-18 people) who connect virtually monthly to share experiences, tools, ideas and challenges in order to learn ways they can grow, expand and improve their work. Joining this City Learning Circle can help participants deepen knowledge and professional connections around a focused aspect of a municipality's work, in this case Community Listening & Engagement strategy that involves working toward creating prototypes and initiatives for urban transformation. Through actively contributing to the meeting discussions, participants engage with a community of like-minded peers to help expand and develop one another's thinking and practice as it relates to understanding the importance and methods of Community Listening, and to gain hands-on experience testing tools and methods with direct, practical application in their cities.

The following four cities participated in the first City Learning Circle prototype experience, September to December 2022.

*(Note: the descriptions below were provided by city participants for the purpose of the [Welcome Packet](#), and are not necessarily official descriptions provided by municipal governments.)*



### Prishtina (Kosovo)

Prishtina, the capital of Kosovo, is a city in transition where glimpses of both its past and modernity can be seen, often merging in its unique silhouette. Despite being home to many internationally renowned artists, Prishtina lacks opera houses and modern art galleries. While urban planning policies have emphasized pedestrian and e-commuting, the city falls short in providing sufficient bicycle lanes. Nevertheless, Prishtina has made its mark on the world stage for various accomplishments and is recognized for its welcoming and socially open atmosphere, as well as its vibrant and dynamic lifestyle.

**Participants:** Arlinda Sadiku, Technical Lead- Urban Shifts/ UNDP Kosovo; Sami Podvorica, Architect, Urban Development Department, Municipality of Pristina; Liridon Kabashi, Architect; Gresa Neziri, Co-founder and Executive director of SpaceSyntaKs, an institute for urban research.

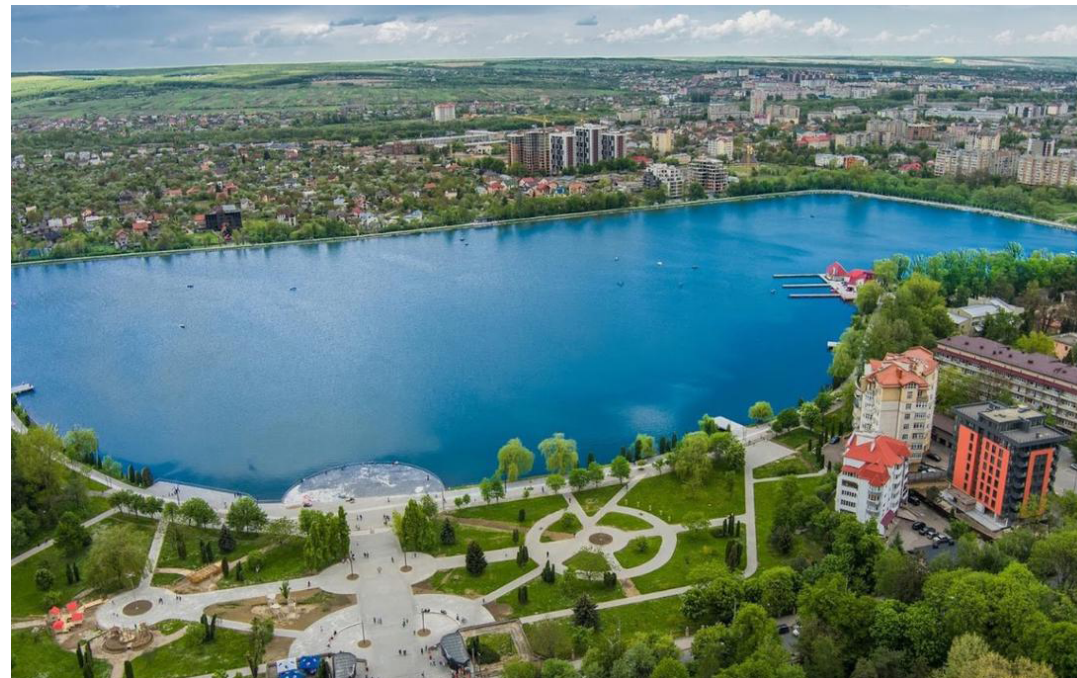


### Stepanavan (Armenia)

Nestled in the lush green highlands of Lorva and adjacent to the significant Gorge of Dzoraget, lies the charming town of Stepanavan. Covering a total area of 5,333 hectares, Stepanavan is situated 157 km from the capital, Yerevan, and 36 km from the regional center, Vanadzor. The town enjoys a moderately humid climate, with mild to moderately cold winters and moderately hot and relatively humid summers. Stepanavan is renowned for its breathtaking natural scenery, pristine air quality, and rich historical and cultural heritage. Of the 244 small enterprises in the community, many offer various services to the population, including micro-enterprises. The town has a hospital and a polyclinic. As part of the community's five-year development plan, Stepanavan aims to become a regional tourism hub, leveraging its favorable geographic location, ideal climate, and abundance of historical and cultural sites, as well as opportunities for both extreme and passive recreation.

## What is the City Learning Circle?

**Participants:** Zhirayr Edilyan, UNDP M4EG National Project Coordinator in Armenia; Lusine Hovhannisyanyan, advisor to Stepanavan community leader; Marusya Balayan, SHOGH day center of Stepanavan, AMAA Armenia; Maria Hovoumyan, Founding Partner of IMPACT Solutions Consulting Company.



### Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukraine)

Ivano-Frankivsk is a city thriving in its artistic scene and dynamic economy. Located in Western Ukraine, the city's strategic position not only brings it closer to EU Member States but also offers favorable conditions for multilateral development. The city is home to an enterprising and successful population that embraces creativity and innovation, making it receptive to modern and innovative models. Ivano-Frankivsk has forged partnerships with 25 cities abroad, including in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, Georgia, Portugal, the US, and China. For its efforts in promoting European values and integration, Ivano-Frankivsk has received four awards from the Council of Europe.

**Participants:** Mustafa Sait-Ametov, Regional Development Programme Manager, IDRDP, UNDP Ukraine; Khrystyna Melnyk, head of project management office in Ivano-Frankivsk City Council; Oleh Sachkov, Head of division, Attraction & support of investment projects, Dept of Investment Policy, Projects, International Relations, Tourism & City Promotion, Ivano-Frankivsk City Council; Uliana Sydor, project manager at NGO "Mamy Prykarpattia", financial manager and analyst at NGO "Carpathian Analytical Institute (FrankoLytics)", head of marketing and strategic development division of the UNE Central City Clinical Hospital of the Ivano-Frankivsk City Council.



### Kamianets-Podilskyi (Ukraine)

Kamianets-Podilskyi is an ancient city that has managed to preserve its medieval spirit to this day. The city's stable traditions of local governance date back to 1347 when Kamianets received the letter of merit in Magdeburg Rights. However, despite its rich history, Kamianets-Podilskyi is also a modern European city with a favorable economic climate that attracts investments. Small and midsize businesses are flourishing here, and a number of big companies operate successfully.

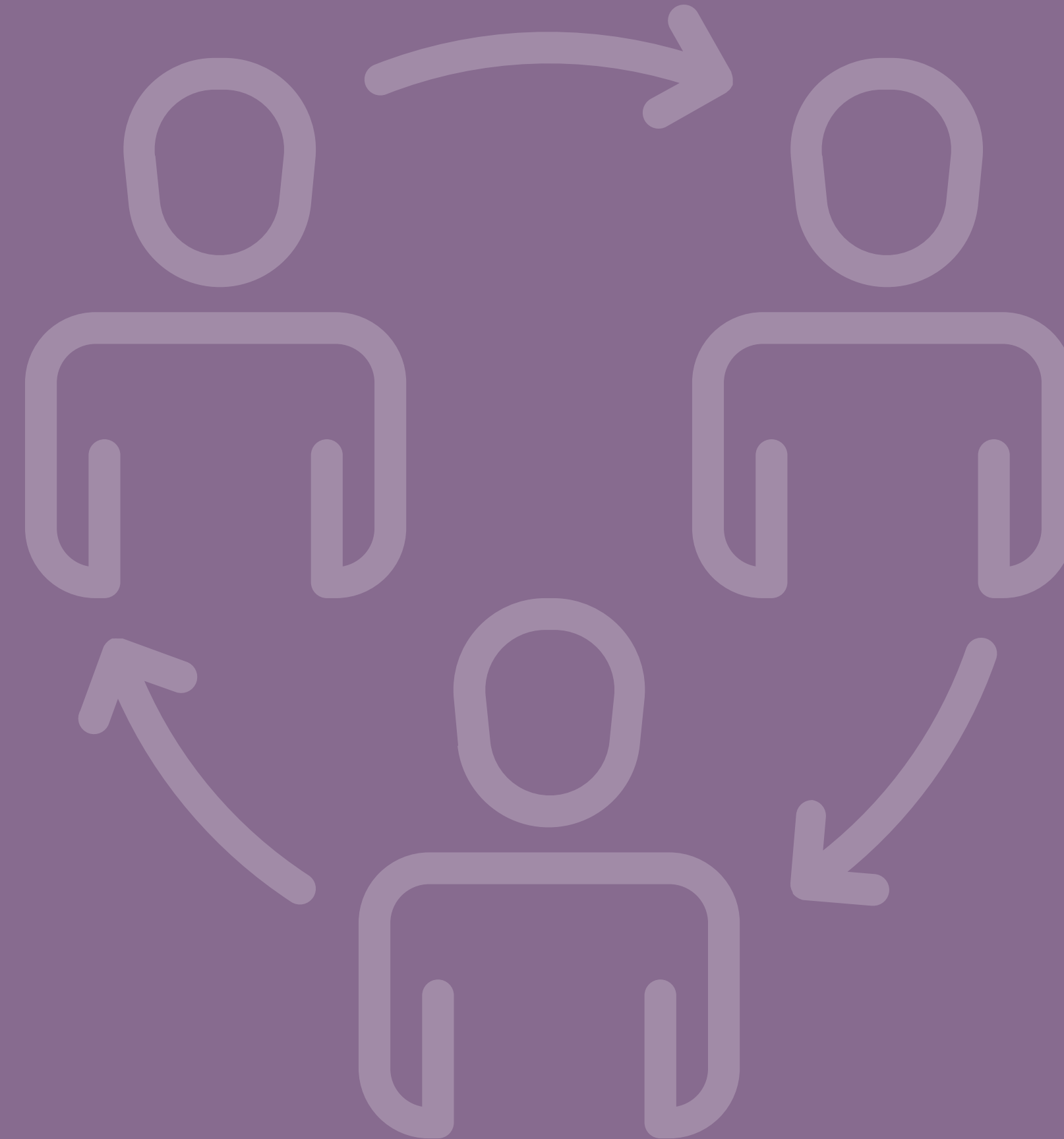
Kamianets-Podilskyi is a historical, cultural, architectural, and touristic treasure that offers a unique blend of architectural, and touristic treasure that offers a unique blend of urban landscapes with twelve surrounding villages that have enormous food-growing potential, creating prospects for the development of agriculture as another sector of the economy.

**Participants:** Tamara Kharchenko, Community Development Associate, Regional Development Program, IDRDP, UNDP, Ukraine; Iryna Shelepnytska, Head of department of information activities, relations with authorities, institutions of civil society, Kamianets-Podilskyi City Council, Deputy of the city council; Elizabet Zorina, Chief expert in the affairs of children, orphans, children deprived of parental rights.

### 3 Listening to communities

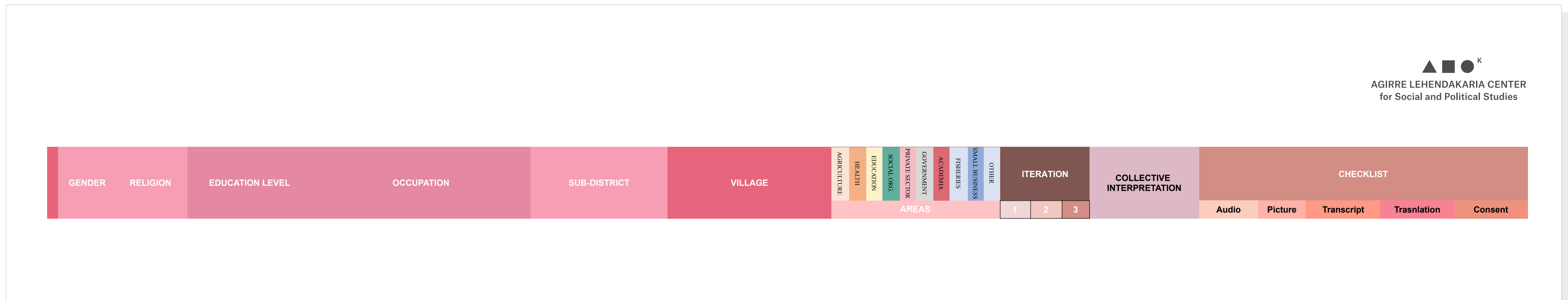
Cities and communities around the world are increasingly moving away from old models of problem-solving and searching for new tools and approaches that are systemic and avoid the pitfalls of single-point solutions. Key in this endeavor is the understanding of the deeper social, economic, and cultural dynamics behind local development challenges. Community Listening facilitates this understanding by building collective knowledge, which enables local governments and civil society partners to tap into the potential for change that exists in a social system, find pertinent leverage points to address problems and facilitate the design of portfolios of interventions that are well-aligned with peoples' perceptions, experiences, and aspirations.

For readers who are already familiar with Community Listening, this Guide can serve as a reference or refresher.



### 3.1 To start off: Matrix systematization tool

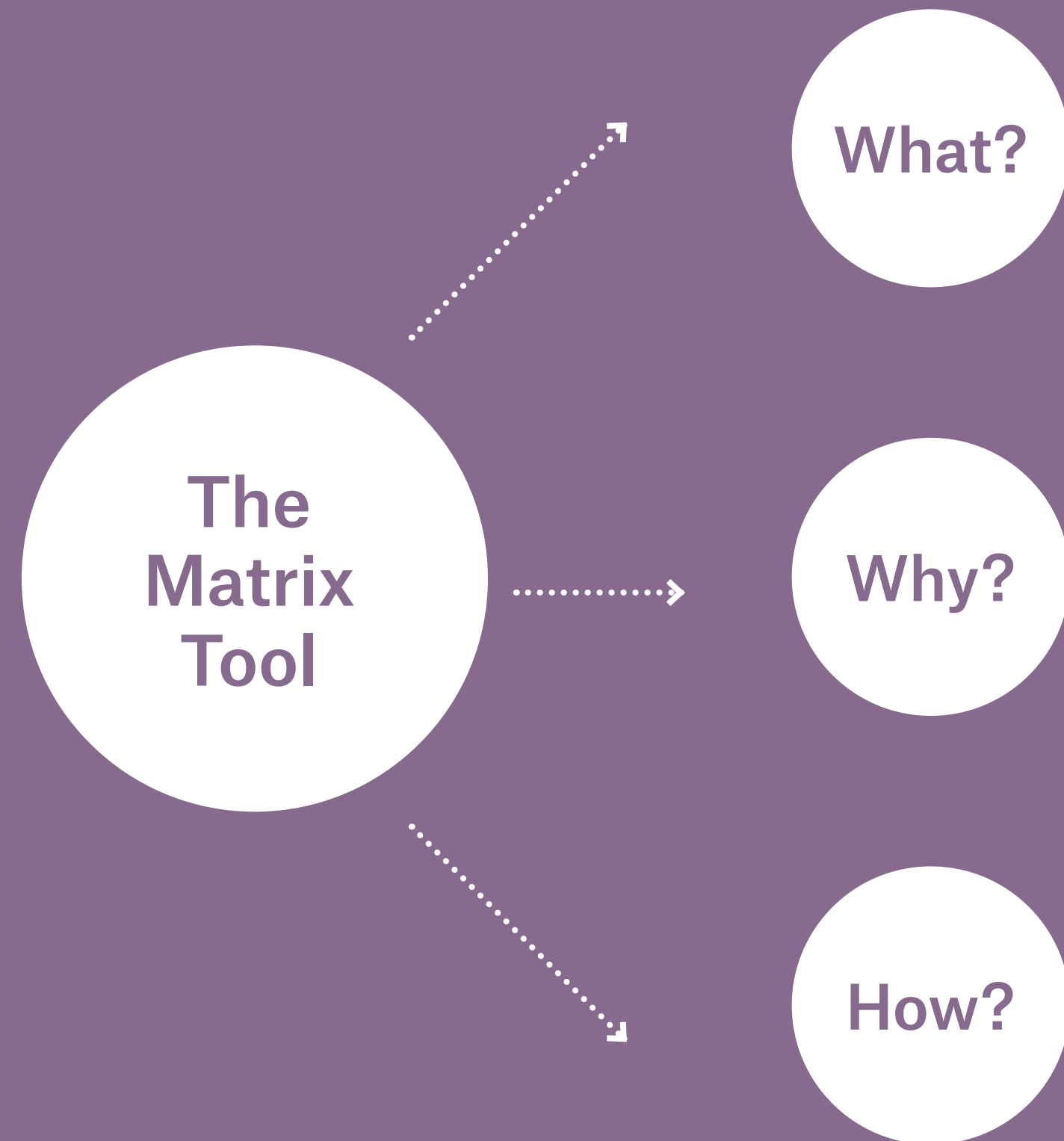
The Matrix tool, developed by ALC, works as a data collection device and can be thought of as a skeleton where each element and articulation is essential to provide understanding and functionality. It helps keep track of information and systematize data collected through all tools shared in the present guide. Throughout the document, and for each step, you will find additional guidelines to help you get started using the Matrix as a recommended tool for data collection and management.



Overview of the Matrix, "Engaged people" tab



## ★ The Matrix Tool



### WHAT is it?

The matrix is an Excel spreadsheet with several tabs (1) Engaged people, (1.1) Stakeholders, (2) Primary sources, (2.2) Secondary Sources, (3) Narrative analysis, (3.1) Personas, (4) Existing actions, (5) Potential Co-creation Areas, (6) Co-creation agents, (7) Portfolio that serves as an evolving tool to capture information and narratives from the listening process, as well as every step of the process.

### WHY: The value of the Matrix Tool

This tool represents the changes in the information obtained over time, and allows the status of each process to be observed in real time, fed with the latest updates and contrasted with other team members in deliberation spaces. This tool visually depicts all useful information regarding the process: contact management, ecosystem mapping of existing initiatives, stakeholders, as well as the needs and opportunities identified in the community listening, sensemaking and co-creation phases, and how existing prototypes correspond to those needs. This also ensures the rigor and robustness of the listening data and analysis.

### HOW: Matrix step by step

The matrix functions as a knowledge management and analytical tool throughout the process of mapping, community listening and sensemaking. For each chapter of this toolkit, the role of the matrix will be illustrated.

In this guide we will focus on the first 6 tabs of the tool (1) Engaged people, (1.1) Stakeholders, (2) Primary sources, (2.2) Secondary Sources, (3) Narrative analysis, (3.1) Personas, (4) Existing actions and will provide specific instructions for each step. We recommend working online, so it's always up to date and no information is lost.

### [Matrix tool spreadsheet \(template\)](#)

## 3.2 Understanding local dynamics through Ecosystem Mapping

### ★ WHAT is Ecosystem Mapping?

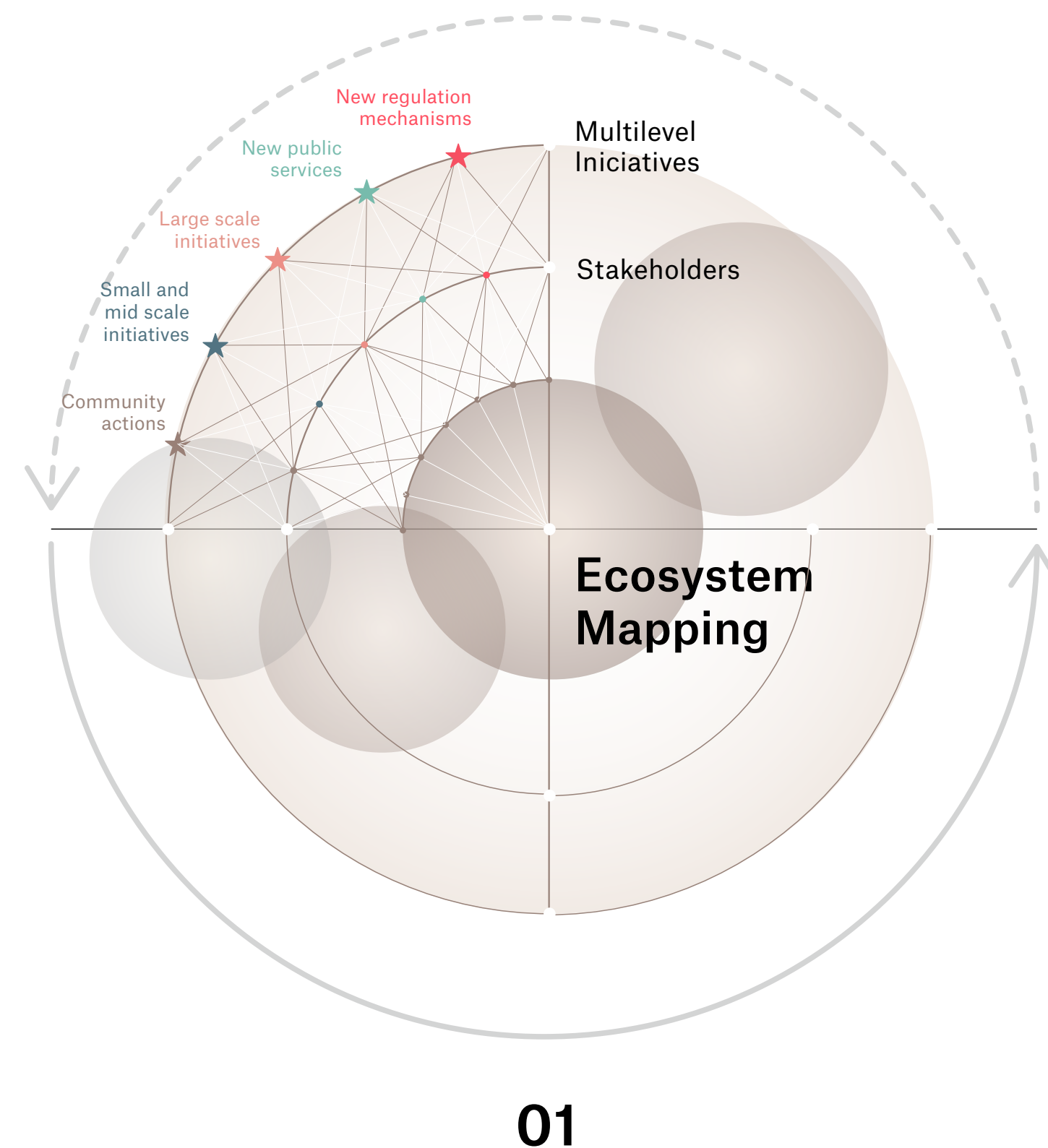


Diagram 2: Ecosystems Mapping

Ecosystem mapping is the process in which the core team of a municipality and their partners identify and graphically represent the key actors and existing initiatives in their region. The ecosystem map is built by first displaying all the initiatives, and then showing their connections based on five levels of impact:

(i) **Community innovation & action.** Grassroots initiatives (projects, pilots and prototypes) linked to improving social cohesion and local agency. These initiatives don't necessarily have a sustainable business model but they are essential to empower local communities and surface narratives of change

(ii) **Small and medium scale actions.** Interventions can take the form of start-ups, ecosystems, or even larger enterprises with a sustainable business model.

(iii) **Large-scale actions.** These are initiatives that bring together public authorities and businesses to set up large scale programs, often in the form of public-private or public-civic partnerships. Their business model usually combines public investment and commercial activity.

(iv) **Public service redesign.** A comprehensive and balanced portfolio on interconnected initiatives normally include the redesigning of existing government-led services in education, health, transport and citizen participation.

(v) **New regulation & policies.** All of the above mentioned categories might fail if the existing regulation has no capacity to be adapted to

the emerging social, business and technology changes. If a law is a barrier/enabler for some of the identified opportunities we would add it to the experimentation target list.

★ These are the kinds of questions that ecosystem mapping processes address:

*How can we better understand and interconnect the key actors and initiatives of the city? Who are key actors to engage (public administration at various levels, local businesses, teachers, media, first sector producers, youth, women, foundations, academic institutions...)? What are the ongoing projects at different levels? Most importantly, how do they all interact with each other, and what can we learn from these leverage points and weaker connections?*



### 3.2 Understanding local dynamics through Ecosystem Mapping

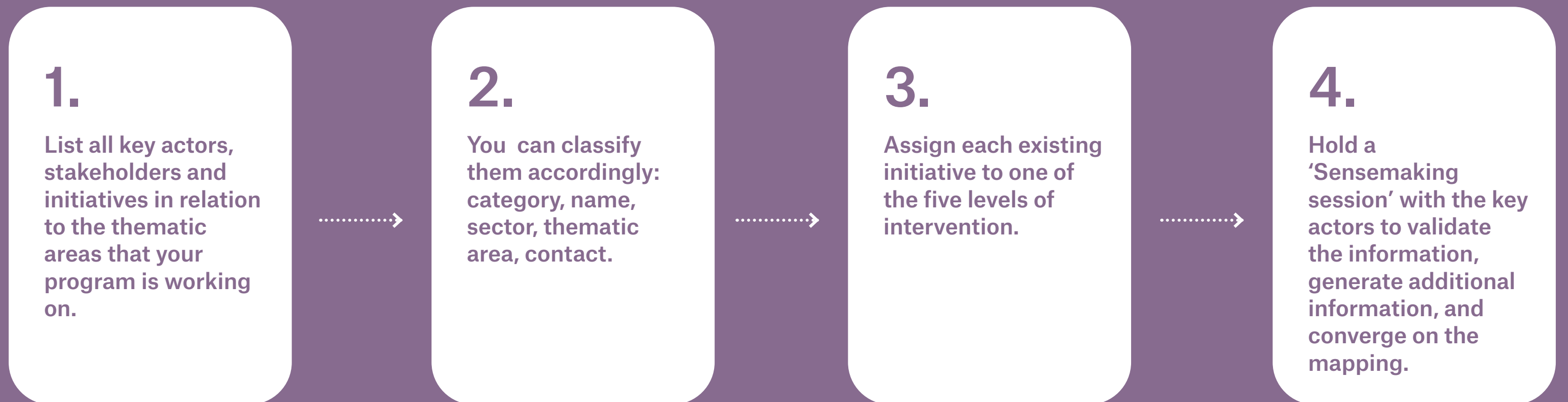
#### ★ WHY: The value of Ecosystem Mapping

Ecosystem mapping is important because through cataloging and visualizing initiatives, agents and institutions, it provides an understanding of a system and its interconnections and interdependencies. The map clarifies how the different existing actions respond (or not) to the others, and it becomes crucial for portfolio development. Framing the mapping into a structured portfolio helps to establish a common system that can be shared by multiple stakeholders.

The map clarifies how the different existing actions respond (or not) to others, and this provides a foundational piece for the next phases of the social innovation process: listening (understanding people’s narratives), sensemaking (collectively interpreting the analysis and ethnographic profiles (Personas) to be sure they respond to the mapped initiatives), and co-creation (building a People Powered Portfolio).

#### ★ HOW: Mapping step by step

To assist you in mapping your city ecosystem, we recommend that you follow the steps below and use the Matrix tool, which we explained earlier in this guide. As a reminder, the matrix tool is a suggested data collection device for Ecosystem Mapping and also for the rest of the steps as a part of the Social Innovation Process.



### 3.2 Understanding local dynamics through Ecosystem Mapping



1. List all key actors, stakeholders and initiatives in relation to the thematic areas that your programme is working on. The composition of the stakeholders should contain a diverse range of strategic actors considering different sectors.

Diagram 3: Ecosystem - Stakeholder Mapping Template at 5 levels of intervention

**TOOLBOX**  
[Link to tool with explanation](#)

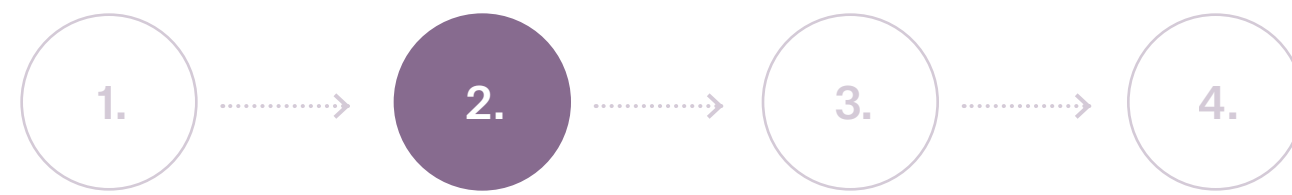
## ECOSYSTEM MAPPING



**MUNICIPALITY INITIATIVES**   **EXTERNAL INITIATIVES**   **INSTITUTIONS**   **AGENTS**

- Community actions
- Small-medium scale actions
- Large scale actions
- New services
- New regulation

### 3.2 Understanding local dynamics through Ecosystem Mapping








2. By utilizing the tools and exercises presented here (links above), you may use the templates provided for Stakeholder mapping and Existing initiatives mapping and subsequently transfer the gathered information into the Matrix tool. This tool will enable you to classify the identified stakeholders based on various factors including their respective category, name, sector, thematic area, and contact information, with the ultimate goal of effectively systematizing all information.

Table 2: Portfolio of Possible Initiatives - Existing initiatives mapping template

[Link to template](#)

## PORTFOLIO OF POSSIBLE INITIATIVES

|   |  |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|--|--|
|  <p><b>Communitary actions</b></p> |  <p><b>Small-medium scale actions</b></p> |  <p><b>Large scale actions</b></p> |  <p><b>New services</b></p> |  <p><b>New regulation</b></p> |
|---|--|---|--|--|

**1. Community relations.** These are grassroots initiatives (projects, pilots and prototypes) linked to improving social cohesion and local agency. These initiatives don't necessarily have a sustainable business model but they are essential to empower local communities and surface narratives of change. Some examples of these types of interventions are: food festivals, fairs, cooking events, cultural exhibitions and community driven prizes, YouTube channels, etc.

**2. Small to mid-scale initiatives.** These interventions take the form of an Start-up or even a larger business with a sustainable business model. They generate employment in food production (farmers), commercialisation (markets) and delivery (transportation) businesses, restaurants, water related activities, packaging and digital traceability for agriculture, product exporting business.

**3. Large scale initiatives and public-private collaborations.** These are initiatives that bring together public authorities and businesses to set up large scale programs. Their business model usually combines public investment and commercial activity. Some examples of these collaborations can power new digital observatories for the area, training programs or distribution centers (markets).

**4. New public services.** A comprehensive and balanced portfolio on interconnected initiatives normally include the redesigning of existing government-led services in education, health, transport and citizen participation. They are normally connected to food systems related services, water management or digitalisation of existing procedures.

**5. New regulation.** All of the above mentioned categories might fail if the existing regulation has no capacity to be adapted to the emerging social, business and technology changes. If a law is a barrier/enabler for some of the identified opportunities we would add it to the experimentation target list. Interesting examples look at the Fishery regulations, food quality and hygiene in restaurants/stalls, denominations of origin, seals of artisanry, etc.

### 3.2 Understanding local dynamics through Ecosystem Mapping



3. You may assign each identified existing initiative to one of the five levels of intervention, the type of initiative each of them is, and other pertinent information.

*You can use the Matrix Tool and the tab 4. Existing Initiatives*

| STAKEHOLDER   | CATEGORY |          |          |               | LINK   | INFORMATION   | TOPIC / THEMATIC AREA |             |             |       |                   |       |        |                |          |         |         |               |          |  |  |
|---|----------|----------|----------|---------------|--|---|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------|-------------------|-------|--------|----------------|----------|---------|---------|---------------|----------|--|--|
|   | LOCAL    | REGIONAL | NATIONAL | INTERNATIONAL |  |   | Policy                | Agriculture | Food system | Water | Energy management | Waste | Health | Digitalization | Mobility | Tourism | Culture | Air pollution | Industry |  |  |
| Department of Alternative Energy Development and Efficiency, Ministry of Energy   |          |          | NATIONAL |               | <a href="http://weben.dede.go.th/webmax/">http://weben.dede.go.th/webmax/</a><br><a href="https://www.dlt.go.th/en/">https://www.dlt.go.th/en/</a> | Regulator, enforcing relevant laws in compliance with National Environmental Board and standards set by PCD To create sustainability of alternative energy and energy efficiency of the country, in order to boost efficiency and environmentally friendly of energy production and consumption.<br>Their mission: To create sustainability of alternative energy and energy efficiency of the country, in order to boost efficiency and environmentally friendly of energy production and consumption. |                       |             |             |       |                   |       |        |                |          |         |         |               |          |  |  |
| Department of Land Transport, Ministry of Transport                               |          |          | NATIONAL |               | <a href="https://www.diw.go.th/hawk/en/content.php?mode=history">https://www.diw.go.th/hawk/en/content.php?mode=history</a>                        | Regulator. Enforce relevant law to control pollution on point source; gives/withdraw permits for industrial operations  |                       |             |             |       |                   |       |        |                |          |         |         |               |          |  |  |
| Dept of Industrial Work, Ministry of Industry                                     |          |          | NATIONAL |               | <a href="https://www.pcd.go.th/">https://www.pcd.go.th/</a>  | Regulator. Enforce relevant law to control forest fires, open burning (agricultural waste). Also work with villagers to prevent and control fires in their authorised areas.  |                       |             |             |       |                   |       |        |                |          |         |         |               |          |  |  |
| Royal Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives  |          |          | NATIONAL |               |  | Regulator. Enforce relevant law to control forest fires, open burning (agricultural waste). Also work with villagers to prevent and control fires in their authorised areas.  |                       |             |             |       |                   |       |        |                |          |         |         |               |          |  |  |
| Pollution Control Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (PCD) |          |          | NATIONAL |               |  | Policy maker & Regulator, making recommendations, setting standards, monitor compliance & report to respective agencies for law enforcement, enforce laws where there is a gap in authorities<br>Study of Sources and Mitigation Approaches to PM2.5 Issue in Bangkok and its Vicinity, including recommendations for further measures on PM2.5 (have they also conducted similar studies/research in other provinces such as Chiang Rai?)  |                       |             |             |       |                   |       |        |                |          |         |         |               |          |  |  |

### 3.2 Understanding local dynamics through Ecosystem Mapping



4. Once all relevant information has been gathered and compiled, including initiatives and stakeholders named in the listening process, you may hold a ‘Sensemaking session’ with select key actors. This session, which can accommodate up to 12 individuals (some of whom may have already been identified during the Stakeholder mapping exercise) will serve to validate the data, generate additional information, and ultimately converge on the ecosystem mapping.

This session can be described as a deliberative session of the information generated by the mapping process. It is similar to the sensemaking spaces where participants are guided through a process together to interpret information that has been collected through community listening and engagement methods. In light of the new information about what is heard and learned, participants then review together the ongoing initiatives and what people and organizations are leading them, in order to identify where the gaps and leverage points are in the existing system. These sessions should be iterative and adaptive. It consists of multiple reflection sessions with key stakeholders to generate insights and invite collective learning. It is important in order to surface gaps and potential leverage points in the current system.

### What are the goals of the confluence session for Ecosystem Mapping?

The ultimate goal is to frame the mapping into a structured portfolio that establishes a common system for innovation activities in multiple sectors. Additionally, the process also enables you to:

- **Gather feedback and make the stakeholders and initiatives mapping and interconnections between them richer.**

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- **Fill in previously missing information.**

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- **Engage with potential collaborators to gather more information, including to conduct quick conversations, as part of the listening process.**

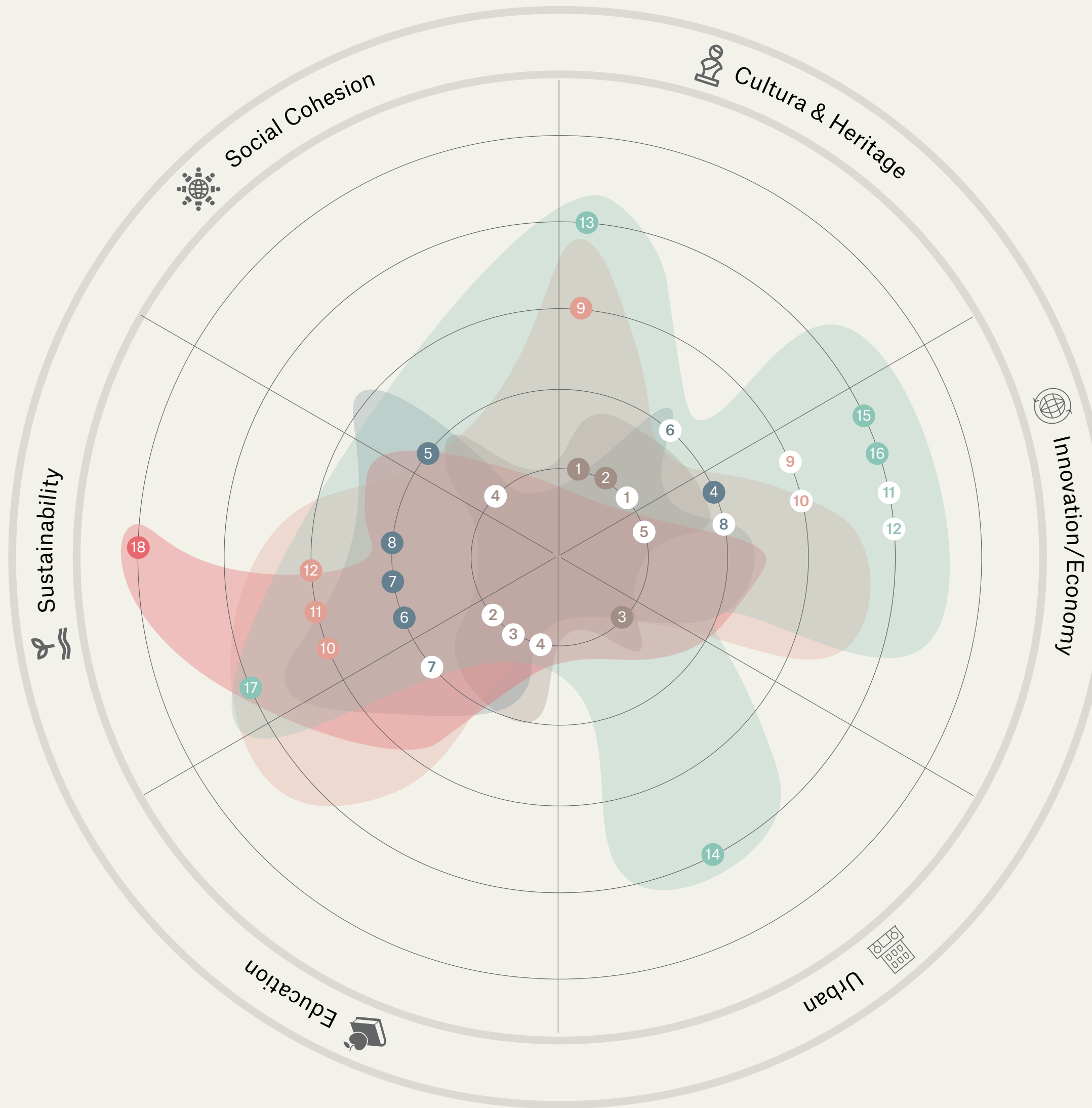
### 3.2 Understanding local dynamics through Ecosystem Mapping

## Ecosystem Mapping Output

The output is a visualization of the current system which represents the various initiatives and their interconnections in one single frame. A first ecosystem map can come out of an initial mapping process of initiatives which takes place in the region. It is a first portrait of how the entire system is connected.

Diagram 4: Prishtina Ecosystem Mapping

Example: Prishtina, Kosovo Ecosystem Mapping of initiatives under UNDP's programme City Experiment Fund. This specific map graphic was designed with AI by a professional designer.



#### CEF 3 (PRISHTINA)

##### Community Initiatives

- 1 Citizen survey (Manifesta).
- 2 Gërr-Gërr Co-creation platform.
- 3 Termokiss Community.

##### Small and mid Scale

- 4 Impact Space Prishtina
- 5 EU-CoE ROMACTED Programme
- 6 Green Debate Tournament
- 7 Kosovo Sustainable Development Week
- 8 The Green School

##### Large Scale

- 9 Sunny Hill Foundation / Festival
- 10 Balkan Green Academy
- 11 Rural Economic Sustainability Initiative (RESI Project)
- 12 Let's talk about Food Waste

##### Services

- 13 Architecture Heritage Center of Prishtina
- 14 Kosovo Spatial Plan
- 15 Kosovo Digital Economy (KODE)
- 16 UBT Accelerator
- 17 USAID / Kosovo Social Contract

##### Regulations

- 18 Green City Action Plan

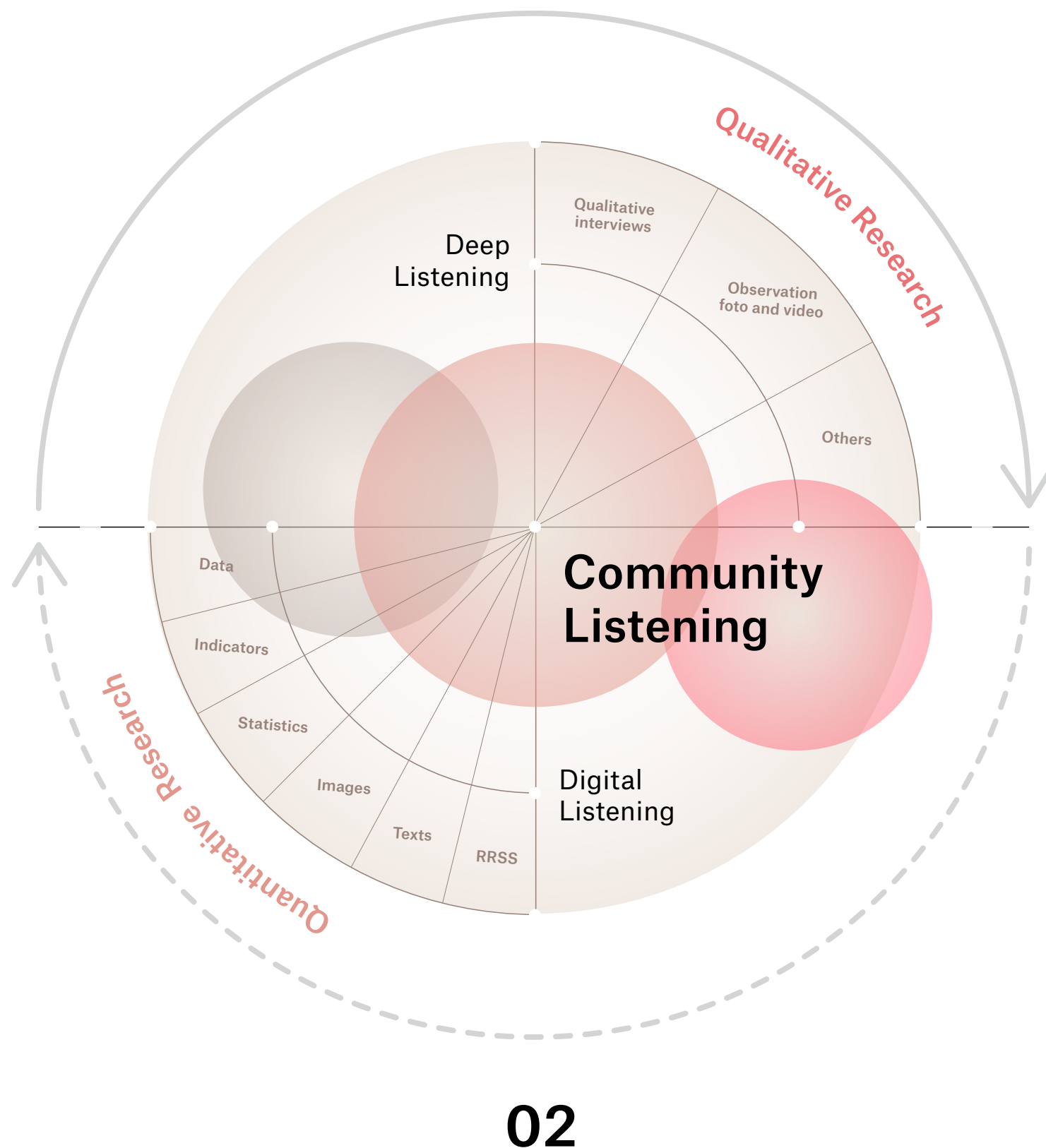
#### 5 Interconnected Levels

- Community Initiatives
- Small and mid Scale Initiatives
- Large Scale Initiatives
- Services
- Regulations



## 3.3 Understanding local narratives through Community Listening

### ★ WHAT is Community Listening?



Community Listening engages a range of qualitative tools that, when complemented with quantitative data, can reveal community narratives and in-depth needs, challenges and opportunities. The listening process also sparks new ideas for addressing the needs and opportunities that arise. It is precisely these discoveries that connect the listening process to co-creation and prototyping. **Through the Community Listening process we identify a diverse range of narratives**, which are patterns of subjective perceptions and experiences that people have about their own lives and communities. These narratives decisively influence what is believed to be possible and what can or cannot be achieved, and they can even determine the success or failure of the socio-economic initiatives put in place for the transformation of the territory.

#### Important definitions:

★ **Narratives** are **perceptions** locals and communities have about their own lives, challenges and opportunities.

★ **Perceptions** are **opinions, ideas and perspectives** people have about specific topics.

★ **Patterns** are **repeated perceptions** and thoughts; in this case, operating in a city. Patterns are helpful when analysing narratives for social change.

★ **Coding** the analytical process in which quantitative and qualitative data gathered is categorized. The aim is to “translate” the data into a simpler and more visual way. In this case, we use the matrix presented above.

★ **Personas** are the visualization of patterns of narratives. These profiles represent the diversity of age, social origin and occupations with respect to a set of people and thus aim to show the diversity of the community.

### 3.3 Understanding local narratives through Community Listening

#### ★ WHY: The value of Community Listening

A deeper understanding of local dynamics requires a strategy of deep community listening. The community listening process is iterative and opens space for the Municipality and city teams to engage in a deep process of community listening and ecosystem mapping, taking into account the context in which the programme is taking place. Community listening adds value to culture, territory development, innovation, as well as strategic decision-making at different levels, both by building understanding across differences and by inviting individual and collective creativity to manifest and build social capital, which leads to greater community resilience, social cohesion, and creates conditions for positive economic change.

Community listening provides essential foundations for Municipalities to build and iterate better portfolios and programmes with citizens. Listening helps to:

- **Strengthen trust and relationships between residents, public bodies and other stakeholders. If carried out on an ongoing basis, listening has the power to build friendships, strengthen social capital and social cohesion, thereby building community resilience.**
- **Build adaptive capabilities in contexts of rapid change, crises, and emergent opportunities, and based on community needs and aspirations.**
- **Create a safe space for experimentation, imagination, and better collective action.**
- **Add value to other strategic processes or projects in ways that become scalable to different levels of interventions and contexts.**



### 3.3 Understanding local narratives through Community Listening

#### ★ HOW: Listening step by step

To assist you in the community listening process of your city, we suggest that you follow the steps below and utilize the tools presented here. It is important to note that the matrix tool is recommended as a data collection device for all steps in the process, and particularly for capturing the individuals information and their corresponding key quotes for further analysis.

#### It will help you answer the following questions:

How can we understand in depth the social and economic dynamics and perceptions operating in the city, including the potential of this process? How do we create and systematize spaces for collective deliberation throughout its design? What kind of information do we use to make sense of our analysis?

#### ★ Essential elements of Community Listening

For a community listening process to be effective, four elements are critical:



### 3.3 Understanding local narratives through Community Listening



#### Step 1. Choosing listening channels

Listening channels are information gathering tools consisting of a range of methods, both digital and analogue. They include various **kinds of interviews, field observations, focus groups, theater, participatory video and photography, community walks, artistic engagement processes, citizen-led festivals**, among others. These qualitative and interpretive methods are helpfully complemented by quantitative data, such as from government reports, scientific articles, and statistical agencies.

**• Adapting the channels:**

To facilitate and integrate projects already underway and avoid possible duplications, **it is important to adapt to the existing listening channels in the territory we are working.** For example: if a municipality already has a community listening process such as participatory assemblies, suggestion boxes and mobile phone apps, or any listening mechanisms implemented by governments, you should include them in your data collection perspective.







**• Choose at least two listening channels:**

Include at least two types of ethnographic listening channels mentioned above. The table below helps to identify the right tool for the job:

### Community listening channels

| Community   | Digital   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Interviews</li> <li>★ Field observation: language analysis, social norms, spaces, hierarchies...                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Points of contact: malls, nurses, pharmacies, doctors, clinics, local businesses</li> </ul> </li> <li>★ Participatory video and photography, participatory theatre, participatory cooking...</li> <li>★ Artistic engagement processes: photo, videogames, music...</li> <li>★ Sensemaking sessions</li> <li>★ Citizen-created data, enabling the launch of digital platforms to tell stories, respond to surveys, map key places</li> <li>★ Citizen-led festivals</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Digital observation</li> <li>★ Big data narrative analysis (PLN of all collected texts, social media and news tracking)</li> <li>★ Narrative collection tools (e.g. Sensemaking)</li> <li>★ Explore other ways to obtain information about the situation: housing and rental websites, employment websites, supermarket prices, Google trends...</li> <li>★ Big data analytics (just focusing on narratives for now)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Any other you can think of?</i></p> |

▲ ■ ● <sup>K</sup>

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <br>Observation & notes | <br>Reports & documents    |
| <br>Videos            | <br>Photography          |
| <br>Netnography       | <br>Interviews and chats |

[Link to table](#)

### 3.3 Understanding local narratives through Community Listening

#### ★ Selecting Listening Channels

City Learning Circle was carried out with four cities from October through December 2022. City teams were invited to select 'listening channels' appropriate for the topic or challenge they selected as their area of focus during the workshops. Following are examples from two of the cities.

#### 1. The city of Ivano-Frankivsk's, with the topic "Sustainable mobility through improving the transport infrastructure and reducing the use of private transport"

a. Listening channels selected: Social media (thematic groups), public transport, bus stops, streets, parkings. As well as Social infrastructure facilities (hospitals, schools, universities, city council), local markets, shops, patrol stations, car repair stations.

#### 2. The city of Prishtina with the topic "Mobility and urban transport"

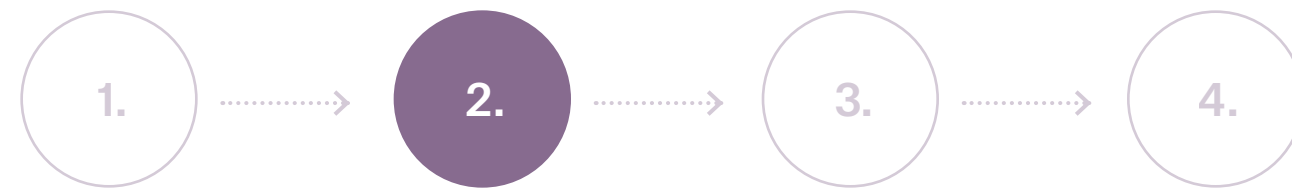
a. Listening channels selected: conversations (the city team commented "Interviews are relevant due to the possibility of structuring Personas (tool) and based on that structuring specific community perspectives of mobility"); Listening meetings, Sensemaking sessions, Spaces for open discussion with main theme stakeholders/Urban transport company. The city team added "Listening meetings give opportunities to face different or opposite stakeholders to understand hidden narratives."

b. Some other channels they thought of were Digital observation, Cultural events as channels, Social media.

#### ★ Some challenges you might find:

- Understanding the wide variety of channels that can be used. It is common to get stuck in understanding we only have the "Interview" possibility, but remember that this Social Innovation process listens through a wide range of listening channels where theater, photography and participatory process can be part too. It is important to adapt to the existing listening channels in the territory we are working.
- The lack of time/human resources. Aligning with all new and adapted listening channels requires a solid listening team created and trained from the beginning that can take part along the process.

### 3.3 Understanding local narratives through Community Listening



#### Step 2. Engaging a diversity of people and working with qualitative data sets

Whether formal or informal, conversations and other listening methods are foundational tools for Community Listening and range from quick chats to in-depth interviews. For Community Listening to be effective it's important to talk with a wide range of people from varied backgrounds in order to draw a breadth of ideas, perceptions and perspectives.

#### Matrix use case for Data management

- **Create the first list of potential interviewees:**

Draw up an initial list of 5 to 10 people. When you talk with the initial participants, invite them to suggest others to interview, thus expanding the network. This is known as “snowball” sampling. This list can start from the stakeholder mapping done in the previous session. It's critical to ensure a balance of gender, age, educational levels, geographies and any other important factor related to the territory.

- **Manage your contacts and interview agenda:**

It is recommended to make a plan using a calendar for conducting the conversations, and to systematically gather and manage the information in the Matrix tool.

- **Keep track of 'engaged people':**

In the Matrix tool there is a sheet called “engaged people” where you can continually add people to be interviewed, their contact information and details, and the status of the interview.

### 3.3 Understanding local narratives through Community Listening



#### Step 3. Asking questions to understand lived experiences

In order to get to the bottom of the narratives, the listening process has several layers with different depths. At first, the innovation waves (see Figure 1) are smaller, then they begin to resonate deeper and higher through the listening process. Thus, the questions that will guide the listening process are selected according to the information we are interested in obtaining from the Community/City portfolio and their depth will depend on the moment in the process you are at.

enablers and power relations. After contacting the first people, you should conduct a series of quick chats with them (10-15 minutes). These initial quick conversations allow us to begin generating the network for the process and to analyze the general narratives. **Normally, in this first iteration we reaffirm elements that we already know or guess, but a first contact like this becomes key to be able to go deeper later, with other qualitative research tools.**

**TOOLBOX**

[Quick chat template / Quick chat guide](#)

**Iteration I. QUICK CHATS**  
(see Diagram 1: first wave in the graphic above)

If the program is at the beginning of the process and there was no listening previously done, you should start with a set of questions that will help you to understand what is happening in the territory and explore the main challenges, opportunities, barriers,

|  |  |
|--|--|
| NAME:<br>SURNAME:<br>AGE:<br>GENDER IDENTITY:<br>RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND (if relevant):<br>ETHNICITY (if relevant):<br>LIVES IN:<br>WORKS IN:   |  |
| What is going on right now in Maldives?  |  |
| What are the main challenges related to work and employment in the Maldives? Do you think the unemployment rate it's too high? Why? Why not? How can you tell this is affecting the area? How do you feel about this? Do you think this change is possible? If so, why? If not, what are the barriers you see and how would you overcome them? |  |
| What are the biggest opportunities that Maldives have for transformation? Are they the same as years ago or are they new? Are they the same for everybody? What would you like to see happening in the future?   |  |
| Who wins and who loses with the current situation? How do you see the near future of Maldives if the employment situation does not change?   |  |
| Reactions, contradictions, context, language...  |  |

Table 3: Quick chat template



### 3.3 Understanding local narratives through Community Listening

| ★ Some challenges you may find with the quick chats:   | ★ Some of the quick chats outcomes and enablers:  |
|--|---|
| <p>a. You may find it unclear whether these first conversations should be all-encompassing or focused on a chosen topic. We recommend treating this exercise as informal conversations with people to help you understand what's going on in the city in general terms. Normally, in this first iteration we reaffirm elements that we already know or intuition, but a first contact is important to be able to go deeper later.</p>  | <p>a. Quick Chats are enablers for recognizing interconnectedness of municipal problems as they help in further stakeholder mapping. They help bring to the surface needs, challenges, and opportunities.</p>   |
| <p>b. It is normal to come to these chats with biases and own experiences and even feel tempted to try to answer the questions yourself. We recommend having these conversations as if you didn't know anything about the city. Try to look at it from a "puzzle solving" mindset about the city, where this conversation will help explore everything about it: challenges, opportunities, etc.</p>   | <p>b. Participants from the City Learning Circle shared it is very useful to hear perspectives that are different from municipal ones.</p>  |
| <p>c. Try to have a diverse range of residents, local organizations and other stakeholders identified (to be interviewed and to be engaged with). We recommend identifying as many agents as possible through the ecosystem mapping. These first quick conversations will also allow to populate the mapping and begin to generate the network for the process and to analyze the general narratives.</p>  | <p>"The survey process has already brought results, namely establishing communication between the authorities and the community. We identified several important problems, one of which was completely unexpected for us... That survey made it possible for us to properly develop our communication with the community, and they were positively surprised that the local government can hear them, that we wish to hear what they miss, what issues they encounter, how we can address that. That was very important because a lot of issues that they've indicated we used to be blind to because maybe [to us] they seem to be trifles, minor problems." (Ivano-Frankivsk city team)</p> |
| <p>d. During the City Learning Circle workshops organized in 2022, some city teams questioned how these chats are different and more open from interviews used in other sectors. Open conversations like the quick chats allow you to focus on a specific topic while it provides the freedom to explore relevant ideas that may emerge during the chat. These are crucial to explore people's perceptions, emotions and beliefs and allow you start with a more superficial contact, to begin to generate the network, and to have a broader view of the context to be able to go deeper later.</p> |   |



### 3.3 Understanding local narratives through Community Listening

#### Iteration II. IN-DEPTH LISTENING

(see Figure 1: first wave in the graphic above)

If the team has already conducted a first listening iteration through the quick chats and the first narratives have been analyzed (and, in some cases, validated), a second batch of information will be collected in the medium term with more in-depth interviews (along with alternative listening channels), this time with as many people as possible. With the conversations of the second iteration, we are taking a step further in the quick conversations we have already conducted and digging deep into the data. This second Iteration will allow the team to reach the hidden narratives and go beyond the information on the surface.

#### TOOLBOX LISTENING GUIDE TOOL

With steps, tips for holding conversations, basic in-depth interview process and additional observation tools templates.

[Link to Listening guide](#)



#### Step 4. Designing and facilitating Collective Interpretation sessions to reveal, discuss and iterate narrative patterns.

Collective Interpretation, or Sensemaking, is an essential element because it's during this phase that we validate the information generated by the ecosystem mapping and the community listening processes. Government, private sector, civil society and individuals take part in this process. For further information on sensemaking, see section 4.4. For instructions on designing and hosting a Collective Interpretation session, [\(link\)](#)

#### Conclusion and what's next in the guide

In section 3, listening to communities, we've shown how to map the ecosystem of actors and initiatives in a place and then to carry out open listening and dialogue channels to tune into lived experience and strengthen relationships of trust, understanding, and empathy. In the next section, revealing narratives, we'll set out how to analyze the listening results, visualize the narratives, and facilitate groups of people to make sense of the patterns of narratives that are operating in a place and that affect what is challenging and possible in terms of urban transformation. This helps to create a shared language of possibility and change.

## 4 Revealing Narratives

Social Innovation processes demand new tools that help cities understand social dynamics and perceptions in greater depth and that enable connecting this information to collaborative building / co-creation processes for urban transformation. “Revealing narratives” involves taking stock of the various stories and narratives that emerged throughout the community listening process, analyzing them, and carrying out collective interpretation workshops in order to test shared understanding of the narratives and build trust among the stakeholders involved and legitimacy of the process. Narratives are a key part of the process, because they involve subjective perceptions that people and communities have about their own lives, experience, and aspirations for the future. Narratives shape in fundamental ways the culture of a place and determination of the possibilities for change, and because narratives can evolve, engaging with people in understanding them can also create conditions for shifting narratives over time in ways that open space for deeper urban transformation.

This chapter introduces the concept of Analysis of data and Sense-making to potential users and provides some supporting tools.



## 4.1 Analysis processes

### ★ WHAT is the logic behind the analysis process?

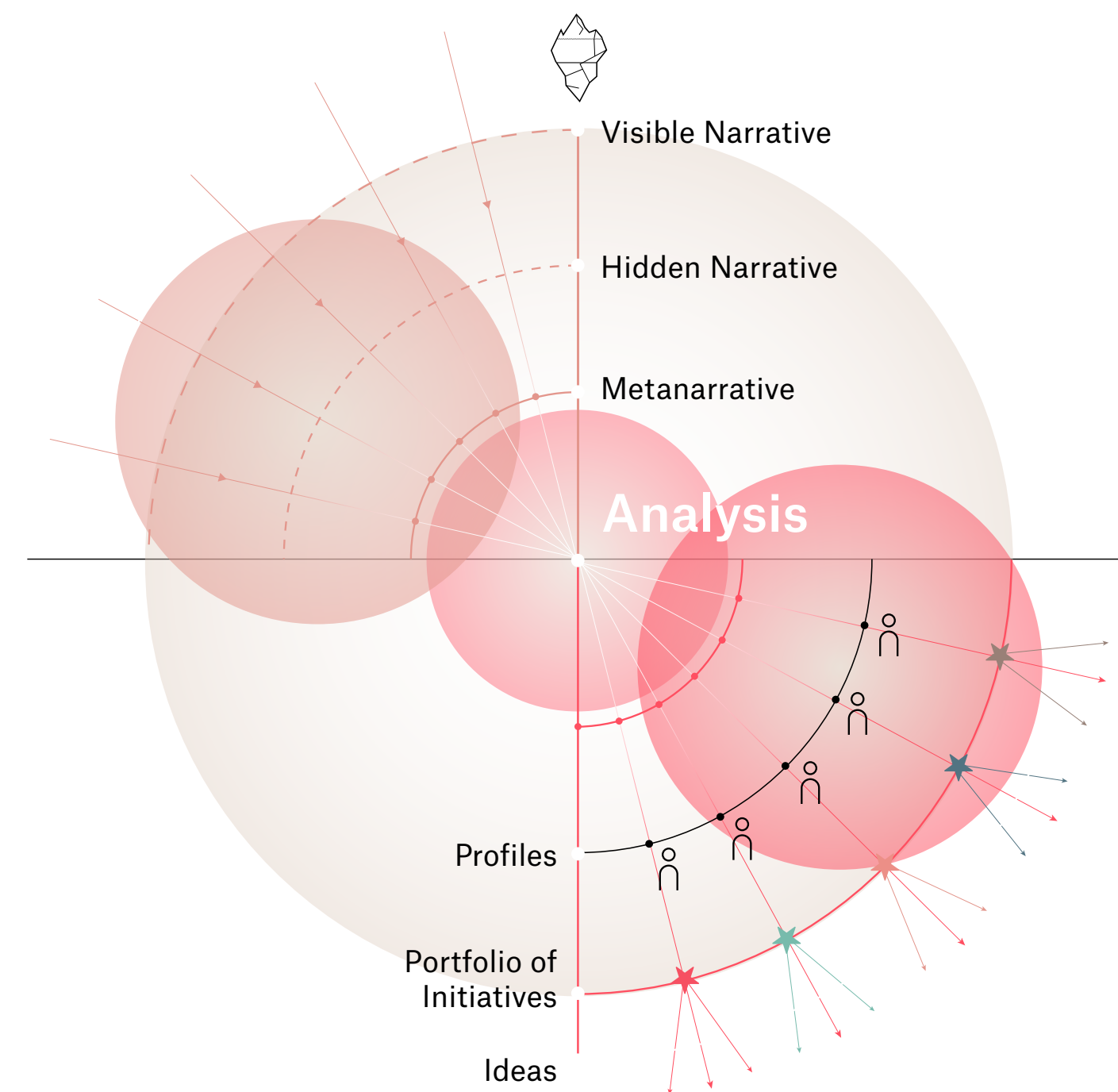


Diagram 5: Analysis Process

This process aims to identify narratives in order to segment them in all their diversity. Community narratives have a decisive influence on what is believed to be possible or not possible to achieve, and can even determine the success or failure of the socio-economic initiatives implemented for urban transformation.

Identified narratives can reshape the status quo, confronting dominant norms, values, and beliefs; can form a collective identity by developing a shared sense of belonging, which structures actions and meaning on the basis of a common perspective on social reality and a desired future; and can guide action by inviting people to imagine alternative futures.

They also inevitably influence the interventions that a municipality develops. It is essential to know them and take them into account when designing and implementing initiatives. That is why we also need to share all the information collected, and work collectively on its interpretation (sensemaking). If we work in this way, we will be able to contribute different points of view, assume the findings and gradually build new shared narratives of what is happening.

### ★ WHO should do the analysis?

The process to systematize the data collected through quantitative and qualitative listening channels (Section 3) should be carried out by the implementation team, pre-determined at the beginning of the program and/or portfolio planning process, and be constantly contrasted (weekly meetings) with other internal team members, and at least once a month with stakeholders and partners involved in sensemaking sessions.

The recommended people to be involved are those who combine analytical and research skills with experience in developing new initiatives around social innovation, community work, ethnographers, etc., and who are part of the municipality and participating organizations (other levels of government, UNDP COs, civil society organizations, etc.). The most important thing is that their work is integrated from the beginning and does not act as separate actors.



# 4.1 Analysis processes

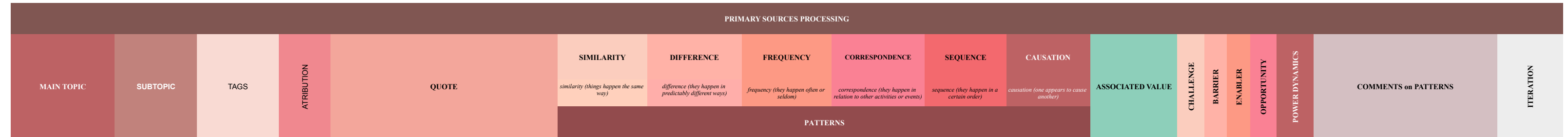
Second and third iteration with other listening channels.

Once the first narratives have been analyzed and validated, a second batch of information will be collected in the medium term with more in-depth interviews, this time with as many people as possible. With the interviews of the second iteration, we are taking a step further in the quick conversations we have already conducted.

It is important to emphasize that all of the quotes gathered and presented are perceptions. This means that they are not necessarily true and sometimes even they are contradictory between each other. In any case, all of them are operating and ultimately conditioning the success or failure of the activities in both areas.

Analysis

Each quote has a general code (to preserve the identity of the interviewee and to facilitate the systematization process). e.g.: In the tab of the Matrix tool named "Engaged people", just add the code near each name. A main topic area and subtopic must be determined together with tags words (key words). In addition, a total of six parameters should be applied to each citation quote in order to identify patterns of thought (HATCH, J.A., 2002<sup>3</sup>):



- **Similarity (perceptions similar to others)**
- **Difference (different perceptions from others)**
- **Frequency (perceptions that are repeated)**
- **Sequence (perceptions that happen in a certain order)**
- **Causality (perception that one element leads to another)**

Through these parameters, we identify patterns of thought, similarities and differences between ideas, and perform the analysis considering three different layers of depth of discourse.

• **Surface narrative:** These narratives are opinions expressed openly in conversations, but they do not necessarily inform our actions in a coherent way. We can say one thing ("I am fully committed with human rights") and behave differently. These are, therefore, public and superficial narratives about the situation people/community find themselves in, but they are normally conditioned by the context and the interlocutors of a particular conversation. They provide valuable information, but we need to dig deeper to fully understand the real perceptions that are conditioning behavior and actions.

• **Hidden narrative:** They are connected perceptions that are normally not presented directly but are implicit in the discourse.

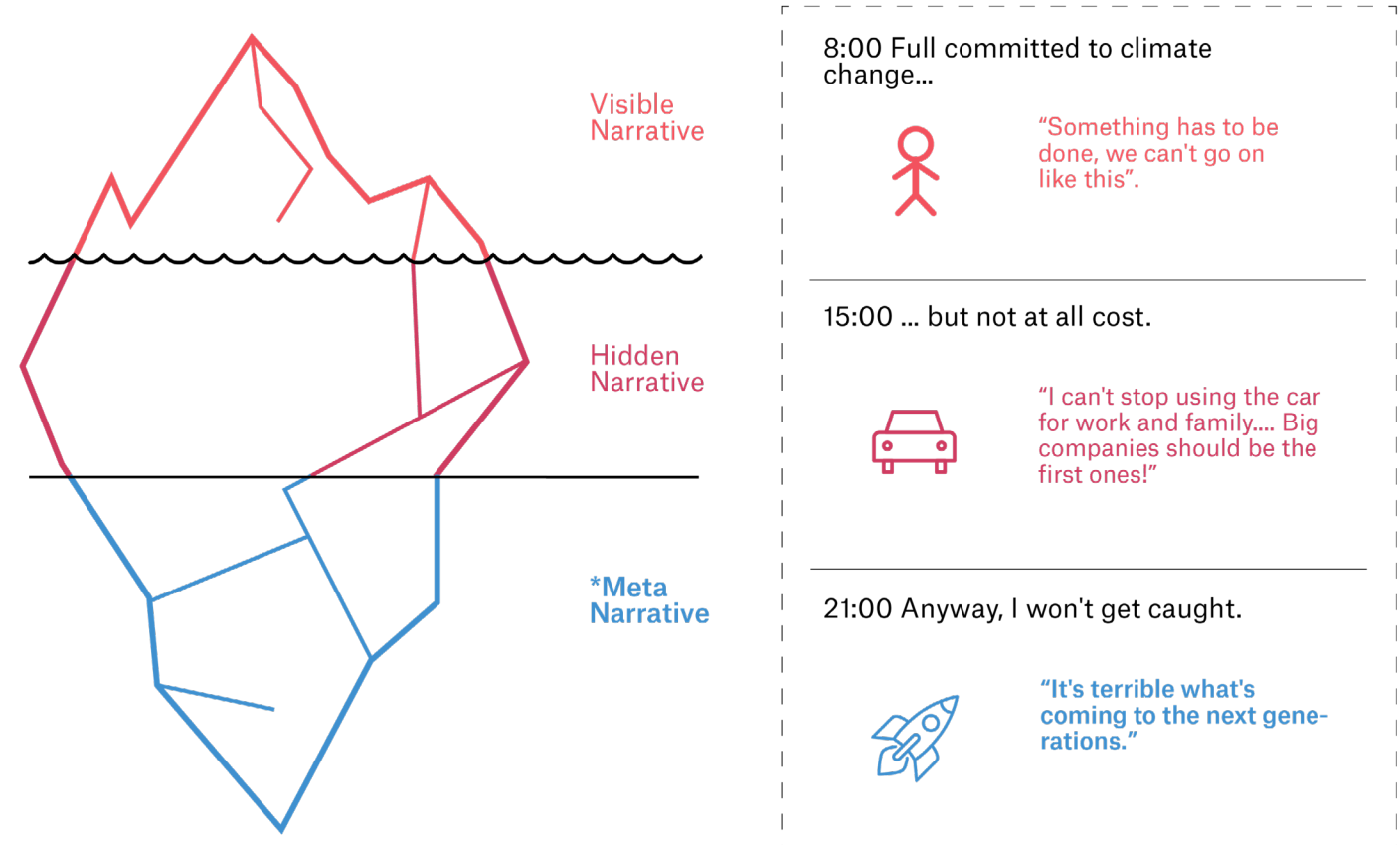



They are beliefs about causality - why things are the way they are. They are identified by analyzing textual quotations that through patterns indicate something hidden behind the public discourse. (e.g. Repeating frequently the institutional commitment to human rights might indicate the need to reinforce certain aspects or gaps).

• **Metanarrative:** Deep belief that operates and conditions the two previous ones. They are underlying convictions that are operating at the core of the issue. Metanarratives are considered as assumptions/values that inform the worldview and should be segmented and addressed in order to reach systemic transformation. Specifically, we are trying to understand if communities believe that in the current context real change is possible and what are the core elements needed to generate new relationships (at the community level but also in relation with local authorities) built on trust.

To reach systemic transformation, the initiatives that are part of the portfolio must address the metanarrative.

<sup>3</sup>Hatch, J. Amos. Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings. State University of New York Press, 2002. Project MUSE Council resolution 1244 (1999)

4.1 Analysis processes

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>★ EXAMPLE ON HOW TO ANALYSE NARRATIVES</p>  | <p>★ EXAMPLE 2 (explanation of 3 level-narratives iceberg)</p>  |   |
| <p>a. "Transport and public management are basic things that should have been fixed by now"</p>  | <p>"Something has to be done about the climate, we can't go on like this" but then, when talking about their daily life they mention "I use the car for everything, for work, family..." (this can also be identified by observation) and then later mentions how "it's terrible for next generation"</p>   | <p>A typical challenge that you may find with iceberg analysis...</p>   |
| <p>b. "The city is stuck and doesn't move any step forward in creating innovative activities and actions"</p>  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What should be included where (at the 3 levels)?</li> <li>• Be sure you include a phase that sums it up the idea per layer, adding a quote (from the community listening process) to support it.</li> <li>• Some participants from the City Learning Circle we conducted understood it this way:<br/>"Visible is what is obvious, Hidden is what people observe but don't speak about and the Metanarrative is what is not consciously seen"</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>NARRATIVE ANALYSIS 1 (with parameters)</b><br/>If basic things are not fixed, the city cannot innovate, this is a causation. These narratives show how people perceive the city and within the analysis we see how one element leads to another.</p>   | <p><b>NARRATIVE ANALYSIS</b><br/>The visible narrative is clear: they're fed up with the climate crisis situation. However, in a) other conversations they mention how much they use the car or b) in other listening channels we observe the number of cars that the city uses is very high - unraveling the hidden narrative that "I'm concerned about climate change but don't commit at all cost". To get to the metanarrative and keep enriching it, it is always important to a) have in-depth interviews with people and b) validate and get feedback with diverse agents in sensemaking sessions.</p> | <p><b>Remember: Metanarratives have a decisive influence on what is believed to be possible or not to achieve, and can even determine the success or failure of the socio-economic initiatives implemented for urban transformation.</b></p>  |
|  <div data-bbox="666 975 1082 1528" style="border: 1px dashed gray; padding: 5px;"> <p>8:00 Full committed to climate change...<br/>  "Something has to be done, we can't go on like this".</p> <hr/> <p>15:00 ... but not at all cost.<br/>  "I can't stop using the car for work and family... Big companies should be the first ones!"</p> <hr/> <p>21:00 Anyway, I won't get caught.<br/>  "It's terrible what's coming to the next generations."</p> </div> |   | <p><b>Some participants from the city teams highlighted about the Iceberg's tool:</b><br/>         "It was a really tough exercise which made us think a lot and analyze what people think, what they feel and what they really need." "When I worked on [the iceberg analysis], I tried to simplify the methodology and explanations for all three layers in the following ways. The visible part is what is clear-what is obvious for people... the hidden part is what some residents think, but do not voice directly...and the lowest part is something which residents interviewed do not even realize - something which is inside their unconsciousness and on which we should keep working."<br/>         "Each tool opens up new aspects. We're now going deeper and deeper. I can see ties between local authorities and communities are getting better."</p> |

**TOOLBOX**  
[Iceberg template](#) For further information, please read the [guide for Narrative & Personas identification](#)

## 4.2 Sensemaking

### ★ WHAT is Sensemaking

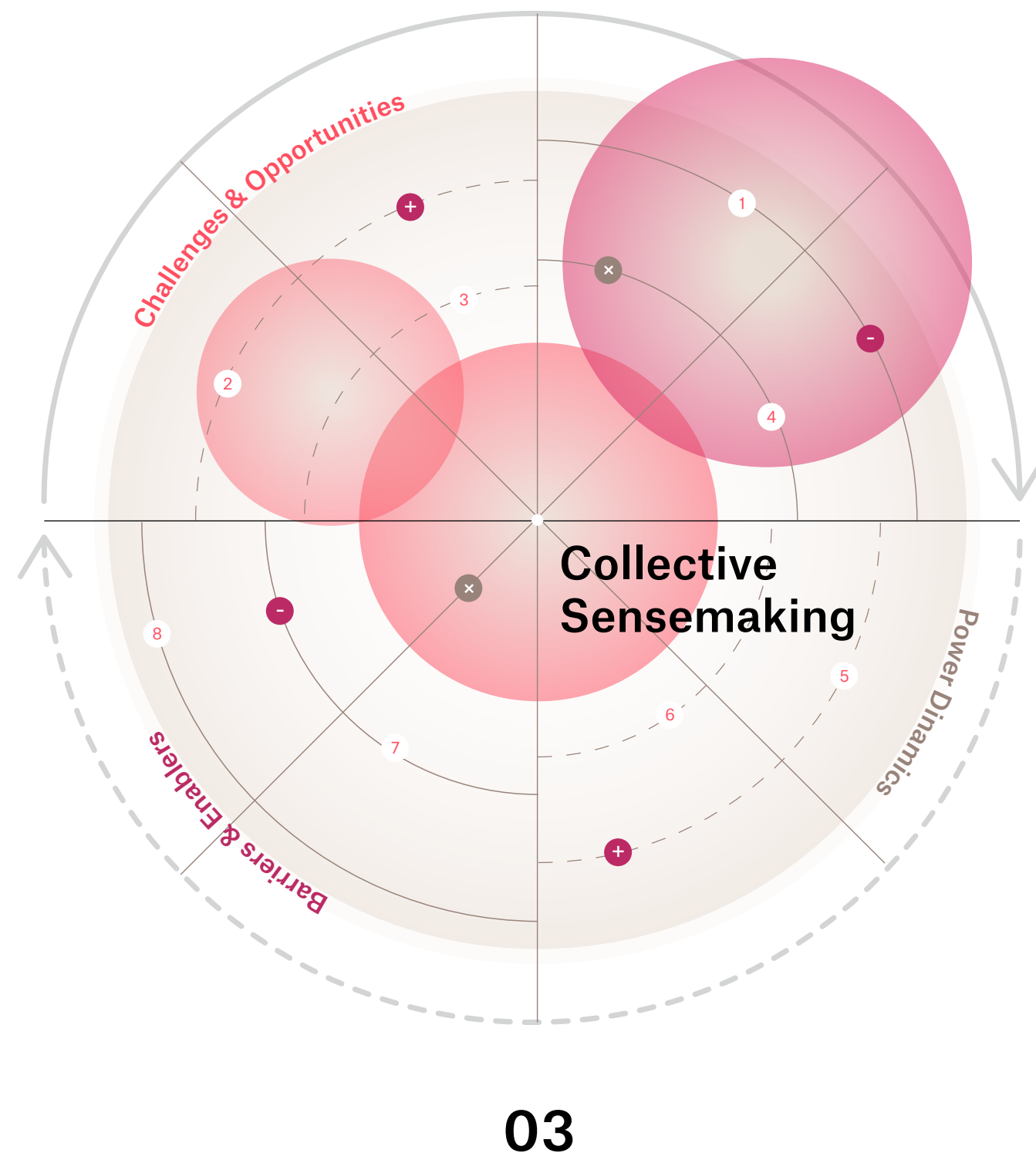


Diagram 7: Collective Sensemaking

Sensemaking is the activity that extracts insights. It is a process that induces learning and creates more meaning from experience. A sensemaking process should clarify the intent of the Collective Sensemaking (rationale), the object (project, programs, activities), situation (context), socialization (networks), extraction (the forming of intelligence), iteration (recurrence), representation (communication) and effect (impact).

In a more simplified version, sensemaking can be described as a collective interpretation of the information generated by the systems mapping and the community listening process. Agents, public institutions, corporations, and civil society organizations take part in the sensemaking process. Sensemaking consists of presenting the identified narratives cross-examining them to legitimize and support the results of the listening process. In sensemaking sessions, the identified challenges and opportunities are presented, mainly through Personas, highlighting similarities and discrepancies on the part of the attendees, as well as possible solutions.

### ★ WHY is it important

Developing new tools to understand social dynamics and perceptions in greater depth as well as connecting this information to collaborative construction processes, are essential elements for social innovation processes. Therefore, by bringing the results obtained through the listening process (narratives, metanarratives, and Personas) to the collective interpretation sessions (sensemaking), we complement and legitimize the information collected and provide a more complete analysis of the complexity of the challenges and opportunities perceived

by people and organizations involved in these processes.

Our analysis must be constantly validated and socialized in spaces for deliberation and participation. The validation and enrichment of these narrative patterns is important to be able to compare existing actions with them and generate new actions that address the identified gaps. Sensemaking also promotes encounters and dialogues between people and institutions that do not normally coincide spontaneously in spaces for discussion and exchange.

The narratives are subjective perceptions that people and the community have about their own lives. They might not be true or correspond to real facts; however, they decisively influence what is believed to be possible or impossible to achieve and may even determine the success or failure of initiatives for socio-economic change. Therefore, the collective interpretation sessions consist of presenting the narratives identified; cross-checking these narratives and thus legitimizing and backing up the results of the listening process; and promoting encounters and dialogue among people and institutions who would normally not encounter one another spontaneously for discussion and exchange in their daily life patterns.

Preparation, facilitation and systematization of a sensemaking session ([link](#))

## 4.2 Sensemaking

### ★ Personas or ethnographic profiles/patterns

One of the key take-aways from this process is the choice of the materials and visualization tools we use. Since it's not very feasible to present a complete and detailed report to a wider audience and for operational reasons, time, and dynamism, we use the ethnographic profiles (personas) as the main tool. The work in detailing and building those profiles is key in the process, as they must be adjusted to the results of the listening. The narratives, challenges, and opportunities identified in the listening process are reinterpreted during the Sensemaking sessions, mostly through these personas, highlighting similarities and discrepancies, as well as possible solutions.

1. These personas are used to represent the patterns of narratives identified during the social listening process that are repeated or operating in the city.

2. The personas are based on narrative analysis. They are not merely based on demographic data or quantitative analysis: they represent unified perception, behavioral and thinking patterns.

3. These personas try to represent the diversity of age, social background, and occupation as a persona set. In the example in Diagram 8, the persona on civil servants doesn't solely represent 50 year old women from Prishtina, but also men and younger civil servants.

4. Each persona has an underlying key idea, a series of opportunities and challenges perceived, and a relevant quote.



Diagram 8: Persona pattern example. Example of filled Persona pattern with representative quote on the top, the metanarrative on the iceberg plus the challenges and opportunities.










## 4.2 Sensemaking

| ★ How to get to Personas   | ★ Highlights from participants in our experience in City Learning Circle about the tool:  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give each of the identified pattern a face and a name to represent the narratives as a whole</li> <li>• The structure of personas includes perceived challenges and opportunities</li> <li>• Each one should be attributed with a key idea or metanarrative that is repeated or exists in the city, whether it is publicly recognized or not</li> <li>• As general criteria, a metanarrative = a Persona</li> <li>• Personas also include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quotes from listening segmented in the Matrix tool , by topic, codes and subtopics.</li> <li>• Quotes segmented by parameters</li> <li>• Quotes segmented by Challenge, Opportunity, Barrier or Enabler</li> <li>• Related challenges and opportunities identified during the social listening process</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Persona template</a></p> | <p>“Personas help us a lot in initiating the conversation [during sensemaking sessions], especially seeing the comments or the quotes from the Personas. And that raised agreements and disagreements from the group; what initiated most of the conversations.”</p> <p>“...to have a human face and story behind it and to make the issue more visible through this and also all underlying things behind the problem (...) So see what are the true emotions and wishes of people, what they attach more importance</p> |

## 4.2 Sensemaking

|               |    |   |   |    |    |
|---------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| Name          | ERA   | BEKIM  | URATÉ  | ENDRIT  | JETA  |
| Age           | 25  | 44   | 40   | 21  | 50  |
| Gender        | Transgender   | Male   | Female   | Male  | Female  |
| Area          | Prishtina   | Prishtina  | Fushe Kosove   | Prishtina   | Prishtina   |
| Quote         | <i>We still aren't getting used to having different types of people and cultures and nationalities in Kosovo. That's an opportunity to work on them.</i>  | <i>We just need to know how to involve younger people in decision making, because they have a different point of view, they have creative and innovative ideas that could potential help our journey towards urban transformation.</i> | <i>People are willing to communicate the problems they face. There are also a lot of young people who are willing to work with these projects. As much as they have the capacity, they are trying to work</i>  | <i>At the moment, the atmosphere in the city is not very people-friendly nor welcoming because it is a very loud and polluted city due to the air and cars.</i>   | <i>You get the feeling that buildings come up like mushrooms and you are not part of the city because the city is developing by ignoring you as a citizen completely.</i>   |
| Job           | Student   | Project manager  | Homeworker   | Student   | Civil servant   |
| Challenges    | <b>Mentality.</b> <i>Not in the other cities of Kosovo, but in Prishtina the old mentality has a minus in the future. It will not work the way it has, it won't work in the way where it's more relevant who you are than what you do.</i>            | <b>Municipality's role.</b> <i>The biggest challenge is the role of leadership that the municipality of Prishtina would have to play, as an institution that has the role to manage the city, it doesn't play its role</i>             | <b>Neverending construction.</b> <i>There is also a lot of construction work going on that is harming the cities' green areas and the public spaces. This affects my life because I have a dog and I have to walk her. I guess this is not a priority, but it is for me. So, I have to go to Gemia Park which means that I have to take my car, which pollutes the air.</i>                                      | <b>Leisure for youth throughout the year.</b> <i>There are very little, very limited amounts of youth centers which makes life boring in Prishtina and doesn't allow the youth to have fun; doesn't allow the youth to experience new things and to see what they're into what they're not into.</i>    | <b>Lack of basic facilities.</b> <i>(Transport, public spaces management) are basic things that should have been fixed by now, so we could move a step forward in creating new experiences that can be linked to arts and other creative solutions of how we can use public space.</i>  |
| Opportunities | <b>Accessibility.</b> <i>Being more accessible to disabled people as well. There are very few places that are wheelchair accessible.</i>  | <b>Mobility.</b> <i>Driving a car is seen as the best mobility type, for different distances. There is no functional mobility plan.</i>  | <b>Mobility.</b> <i>I come here for work and I live in Fushe Kosove, so I am part of the citizens who come here for work and I am not registered here. So, traffic is usually overcrowded – buses are limited, and usually I have to take my own car to work.</i>  | <b>Visas.</b> <i>Another issue which is as I said also in Kosovo is visas, a huge problem. Not for me personally but I am seeing what its doing to youth my age.</i>  | <b>Lack of greenery.</b> <i>There is no greenery. There are no proper spaces or walk-throughs for people with disabilities. It's hot and like all we have around us is concrete as well. There are no water fountains.</i>  |
| Metanarrative | <b>National immigration.</b> <i>Prishtina is attracting students from all the country: at the core of the youngest country in Europe, there is a young city teeming with energy. 53% of Prishtina population is under the age of 25.</i>              | <b>Job Opportunities.</b> <i>The most attractive opportunities Prishtina has are its vast market for jobs, especially jobs that use the internet and are tech focused.</i>   | <b>Collective planning.</b> <i>I do not know of one single case when the community, in a substantial way, has taken part in the way that the city has developed. And this can be seen visually in the way the city is built, it is not built for people but for private interests. It seems that the buildings do not complement one another but they are in a fight for who gets more space and visibility.</i> | <b>Remote work.</b> <i>One new opportunity is that of remote Work – which would mean less people coming in but that would need more work from the private and public sector jointly.</i>  | <b>Different type of transportation.</b> <i>New roads, everything will be reached, but I also imagine Prishtina having ways to connect with each other between the city with a different type of transportation. // If the municipality of Prishtina would invest in bicycle paths, so that we can move by bicycle, this in addition to have a cleaner environment, will also affect saving time (not waiting in traffic jam), better health for all of us, smaller financial expenses etc.</i> |
| Metanarrative | <b>Local stakeholders in events such as Manifesta.</b> <i>I think that the my experience in previous projects, that a project will have an impact if the stakeholders are permanent. Manifesta is an action, but the stakeholders should be local</i> | <b>Young people.</b> <i>We should grab onto is the young population. We just need to know how to involve younger people in decision making.</i>  | <b>People's will to communicate.</b> <i>People are willing to communicate the problems they face. There are also a lot of young people who are willing to work with these projects. As much as they have the capacity, they are trying to wor.</i>   | <b>Creative minds.</b> <i>Every city has its own characteristics, and the characteristic of Prishtina is that innovation and creative mind is outside of institutions. Good performance and benefits are seen from cultural and social communities and the best example for that could be Dokufest.</i> | <b>Tourism focused on heritage.</b> <i>I feel that if that gets thrown down, we get more focused on something more that represents our history and represents Prishtina and the people themselves. I feel that in the next 10 to 20 years or so, it's doable and it could be very economically good and of course overall I see Prishtina in 20 years if all goes well to be a more tourist oriented hotspot.</i>   |
| Metanarrative | <u>People in Prishtina are lacking awareness</u>  | <u>We have to put youth in the centre of decisions if we want change to happen</u>   | <u>We need a collective deliberation space to connect among us</u>   | <u>During the rest of the year, there's nothing that makes you want to stay</u>   | <u>The city cannot innovate if the basic urban problems are not fixed</u>   |

In section 4, revealing narratives, we've set out how to analyze the listening results, visualize the narratives, and facilitate groups of people to make sense of the patterns of narratives that are operating in a place and that affect what is challenging and possible in terms of urban transformation. This helps to create a shared language of possibility and change. The following section, rehearsing change, will show how to generate new ideas and co-create initiatives based on narrative patterns and possibilities, and how to co-design portfolios of interventions with multiple stakeholders. Specific co-creation tools are shared in this section.

Diagram 9: Prishtina's Example of initial personas with Matrix tool



# 5 Rehearsing Change

Key in this process of urban transformation is greater investment in people’s participation and agency to shape public policy, ensuring people with diverse backgrounds come together to formulate development solutions and are empowered and co-created to drive societal change. Aligned with and informed by [UNDP’s Portfolio Design Framework](#), this process involves providing for co-creation and co-design spaces, which foster new forms of collaboration between governments, people, and businesses and facilitate the listening to people, learning from them, and ultimately leveraging solutions, portfolios, and pathways forward that they have collectively developed.

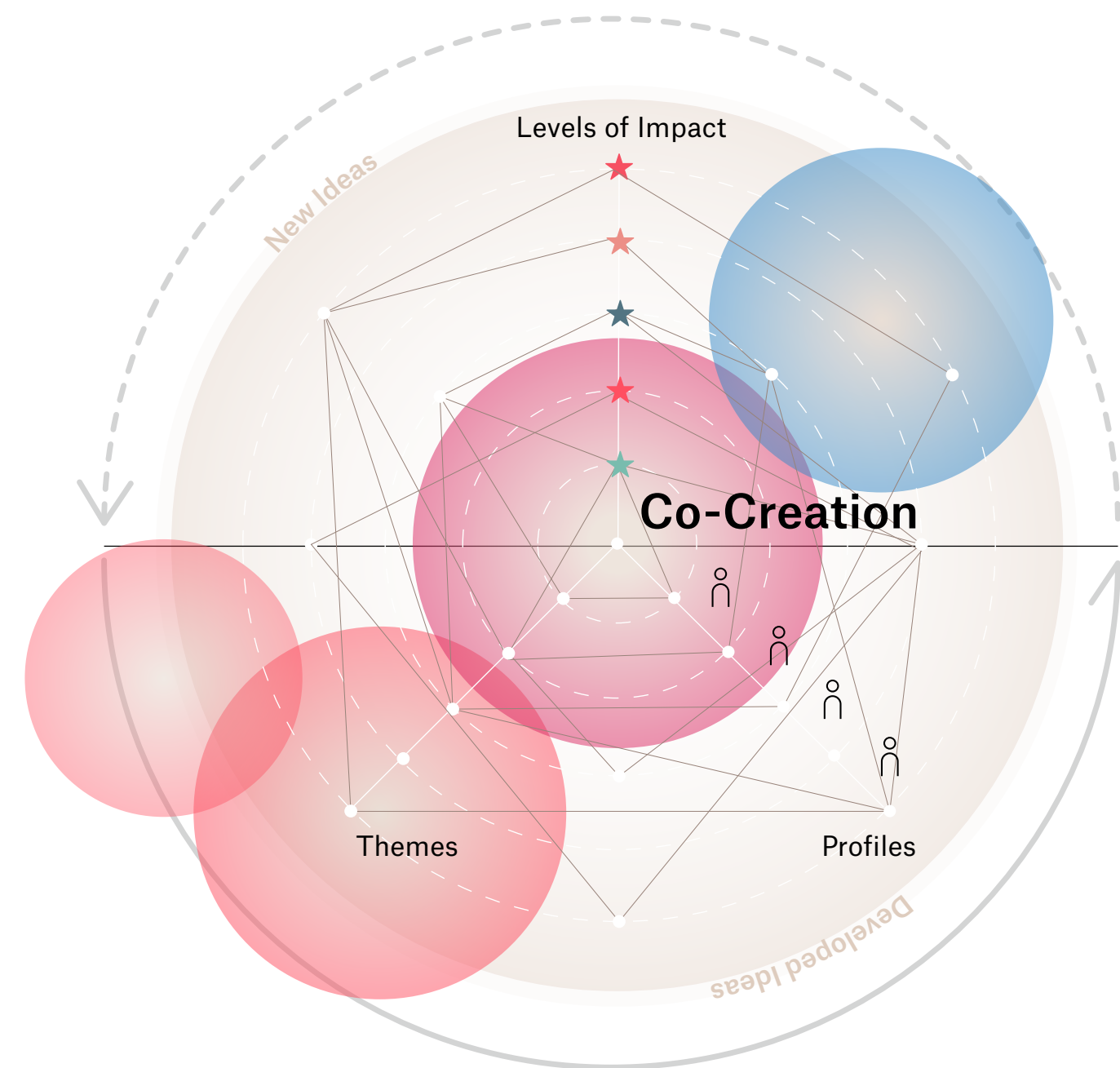


## 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

The initial steps of community listening, collective interpretation and collaborative analysis naturally lead to finding shared values, areas of opportunity and barriers, which motivate the involvement of stakeholders to start the co-creation process. This inclusive process will lead to numerous sparks of ideas that are then the basis for co-design and prototyping. Therefore, the first step would be to sort and group the ideas by thematic similarity.

The matrix tool (“Co-creation areas”) is used to systematically compile the list of themes and initial ideas and other information generated throughout the process. Co-design will help to structure team interactions around these ideas and align participants around specific goals and results to move forward.

### ★ WHAT is Co-creation



04

Diagram 10: Co-creation

Co-creation is a process by which new ideas and solutions are developed collaboratively. It is linked to the listening and collective interpretation processes, as the basis for co-creation will be the already contrasted patterns of narratives (personas), the identified areas of opportunities, shared values and new ideas that emerged during the rapid and in depth-conversations. On Social Innovation Processes, co-creation will work as a mechanism to bring together new stakeholders with the emphasis on building a joint response to a complex challenge for which there is no defined answer ('wicked' problem). The Social Innovation journey fosters a large co-creation process at five different levels of action:

- **Community initiatives,**
- **Startups and social entrepreneurship**
- **Large scale public-private partnerships**
- **Redesign of the current public services offered by the local authorities (innovative services that were not previously provided)**
- **New regulation associated with new challenges (climate emergency, COVID, digitalization, etc.)**

Being an experimentation process, the platform allows the design of spaces for co-creation and co-design of specific responses that can complement and improve existing initiatives/projects. The set of existing initiatives and the new ideas that emerge allow generating the necessary knowledge to build new processes of social innovation in the territory. The process is designed intentionally as a people-powered portfolio process that is continually updated based on what is learned through community listening and engagement and shifting of narratives and culture.

# 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

## ★ WHY is it important

If narratives and challenges are well specified, actions resulting from the co-creation process will be connected to the listening process. If not, they will not have the desired impact, the community for which it is created will not feel it as theirs, and transformation is less likely. Each of the new concepts and ideas should respond directly to at least one of the validated personas.

If a portfolio is built only on already-existing initiatives, the capacity to have a systemic impact will be limited. Therefore, co-creation allows adaptation of the ongoing initiatives in the area, but also to create new prototypes that will be added to the portfolio. A robust people powered portfolio has a good balance of new ideas/prototypes, projects, and pilots:

- **EXISTING PROJECTS:** Those that work and respond to perceptions, extracted from the mapping
- **PILOTS:** Inspiring things working in similar/neighboring cities
- **NEW PROTOTYPES:** From the co-creation process, addressing gaps

## What's missing? Cross Cutting analysis (listening+ initiative mapping)

From the community listening process and narrative analysis, we segmented the information in its diversity of opinions and perceptions and created the so-called 'personas'. These personas were validated during the collective interpretation sessions with diverse actors from different sectors such as the public sector, private sector, international agencies, and civil society.

By intersecting the existing initiatives from the system mapping exercise and the preliminary narrative patterns derived from the listening process, we can recognise existing gaps on the ground and initiate the development of a people-powered portfolio.

The matrix in the image systematises the connection between the existing initiatives from the mapping and how they respond to 'personas'. This visualization allows us to spot missing areas and potential areas for co-creation.

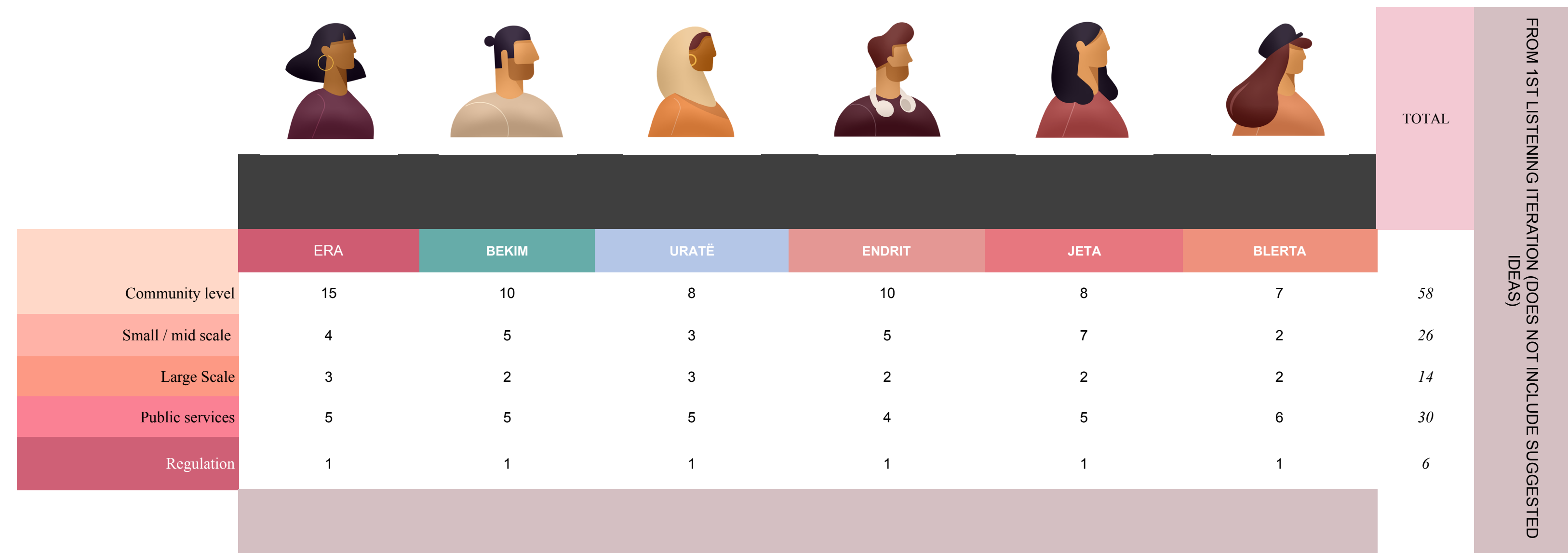


Diagram 11: Prishtina (City Experiment Fund) - Matrix tab 4.1



## 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

### ★ Expected results: Why five levels of intervention?

At least 5 levels of intervention need to be operating if we want to achieve systemic impact, according to analysis conducted by ALC of successful territorial transformations under extreme difficulties (especially focusing on identifying the keys to success in the Basque model). Therefore, the expected results from the co-creation process are new ideas on these five levels of action, responding to the personas (patterns of narratives):

| 1. Community actions   | 2. Small and medium scale interventions  | 3. Large scale actions   | 4. Services  | 5. Regulations & policies   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p>These are grassroots initiatives (projects, pilots, and prototypes) linked to improving social cohesion and local agency. These initiatives do not necessarily have a sustainable business model, but they are essential to empower local communities and surface narratives of change. Ex: Creation of safe spaces in which discussion sessions on matters of gender and women's empowerment are provided.</p> | <p>These interventions take the form of a start-up or even a larger business with a sustainable business model. They generate employment in, for example, food production (farmers), commercialization (markets) and delivery (transportation) businesses, restaurants, water-related activities, packaging and digital traceability for agriculture, product exporting business. Ex: An initiative of rural micro-entrepreneurs to market mushrooms (mycology).</p> | <p>These are initiatives that bring together public authorities and businesses to set up large scale programs. Their business model usually combines public investment and commercial activity. Some examples of these collaborations can power new digital observatories for the area, training programs or distribution centres (markets). Ex. a district heating system promoted by the city council and the main electric utility, that provides cheaper energy to the neighbours and enterprises in the area.</p> | <p>A comprehensive and balanced portfolio on interconnected initiatives normally includes the redesigning of existing government-led services in education, health, transportation, citizen participation, etc. They are normally connected to food systems related services, water management, or digitalization of existing procedures. Ex: Encouraging change in tax benefits to promote the use of solar panels.</p> | <p>All the above-mentioned categories might fail if the existing regulatory and policy environment has no capacity to be adapted to the emerging social, business, and technology changes. If rules, policies, and laws are barriers/enablers for some of the identified opportunities, we would add that to the experimentation target list. Examples might include creating regulatory sandboxes for just transition zones, or changing regulatory enabling environments for better fishery practices, health care, and the circular economy.</p> |

## 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

### ★ HOW is a co-creation session organized step by step?

A co-creation session is designed as a space for dialogue and sharing that provides a structured framework for creativity and collective decision-making.

In order to facilitate the organization, this guide will provide a systematic next-step consisting of three stages: preparing the session, performing and systematizing its progression and results.

#### 1 – Preparing the Session

##### i) How to build on the community listening and sense-making processes?

The co-creation process is initiated with the information obtained from the community listening process, collective interpretation sessions, and analysis of the existing initiatives operating in the area (identified gaps from the cross-cutting analysis). The shared values, opportunities and new ideas, even barriers that have emerged from these processes must be developed and specified.

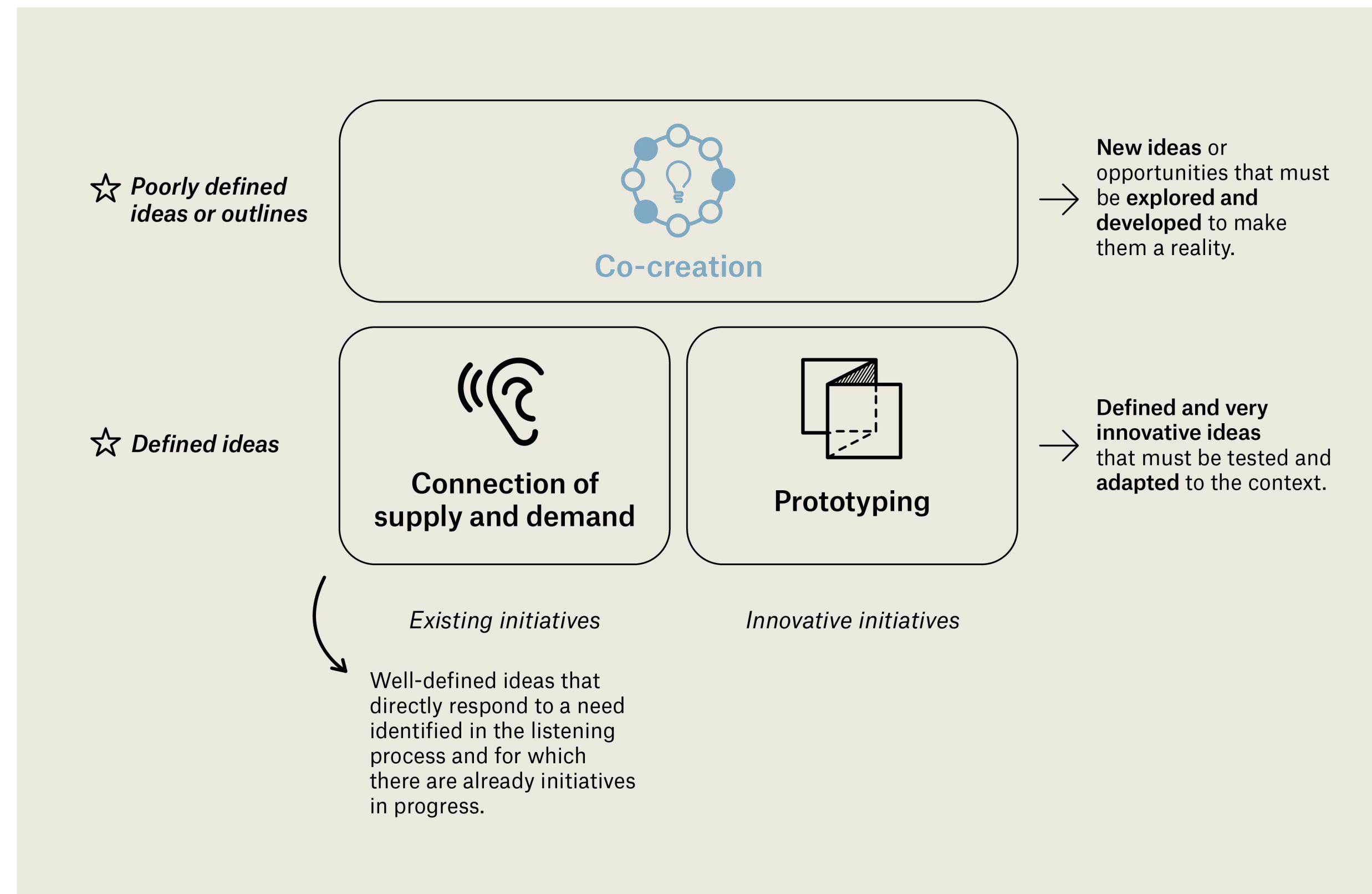


Diagram 12: Co-creation & Prototyping

### 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

The matrix is used to systematically compile the list of initial subjects and ideas and other information generated throughout the process. In the matrix, ideas that emerged during the community listening and sensemaking are listed (name and a description). These are the ideas that could be considered for the process of co-creating new prototypes at these 5 levels of intervention that respond to the existing gaps.

A **working group** is established for each thematic group. To do this, we will make a preliminary mapping of the stakeholders who could potentially be interested in exploring each thematic area. These stakeholders are the ones we will be inviting to the co-creation sessions by thematic areas. At first, these groups may seem divergent, but as we move forward in the co-creation process, these groups will be increasingly defined and actively involved. The ideal scenario is to identify at least one local leader and several local partners (at least one or two, in order to ensure collaboration) for each idea. If some ideas are poorly defined assumptions can be made, so that these are further explored and contrasted by stakeholders in co-creation sessions. For example: "there is a clear gap when it comes to the circular economy, glass is not recycled and ends up in landfill." The matrix can be filled with additional information, for each idea/row:

| THEMATIC AREA   | NAME  | IDEAS (examples)  | RATIONALE   | GAPS THAT THIS WOULD FILL, INTERCONNECTIONS, CONSIDERATIONS | INTERVENTION LEVEL | PERSONAS  |           |
|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1   | PUBLIC SPACES AND PROGRAMMING: child-centered & gender inclusive  | Disco Soup  | Disco Soups are supportive and joyful movement that appropriates public space and food to raise awareness of food waste.  | Community   | Community          | Community | Community |
|   |   | Community Garden  | Public areas in the periphery or center of the city that the municipality owns to invite the community to use them for different purposes. Use from the venues in Manifesta |   |                    |           |           |
|   |   | Cultural Centers  |   |   |                    |           |           |
|   |   | Adrenaline Parks  | Amusement parks - In the context of Prishtina, this new idea emerged in relation to the lack of good children-toys in parks and activities for kids                         | Community   | Community          | Community | Community |
|   |   | Kids Museum   |   |   |                    |           |           |
|   |   | Schools as Meeting Place  | The use of schools and other educational institutions as a meeting place for the community of the district  |   |                    |           |           |
|   |   | Smart Health Communities  | New idea identified in the listening process that relates to the area from co-creation  | Community   | Community          | Community | Community |
|   |   | Plant for seasonal trees  |   |   |                    |           |           |
|   |   | Create access/ games for children with special needs in parks   |   |   |                    |           |           |
|   |   | Re functionalization of the Luna Park/ city fun park/ access of children with special needs in the fun park |   | Community   | Community          | Community | Community |
|   |   | New sport areas/ more spaces for volleyball   |   |   |                    |           |           |
|   |   | Creation of a Youth Center where children can hang out/ children can organize activities                    |   |   |                    |           |           |
|   |   | Use the platform Bone Vendin tond/ Fix Your Place Bone venin tond ma t&#39;mirë (airtable.com)              |   | Community   | Community          | Community | Community |
|   |   | Opening/ re functionalization of public spaces: Grand Hotel Plato   |   |   |                    |           |           |
|   |   | Infrastructure adapted for disabled people  | New idea identified in the listening process that relates to the area from co-creation  |   |                    |           |           |
| Easier access for pedestrians   | Easier access to movement/commuting including pedestrians and cars (from Listening  | Community   | Community   | Community   | Community          |           |           |
| Street Lights in Parks  | Idea identified in the listening process that relates to the area from co-creation  |   |   |   |                    |           |           |
| Places to stay, with greenery   | Places where you can go and stay, have a chat (no need to buy or do anything special). Inspiration from older buildings built mainly  |   |   |   |                    |           |           |
| Bike system   | Management of Public Spaces are working on a bike system, and had some initial meetings with The Dutch embassy of cycling   | Community   | Community   | Community   | Community          |           |           |
| Closing roads for cars  | "We are working on regulating the streets for the kids near Elena Gjika school, because as we all know it is a big problem currently. So we want to place the marks for more regulation." |   |   |   |                    |           |           |
| Spatial decentralization  | "I would say that the main problem is that there is nothing happening in the periphery of the city, no parks, no places for children to play. so without a decentralization we can not    |   |   |   |                    |           |           |
| Mandatory fines and better monitoring of blocking pavement and trails |   | Community   | Community   | Community   | Community          |           |           |
|   |   |   |   |   |                    |           |           |
|   |   |   |   |   |                    |           |           |

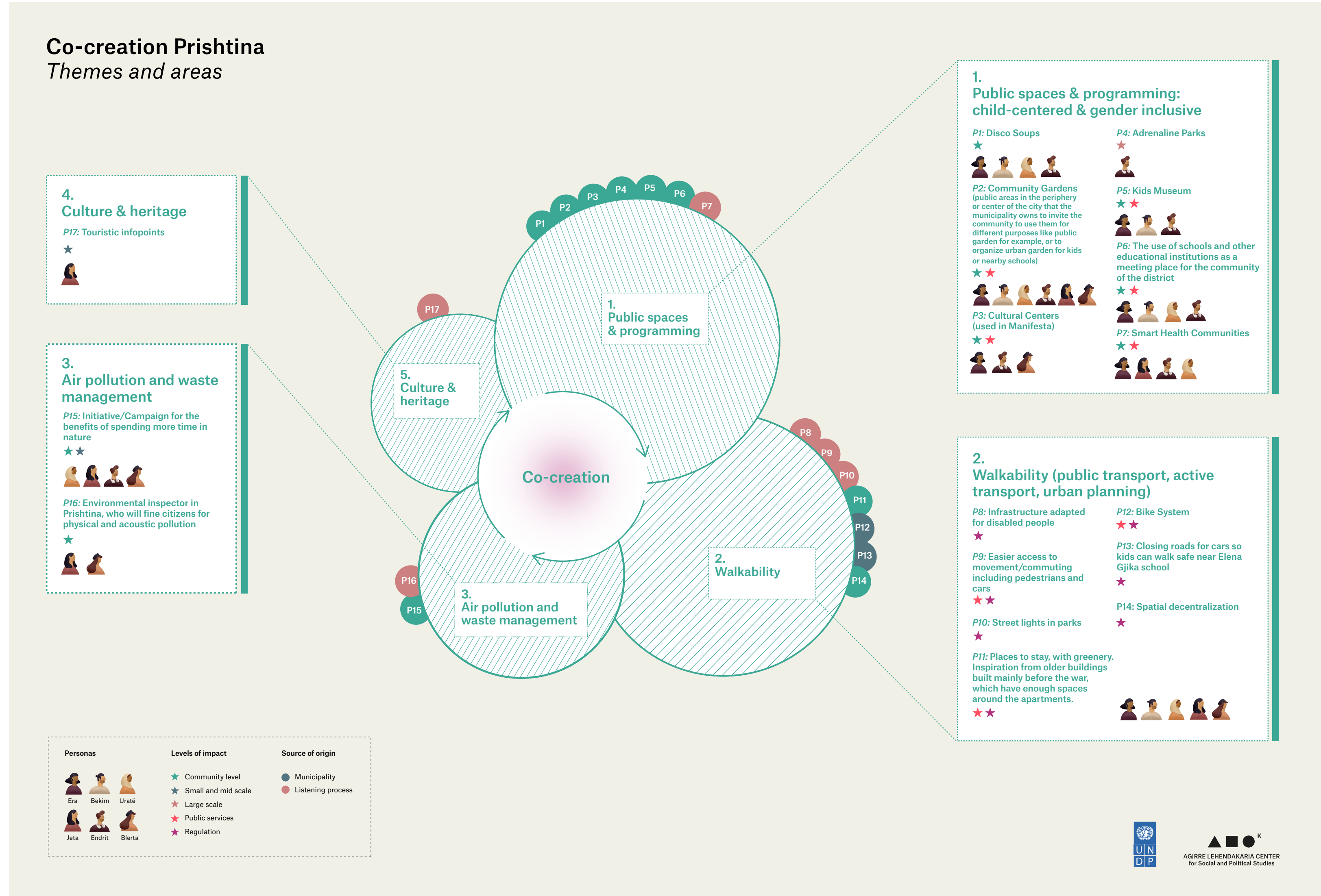
Diagram 13: New Prototypes. From the co-creation process in Prishtina, addressing gaps.



### 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

- a. Alignment / misalignment with personas (patterns of narrative) and the five levels of intervention - this will give us information of whether or not the identified gaps from the mapping exercise are addressed.
- b. A sentence specifying the relevance of this idea in order to happen.
- c. The current status of the idea and which steps should be taken in order to move forward.
- d. Quotes from the listening process that refer to that idea.

A first visualization of the identified areas of opportunity, responding to Personas and classified in the five levels of intervention, can be made. This graph will change as we progress through the co-creation iterations. It is essential to constantly contrast this graph with stakeholders. It could also be an interesting exercise to contrast each area with specialists. The idea is that, as we advance in the process, some ideas will be discarded and others will become more and more defined.



| Personas | Levels of impact      | Source of origin    |
|----------|-----------------------|---------------------|
|          | ★ Community level     | ● Municipality      |
|          | ★ Small and mid scale | ● Listening process |
|          | ★ Large scale         |                     |
|          | ★ Public services     |                     |
|          | ★ Regulation          |                     |

Diagram 14: Co-creation, areas of opportunity in Prishtina

## 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

### How to prepare the session, step by step

• **Using thematic areas:** As previously mentioned, initial co-creation sessions can be conducted in areas that stand out from the contrast with stakeholders. For instance, in the process in Prishtina, the initial co-creation sessions were divided into two thematic areas:

- Session 1 – Public Spaces
- Session 2 – Mobility

Ideally, each session should address a single thematic area. However, if the areas are interrelated or if it is contextually appropriate, a session may cover multiple areas. This approach accommodates a wider range of perspectives and allows for consideration of how the different areas might be interconnected. The choice between focusing on one issue per session or several will depend on the goal of the session, whether it is to interconnect areas or delve into a specific area with key stakeholders.

• **Choosing the venue (in person):** it must be accessible, large enough to accommodate everyone invited, facilitate work in small groups, and have capabilities to display results or information. It could be a school, a cultural center, a neighborhood club, etc. Avoid spaces with furniture that is fixed to the ground or too large to move and adapt it to the requirements of each meeting. An outdoor session could be very inspiring and productive.

• **Inviting Participants:** Two methods are available for inviting participants: targeting a specific group (e.g. women only, farmers and fishermen only, young people, etc.) or mixed sessions (including local stakeholders like public institutions, civil society organisations, and companies operating in the area, as well as members of the public including small business owners, farmers, women entrepreneurs, young people, elderly, immigrants, etc.). To ensure diversity in mixed sessions, it is essential to consider factors such as:

- Gender and age balance
- Varied levels of knowledge and understanding of the issue
- Representation from a diverse range of institutions including companies, government institutions, village leaders, universities, etc.\*
- The crucial role of community leaders who have a significant impact on local perspectives and their active participation is key.

\*Importantly, depending on context, culture, gender and other dynamics in the locality, some people may find it uncomfortable to speak out about problems in front of local authorities. In those cases, it is advisable to have sessions without authorities in the room to allow people to speak freely and safely without retaliation or judgment. To give an example, women may be less inclined to talk about their issues in front of men or men might end up taking more space in the conversation even if women were willing to speak. Hence it is important to think in advance about how to form interview teams as well.

**Sessions with specific groups are recommended, but joint sessions are essential. A maximum of 30 people is recommended.**

• **Place and time (and hybrid experiences):** Select an appropriate time for the sessions, taking into account the availability of women and youth. Preferably, the sessions should be in-person, but hybrid or on-

line options should also be considered and adapted as necessary. Ensure the location is accessible, nearby, and large enough for all participants if in-person, and provide break-out rooms if online, as well as facilitation specific for online participants to ensure a quality experience. Outdoor sessions can provide a fresh and productive environment, while also serving as a covid precaution.

• **Duration of the session:** 1.5 to 2.5 hours maximum (it will vary depending on the participants and context).

• **How to invite the participants:** Invitations are crucial and require proper attention and follow-up.

- The initial contact should be made on an individual basis, either through a personalised phone call or email. It's advisable to send the invitations at least two weeks in advance and follow up with phone calls the week and days leading up to the event.

- Include details about the purpose of the session, what is expected of the participant, and any necessary information such as a one-pager brief or a link to the platform's website for further details.

- Provide the date, time, and location, including how to arrive, along with a contact number and request confirmation of attendance. In some cases, it may be recommended to use a form for confirmation.

- Additionally, gather information from participants through the invitation to help structuring the session, such as their expectations, areas of interest, and any ideas or initiatives they may wish to present.

## 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

- **Determining session frequency for working groups:** There is no set limit, but if a working group does not make progress after three sessions, it may be appropriate to discontinue the group.

The approach is to simultaneously work on multiple areas, understanding that it is normal for some to not move forward. As the process advances, it's crucial to identify local leaders and partners for each area, so that they are fully engaged and driving the co-creation and co-design processes by the end of the process, with the SIP playing a supportive role.

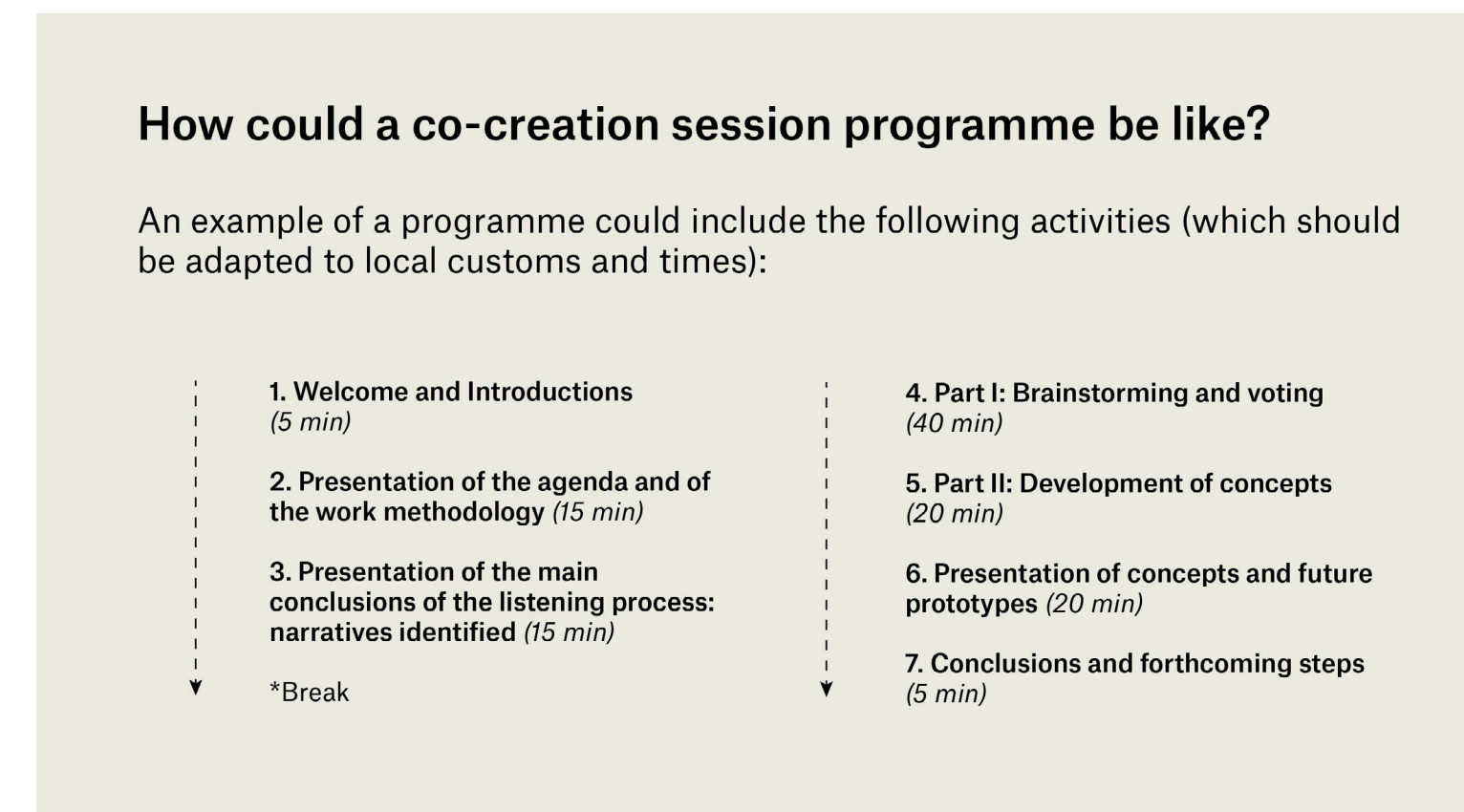
- **Session reporting plan:** Assign one person to facilitate the session and another person to take thorough and organised notes on the dynamics, participants feedback, and results. This information should be recorded in the excel matrix to refine and adjust ideas. Remember to record and take pictures – and be sure to request and obtain consent for both.

- **Tools:** Select and print (if it is face to face) the tools and dynamics that will be used in the session. These can include:

- Main narratives (selected Personas)
- Map of identifies areas
- Design questions
- Brainstormings
- Concept poster

## 2 – Performing the Session

- **Agenda:** Following is a template agenda that can be adapted for the co-creation session:



### 1 - Welcome and introduction

As a first step, it is recommended to start with an icebreaker so that attendees can get to know one another. For example, Can you introduce yourself and briefly describe your expectations for the session?

### 2 - Presentation of the agenda, participants and work methodology (10 min)

When the group has got to know one another, it is time to present the session's agenda, its estimated duration and the envisaged results.

**It is important to highlight the iterative nature of the process - this is not the only session. If it is not the first session, it is useful to include relevant information on previous sessions.**

### 3 - Presentation of the main conclusions of the listening process and the sensemaking sessions

Highlight that the transformative potential of these processes lies in connecting action with listening. This includes the presentation of the main narratives identified. In the first part of the co-creation sessions, share the narratives through visualization tools. Different tools are available, but the best are the individual and collective ethnographic profiles shared with participants.

The main identified challenges and opportunities will also be shared briefly. These should be presented either through profiles or in a very simple and specific list for each session.

- **The session should focus on producing concrete ideas to address specific problems. Additionally, the sessions should aim to identify and validate areas of opportunity.**
- **While providing feedback is not the main aim of the initial stage of the session, (and this should be clearly communicated), the participants may offer their feedback.**
- **It's crucial that the personas and their narratives are succinctly pre-**

## 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

sented in a visually simple and generic manner, with an emphasis on the overarching themes, opportunities, and challenges. This will set the stage for the second part of the session, where the focus will be on working with the identified areas of opportunity.

### 4 - Presentation of portfolio logic and mapped opportunity areas

The mapping of areas of opportunity and concepts/ideas is presented addressing the personas and various intervention levels, as well as the process leading to this result. Using the graphic (above explained), the portfolio logic will be presented through the following key ideas:

- These areas of opportunity are classified into 5 levels of impact : community, start-ups, medium and large scale, regulation and public services.
- These ideas are not random, but are the outcome of a thorough analysis, a community listening process, a mapping of initiatives and stakeholders, sensemaking and co-creation (if already conducted), which engage a full range of relevant local stakeholders including the local government or any public actors, private sector, non governmental organizations, academia, civil society, individuals, etc.
- The added value of the portfolio logic relies on how these areas respond to the main perceptions and needs identified in the territory.
- These areas/concepts have a different degree of maturity, with some being more advanced than others
- These areas won't operate independently, but will have interconnections among themselves and with existing projects in the area.

- Dynamics<sup>4</sup> suited to the meeting's objectives.

All thematic groups will receive the "basic co-creation tools and dynamics" to be used in each block of discussion. An established period of time should be given (approximately 30 minutes for each dynamic).

At this point the role of the Facilitating Team is to foster a creative environment and build trust through collaboration. All ideas and suggestions should be respected, and it should be recognized that all participants and organizations have something valuable to bring to the social transformation process.

**Using the tools is not always necessary for fostering dynamics. The idea of iteration is crucial. Initially, or in certain situations, group discussions may suffice. When a highly structured activity or method is employed, the group dynamics can become obscured. These tools may not always be optimal for having meaningful conversations.**

### 6- Concluding questions

At the conclusion of the session, the following queries can be posed to deepen the stakeholder's connection with each other and the process, as well as identify the next steps for each area/thematic group:

- Who else should be included?
- What sub-groups could be established?
- What was the most significant or intriguing thing you learned today?

<sup>4</sup>The term "dynamics" here refers to the patterns of interaction and behavior that can emerge from an exercise/tool mechanics, and social elements. It encompasses the various ways in which participants engage with it.

## ★ Tools

We will develop an exercise (or various exercises) suited to the meeting's objectives and the status of the co-creation process:

### 1. Local knowledge

Having prior insights is beneficial, but it's essential to be receptive to questioning and not dismiss others perspectives.

### 2. Creating a relaxed atmosphere

The session should aim to be as relaxed and informal as possible, such as incorporating coffee breaks, and holding it in an open and well-lit room.

### 3. Flexibility in the methodology

The methodology should not be the primary focus. It should be flexible to accommodate changes or alternative suggestions that may arise during the session.

### 4. Social change is the key, not

The ultimate goal is to create networks for social change, not necessarily to achieve specific outcomes with prototype. Establishing networks is still a success even if the desired results are not met.

## ★ Tool 1: Open questions for group discussion

### 1. To identify opportunities:

What is the opportunity?  
Is it viable to pursue this opportunity in the area?  
Are there similar initiatives in progress or could they benefit from this one?  
What requirements and components are necessary for implementation?

### 2. To identify interconnections:

The session should aim to be as relaxed and informal as possible, such as incorporating coffee breaks, and holding it in an open and well-lit room.

### 3. To identify stakeholders by areas:

The methodology should not be the primary focus. It should be flexible to accommodate changes or alternative suggestions that may arise during the session.

### 4. Accessing proposals:

If a concrete proposal has been presented by one or more stakeholders:  
Does it make sense to explore this proposal?  
How can we complement this proposal with existing initiatives or future actions?

## ★ Tool 2: To generate ideas

### Design question

With this tool it is possible to generate questions from the working groups and thus view potential solutions from a different perspective. The questions will follow the model “How is it possible or how might...?”

#### STEPS

1) The theme or groups of ideas are used to pose a general question.

2) Rather than trying to answer the question, the working group must propose other ways of asking questions about the same theme.

3) Once the process is complete, three of these new questions are chosen to be used in the next brainstorming session.

Ex. Real case in Prishtina, Kosovo:

- How might public spaces be improved?
- How could we increase participation and inclusion of children? And girls in particular?

\* How might we





\* How might we





\* How might we





[\(Link tool 1\)](#)

## ★ Tool 2: To generate ideas

### Brainstorming

The purpose of brainstorming is intended to generate specific ideas in a structured way, after having identified a specific challenge or need. It is an open process in which all ideas are welcome.

#### STEPS

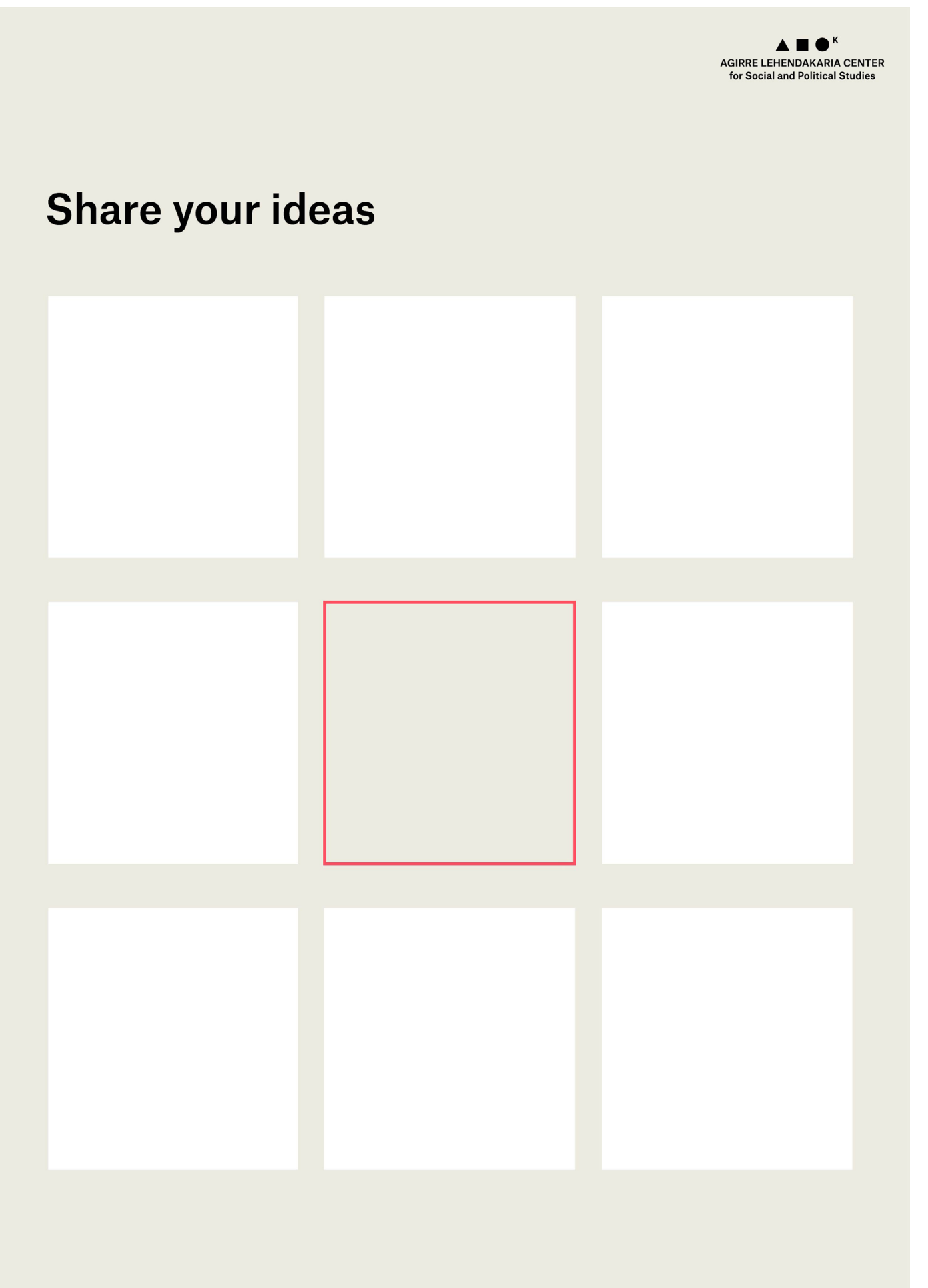
1) Place the design question or challenge in the center of the matrix.

2) Reflect for three or four minutes on an idea based on the design question in the center of the matrix. Write down the idea on a post-it and place it on one of the matrix's empty squares.

3) After reflecting on the first idea, the whole group should read the ideas that have emerged and develop them or generate other new ideas – adapting the previous ideas or writing other new ideas. This process is repeated until each matrix is complete.

4) A lot of new ideas will have emerged by the end of the brainstorming session.

5) Prioritize the results of the brainstorming: Following the results of the brainstorming session, each person should vote for the proposed idea or solution that he or she liked best and explain why.



[\(Link tool 2\)](#)



## ★ Tool 3: Define an idea and expand on it in detail


### Concept poster

This tool enables ideas and solutions to be made more specific. It helps to clarify and focus ideas and solutions during the conceptual design process. By grouping and refining multiple ideas, the tool can guide the design process in a specific direction. The concept poster serves as the initial step in specifying the ideas, and can also serve as a preparatory step for creating proposals through storyboarding.

#### STEPS


- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) Select which groups of ideas or one-off ideas could possibly be developed.   | 5) Describe the value and the effects that this concept or idea may have for the target group(s).  |
| 2) Start choosing a title that sums up the essence of this concept.   | 6) Start making a list of the main stakeholders involved: Who should belong to this? Think of the stakeholders that are crucial for this concept to materialize, for example in the public and private sectors or members of associations and organizations. |
| 3) Briefly describe the elements that should be part of this concept. What services does it include? What is innovative about it? What makes it original?   | 7) Describe the business potential of this concept. Who would be willing to finance it? What new business model does it involve? What is its potential for growth?   |
| 4) Identify the target group for this concept and describe how it relates to the profile and the needs of this specific group. To do so, it may be useful to identify up to three target groups and to describe them in detail. | 8) Analyze existing strategic initiatives and knowledge on this subject. Indicate the three most important following steps for this idea or concept to materialize.  |
|   | 9) Indicate the three most important following steps for this idea or concept to materialize.  |

### Concept Poster




Title

Description

Target groups 

Needs

What new?

Who should join? 

[\(Link tool 3\)](#)

## 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

### 3 – Systematizing

#### • Document the progression and results of the co-creation session:

After each of the sessions, there must be a summary of results in a synthesized way. It is essential to analyze the extracted material (the post-its, the notes, and the possible recordings that we have made), draw conclusions, and make a list of the ideas that have emerged.

#### The objective of the systematization is:

- To document the co-creation process
- To report results internally and externally
- To organize future meetings
- To improve the dynamics used
- To maintain the listening process
- To review the structure of the Work Groups and, if necessary, form new groups
- To feed into the previous analytical work from community listening and ecosystem mapping

#### Tools for documenting a co-creation session:

- Minutes of meetings, which are useful for keeping a detailed record for the Facilitating Team
- Visual representation (infographics) of ideas, connections, and people
- Storytelling with videos or photos for reporting the results to the community

- A theatrical play, puppets, etc. for representing the patterns observed in the community.

The outcomes of the systematization process will be utilized to eliminate existing ideas, incorporate new ones, and refine the previously documented ideas, including names, description, level of details, stakeholders, etc. The matrix should be updated after each iteration to reflect these changes.

The most important part of co-creation is the work between sessions. Follow-up should be done externally (with stakeholders) and internally (within the program team):

#### • Externally

A follow-up message should be sent to... with information regarding (1) the list of ideas and areas of opportunity that have been identified in the session, (2) main conclusions, (3) next steps, and (4) some follow-up questions to be answered by the participants:

- Which is your aim / interest?
- From the ideas listed below, which are your main priorities/ areas of interest?
- What would you need to put these ideas into practice?
- Who else should we invite?
- Does it make sense to develop this particular idea?

It is suggested to organize the data obtained from the co-creation

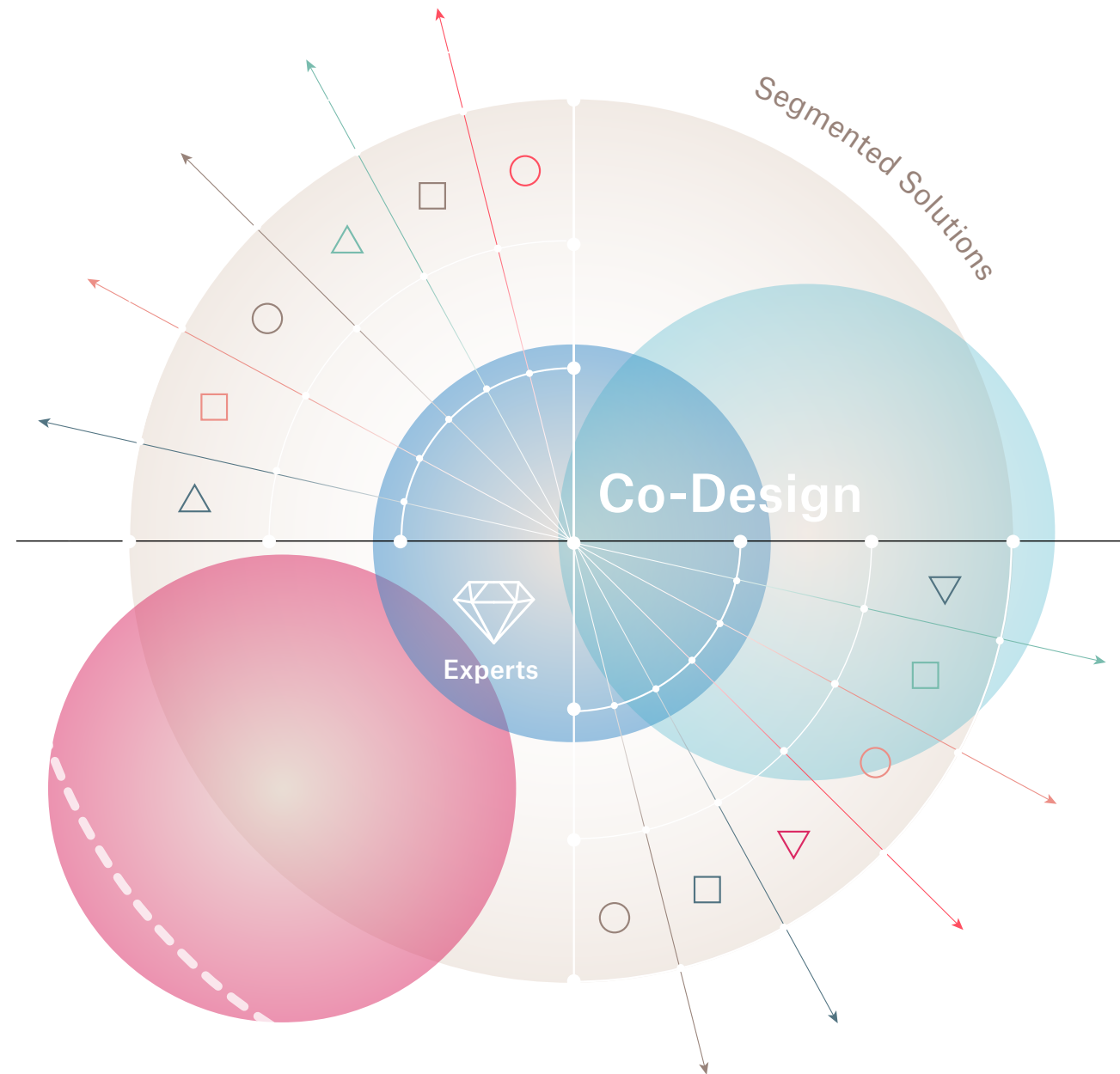
and the follow-up questions into the matrix. This will provide a deeper understanding of the stakeholders' interests and priorities, allowing us to form specific working groups focused on different themes and ideas.

#### • Internally

To effectively track areas of opportunity internally, we recommend assigning a designated member of the program team to monitor each area. This can be recorded in the matrix along with their specific responsibilities and next steps. Weekly internal meetings can then be held to monitor progress, assess compliance, address needs, make adjustments, and plan future actions.

## 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

### ★ WHAT is Co-design



Co-design is the process by which the new ideas that emerged from the co-creation process are developed and specified. In this phase, new actions are prioritized and their paths are co-designed in order to start prototyping them (prototypes allow us to evaluate, make additions and correct them in real time). All of them need to be integrated and conceptualized as an interconnected portfolio.

Co-design involves shared decision making – everyone taking part has an equal level of power and consists of people with the relevant skills and experience coming together to create a tangible product or service. Ideally, at this stage of the process, at least one local leader who is actively involved in the design process should be identified for each idea, as well as some local partners, in order to work collaboratively.

### ★ WHY is it important

Co-design is essential as it helps to ensure that the designed ideas address the identified gaps in the five levels of intervention, substantially respond to the personas, and are all interconnected.

In later stages of the co-creation process and/or in co-design, business models and similar tools are used to define and specify the new ideas emerging from the co-creation process. The tools suggested by ALC are the Social Business Model canvas and Business Model canvas to further develop those contents. These tools are also used to make assumptions and have conversations and contrast sessions with stakeholders. As previously mentioned, the process is iterative and the content will be modified and updated after each iteration.

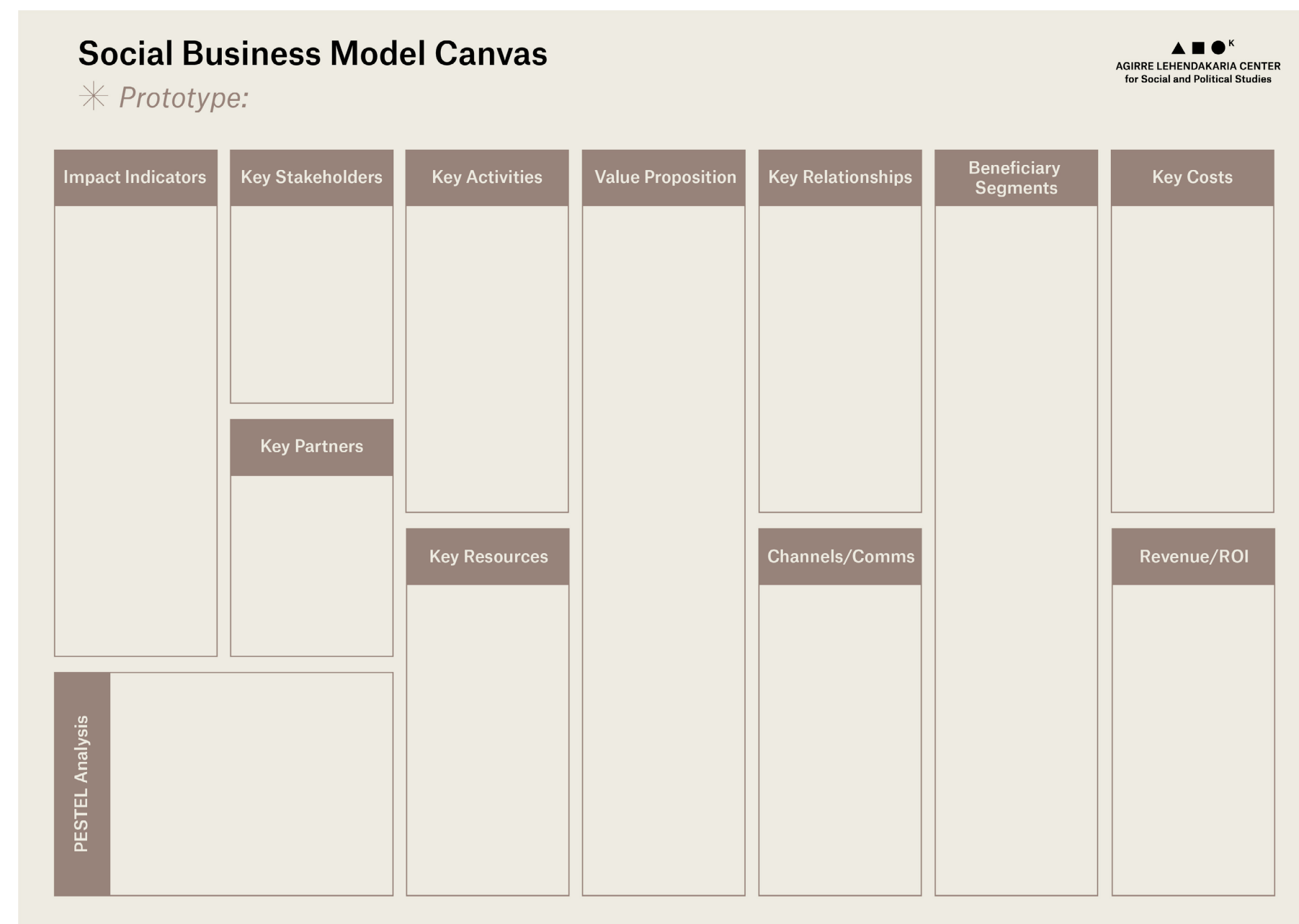
**Co-design involves a collaborative approach to understanding, creating, and supporting mutual growth among multiple participants in the decision-making and design process. This process encourages shared learning and joint contribution to create solutions that meet the needs of all involved parties.**

**Co-design is essential as it helps to ensure that the designed ideas address the identified gaps across the five levels of intervention, substantially responding to the personas and ensuring that all aspects are interconnected.**

## ★ Tool 1: Social Business Model Canvas:

In co-design business models and other tools are utilized to define and refine new ideas from the co-creation process. The recommended tools for this purpose are the Social Business Model Canvas and the Business Model Canvas for detailed content development. These tools facilitate discussions and assumption-making with stakeholders. The process is iterative, and the content is modified and updated after each round.

When creating a social enterprise, the Social Business Model Canvas can be an effective tool. This canvas is specifically designed for social business, providing a framework for developing this type of business model. It's a collaborative tool that helps to generate new ideas and facilitates communication with various stakeholders and aids in brainstorming ideas.



[\(Link tool 4\)](#)

### STEPS

- 1) Impact Indicators:** Describes short-, medium, and long-term indicators that show the prototype has worked creating positive social impact in line with program objectives.
- 2) Key stakeholders:** Describes the network that will support the prototype work.
- 3) Key partners:** Describes the network that will help make the prototype work (funders, implementers, initiative leads, etc.).
- 4) Key activities:** Describes the most important activities the program teams need to do to make the prototype work.
- 5) Key resources:** Describes the most important assets and resources required to perform the planned activities.
- 6) Value proposition:** Describes the bundle of products and services that will create value for the target service users. It's like a map that guides the business and shows why it exists.
- 7) Key relationship:** Refers to the strategic partnerships and collaborations that the program teams need to establish with the participants, or service users and between them.
- 8) Channels/Comms:** Describes how the program team needs to communicate and reach out to the service users to deliver the value proposition.
- 9) Beneficiary Segments:** Refers to the various groups of service users that the social business aims to reach and serve with its products or services, especially during the prototyping phase.
- 10) Key cost:** Describes all the estimated costs that will be incurred to get the prototype working.
- 11) Revenue/Return on Investment (ROI):** Represents the estimated investment or income that may be generated to make the prototype viable.
- 12) PESTEL Analysis:** It is a tool that helps understand and analyze the external factors that might impact on the prototype. The acronym stands for Political, Economic, Sociocultural, Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors. By understanding these factors, you can adapt the prototype strategy and make strategic decisions.

## 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

### Testing and Prototyping

New actions emerging from the co-design process will be tested and included in the portfolio, interconnected with the already existing projects and pilots, as the base for a people-powered portfolio. Due to the iterative nature of the process, next steps should include:

- Co-creation process based on the enriched personas. One session for each thematic area should be organized in order to kick off portfolio creation and activation.
- Sustained listening. After the first co-creation session, another iteration of conversations and enriching channels will make the data and process more robust. We will identify the information we are missing, which will help us better design the next listening iteration.
- Systematized collective interpretation spaces. Every month or two, open deliberation spaces or deep discussions should be part of a social innovation process in order to exchange new information and continually test assumptions and be prepared to respond to opportunities and crises as they emerge.

### Portfolio Design

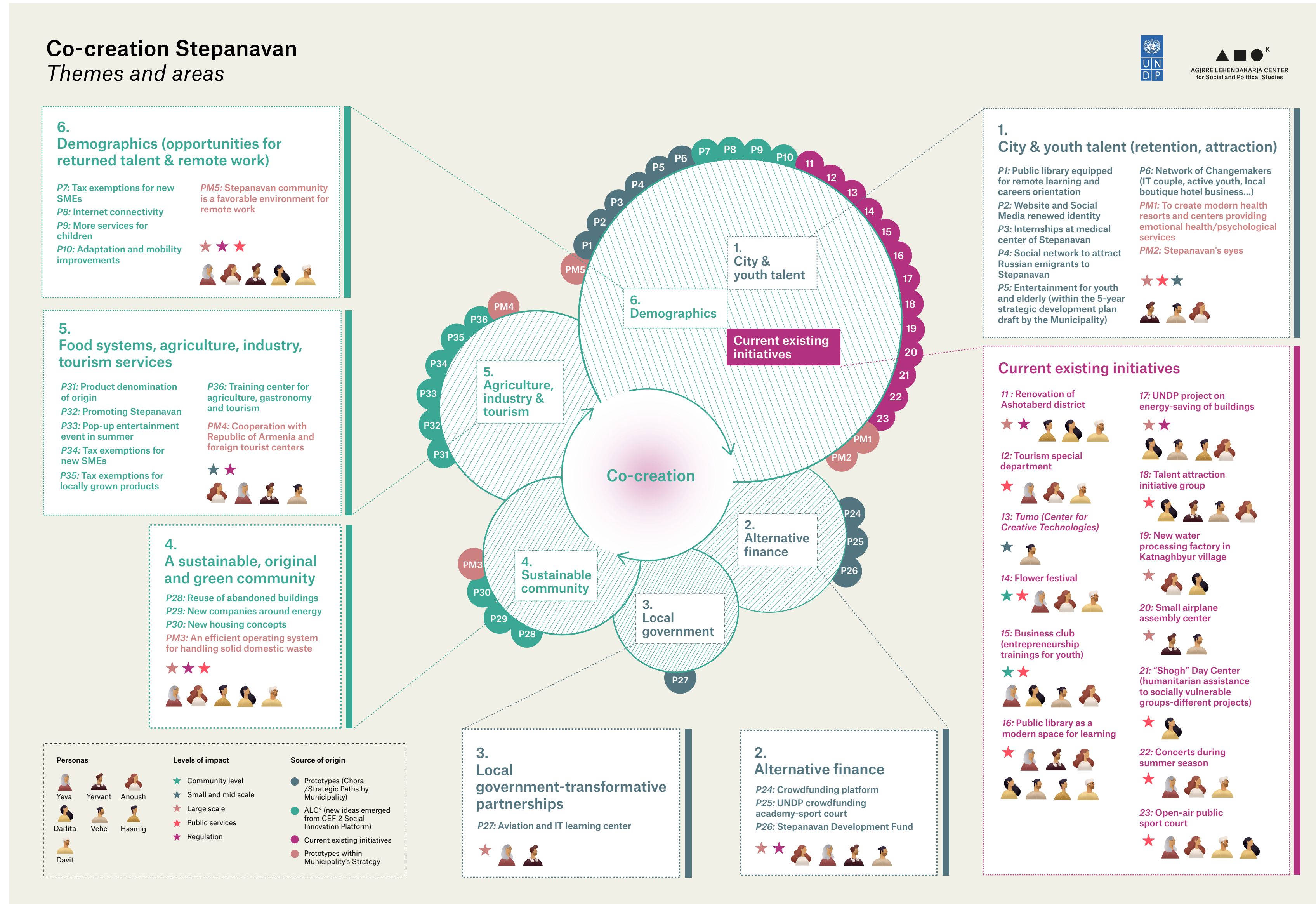
From the community listening process and narrative analysis, we segmented the information in its diversity of opinions and perceptions and then created personas. The personas were validated during the collective interpretation sessions with diverse actors from the public sector, private sector, international agencies, and civil society. Crossing the existing initiatives from the mapping exercise and the initial narrative

patterns from the listening exercise allows us to identify the existing gaps and start creating the portfolio. It is interesting to see how, depending on the context and stakeholders most engaged in co-design, some levels of intervention are significantly more covered than others. It's also important to pay attention to this to assure a well-rounded portfolio for multi-sectoral urban transformation that addresses a range of challenges and is not siloed.

Portfolio design involves shared decision making. Those taking part bring varied perspectives, skills, and experiences to create an interconnected portfolio of tangible interventions, products, or services. Ideally, at this stage of the process, at least one local leader who is actively involved in the design process should be identified to steward each idea area, as well as some local partners who can be involved in advancing the work collaboratively.

## 5.1 Co-creation & Co-design of interventions and portfolios

Diagram 16: Stepanavan Co-creation



#### Legend

| Personas | Levels of impact  | Source of origin   |
|----------|---|--|
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☆☆ Community level</li> <li>☆☆ Small and mid scale</li> <li>☆☆ Large scale</li> <li>☆☆ Public services</li> <li>☆☆ Regulation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prototypes (Chora /Strategic Paths by Municipality)</li> <li>● ALC* (new ideas emerged from CEF 2 Social Innovation Platform)</li> <li>● Current existing initiatives</li> <li>● Prototypes within Municipality's Strategy</li> </ul> |

## 5.2 Dynamic management of urban transformation portfolios

**“[A portfolio approach] seeks to develop, test, learn, and scale (where appropriate) a suite of interventions that are complementary and can shift complex systems by focusing on multiple intervention points at a given time. In this way, the portfolio is a platform for strategic learning and action: to understand the dynamics that occupy the problem space, and over time more accurately understand the aligned interventions.”**

**[System Change: A Guidebook for Adopting Portfolio Approaches, by UNDP \(2022\)](#)**

So far we have emphasized portfolio co-design and the many engagement processes that lead up to it. This section provides some initial starting points for ongoing portfolio management. Portfolios can be thought of as living systems that are continually evolving and that operate within broader ecosystems of change, and with capabilities to adapt, iterate, and change as contexts, needs, and opportunities change.

A portfolio approach contrasts the simple narrative that single projects or single-point solutions result in urban transformation. A classic example of the latter is the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, which is often credited for the transformation of the Basque country, but the reality is that the museum project – significant as it is – represents but one intervention among many in the region’s socio-economic transformation portfolio. ALC’s theory of change and processes of co-creation address the multiplicity of interconnected interventions required for a transformation portfolio by ensuring inclusion of projects and initiatives at five levels of intervention: community; small and mid scale;

large scale; public services; and policy and regulatory environments. Projects at all five levels help to maximize the transformative possibility of a portfolio approach.

### **Portfolio processes and examples supported by ALC**

**ALC brings the benefit of experience co-designing and managing adaptive, people-powered portfolios in 12 countries – with UNDP in many parts of the world; in Peru, India, and Mozambique with La Caixa Foundation; and in the Basque Country with multiple actors and governments, including Mondragon (the world’s largest worker-owned cooperative network) and Iberdrola (Spain’s largest energy company). The social innovation systems created in these places have resulted in large portfolios of interconnected initiatives consisting of a network (or platform) of organizations.**

**As an example, the portfolios supported by the La Caixa Foundation are visualized with a digital tool showing portfolios and connections by theme, geography, and process, including which initiatives are in which phase of the social innovation process (Listening, Co-Creation, Prototyping, etc.). Other examples include Iberdrola Energy: portfolio in areas where they’re closing coal powered industries ([see portfolio visualization-insert link](#)); UNDP Indonesia, which is now scaling in 100 communities ([see article](#)); and a network of municipalities in the Basque region are currently joining forces on a new experimentation portfolio investing 50 million Euros per year.**

### **5.2.1 Lenses and support platforms for portfolio management**

When possible and based on local conditions and narratives, ALC’s experience is that managing a people-powered portfolio can be most helpfully carried out with a movement building logic, which invites using two lenses.

Throughout this guide, we have discussed the broad initiative types that make up a portfolio, particularly: 1) projects– initiatives that have already been tested and are high innovation and/or low risk; 2) pilots– ideas that we adapt from experience in other cities, so some clear innovation and fairly low risk; and 3) prototypes– new ideas that we incorporate in the portfolio and where the main purpose is learning and not necessarily impact, because uncertainty and risk are higher. An adaptive, dynamic portfolio management system has the capacity to make the various projects, pilots, and prototypes visible in real time, and enable collective decisions about desirable levels of risk and innovation in the portfolio. In some cities risk-tolerance is higher, so more can be invested in the prototyping element than in other contexts, where cities and their ecosystems may choose to limit the portfolio to projects and pilots.

Lens on Levels of intervention (community, small/mid scale, large scale, public services and regulation)

The types of intervention can be balanced across five levels in order to increase diversity of system dynamics and capabilities for learning and managing risk: 1) community 2) small-mid scale 3) large scale 4) public services and 5) policy and regulatory. (These were described

## 5.2 Dynamic management of urban transformation portfolios

more in depth in Section 2.) Regarding community interventions, we have seen that they are sometimes considered too small-scale, but our experience is that they are critically important, not only to address challenges that larger institutions are ill-equipped to handle, but also to directly address perceptions and narratives of civil society and help build civic agency and capabilities. The quantity and quality of community initiatives is often an excellent indicator of the readiness of the city and openness of local communities for change. As for small to mid-scale interventions, entrepreneurship and startups, we have found this to be an important space for testing and generating rapid responses to challenges. However, there is sometimes a risk that an innovation portfolio is limited to small scale startups, which will not lead to broader systemic change. Regarding the three other levels of intervention – larger scale public-private or civic partnerships, public service redesign, and policy and regulatory change – a portfolio that includes all of these will greatly increase impact potential. Therefore, dynamic portfolio co-creation and management needs to incorporate mapping, listening, sensemaking, and co-design processes, and ensuring a balanced portfolio of multiple types of initiatives and levels of intervention. We often see that the early phases of mapping, listening, and sensemaking are neglected, but they must be seen as critical, as they form the infrastructure for a dynamic, adaptive portfolio management system.

### Support Platform for Portfolio Management

In order to dynamically manage an urban transformation portfolio on an ongoing basis, it is essential to design and set up cross-cutting support functions. These functions can take the form of what is

sometimes called a ‘backbone’ or support system, which can provide coherence and effectiveness for the whole social innovation process. The main support functions include mechanisms for developmental evaluation and learning, convening, experimenting, communicating, and financing. These support systems are essential for effective management, particularly given that transformation portfolios have roles and are positioned in relation to broader ecosystems, which are also dynamic. Fortunately, support systems for portfolio management can benefit from economies of scale. For example, in a country or region that decides to create multiple portfolios across cities and communities, some support functions could be shared in a backbone organization or team to serve multiple geographies or portfolios across the system.

For more information on adopting portfolio approaches, see [System Change: A Guidebook for Adopting Portfolio Approaches, by UNDP \(2022\)](#).



## 6

## Looking Ahead: What's next?

## ★ From ALC

The learning-by-doing design and journey of the City Experiment Fund process with the cities of Prishtina and Stepanavan along with the prototype experience of City Learning Circle helped us develop this Community Listening Guide for a wider network of cities in the region. We've included step-by-step instructions with a menu of tools and information devices, meant to be a framework useful for municipalities to create social innovation platforms and processes and integrate tools of community listening and engagement in their daily work. The tools in this Guide are adaptable to different urban contexts. Thanks to the co-creation process of the City Learning Circle with four cities in the region, we were able to add value to teams' work in each context, and based on what was important to municipalities, we refined certain tools and methods. Additional tools that were of interest and may be further designed and developed in the future include: (1) a full and in-depth explanation and learning mechanisms for the Matrix tool in the form of an audiovisual capsule or other accessible format; and (2) an explanation of the process of designing visuals of the ecosystem mapping data, via illustrator softwares.

**To learn more about our work, to provide feedback on this Guide, or to explore partnering with us, please [get in touch!](#)**

ALC offers research, educational materials, and a suite of tools, including a Digital K-Tool

The ALC web site provides information and tools on community listening – many of which are linked to in this Guide – and others which are in development, such as the new 'K-Tool', a digital visualization tool for collaborative management, evaluation, and communication of social innovation processes. The tool will help collect information in real time via the matrix, for ecosystem mapping, community listening processes, and collective interpretation. This collaborative space will allow teams to visualize the balance between the actions included in the portfolio and the narratives and perceptions of the agents linked to the process. It also allows viewing the set of experimental prototypes in real time. This information facilitates rapid de-

cision-making among a large number of agents (such as UNDP, municipalities, and prototyping teams) in highly complex environments. In addition, the tool will present the information collected in the listening process in a segmented way, so that it can directly assess whether the portfolio of interconnected actions respond to the different needs of the community and thus avoid a homogenization in the response. The tool presents a visualization and evaluation space that can support the processes internally (back office for shared management of the entire process), methodologically (providing rigor to ensure that all the key elements of the process are carried out), and externally (serving as a tool for developmental evaluation and diagrammatic visualization of the process). The tool is currently in its beta version.

**Key Learnings**

Four high level learnings emerged about Community Listening during City Experiment Fund and City Learning Circle.

1. Community listening is not a luxury. All cities – and particularly those in Ukraine – decided to prioritize community listening as a core part of strengthening social cohesion and resilience, particularly in these times of growing crises, insecurity, and precarity. "Social listening constitutes an important element of all our efforts, because I need to say that society now is quite depressed either because of the economic challenges, and of course not only economic ones"
2. Irina, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Ukraine Municipality team.
3. Engaging directly and listening to people in public spaces helps build trust. To build trust and understand the deep lived-experience of residents as well as their hopes and dreams, municipal staff need to get out and listen to people directly – in the streets, public places, and in forums for co-creation, participation and dialogue.
4. Listening structurally and systemically changes culture. To illuminate narratives of possibility for positive

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## Looking Ahead: What's next?

transformation, community listening must be structural and systemic, rather than one-off, and involve on-going, iterative processes of shared interpretation and co-creation of prototypes, experiments, and system demonstration projects. Listening increases the quality of co-creation and can embed itself in the culture.

★ From UNDP

5. Thinking, listening, and acting across horizons and as ecosystems, builds future-fit capabilities. To build future-fit capabilities, cities need to think and act across horizons (triage, transition, transformation) and they need intentional strategies for each. This means addressing immediate pressing problems (triage-horizon 1); improving on existing practices and policies of current systems (transition-horizon 2); and building new systems, infrastructures, and cultures to replace what is becoming obsolete (transformation-horizon 3). Capabilities in community listening, narrative analysis, collective sensemaking, and co-creation are powerful tools to address these strategies and bridge across horizons, as residents and stakeholders can then better grow collective intelligence about the need to operate at multiple horizons and how to do so, together.

This Guide is meant as a stand-alone resource for local authorities in the M4EG network, the City Experiment Fund and beyond that are interested in applying community listening to their planning and strategy formulations, as well as those with ambitions to test a portfolio or mission driven approach to local initiatives for transformative change. What is presented in the guide is one of many ways of applying adaptive and flexible management to local challenges which keeps communities at its heart. The tools presented in this Guide will be translated into a learning offers under the M4EG Urban Learning Center (ULC). The ULC intends to introduce approaches beyond 'business as usual' with a range of tools and approaches with an 'urban makeover' intention, including foresight, community listening, sensemaking, adaptive and agile management, learning and monitoring effects, all with a strong focus on local solutions linked to the global objectives set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

These knowledge will help us to further strengthen our work moving forward, and we look forward to continue supporting cities and regions around the world in their processes of community listening for urban and social transformation.

## [A. Welcome Packet for City Learning Circle](#)

### **B. Additional Resources from ALC:**

A range of resources on social innovation platforms and community listening processes are provided on ALC's research page: <https://www.agirrecenter.eu/work/research/>

### **C. Additional Resources from UNDP:**

#### **1. System Change:**

A Guidebook for Adopting Portfolio Approaches  
<https://www.undp.org/publications/system-change-guidebook-adopting-portfolio-approaches>

#### **2. Sensemaking Protocol:**

<https://www.undp.org/publications/sensemaking-workshop-preparation-guide-and-facilitator-guide-and-sensemaking-training>

#### **3. Urban Learning Center:**

<https://www.sparkblue.org/urbanlearningcenter>

#### **4. Listening to the Present, Designing the Future: A Guide to Deep Listening**

(local Governance team at the UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub (BRH) and Agirre Lehendakaria Center (ALC) with support from UNDP Pakistan, Thailand, and Indonesia)

<https://www.undp.org/publications/listening-present-designing-future-guide-deep-listening>

