

REINVENTING DEMOCRACY IN THE DIGITAL ERA  
**MIDDLEEAST INITIATIVE**



[www.reinventdemocracy.info](http://www.reinventdemocracy.info)

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The report presents the results of **Reinventing Democracy in the Digital Era – MENA Initiative**.

The main event took place in Nicosia (Cyprus) between 15th and 19th May 2017. The face-to-face deliberations of approximately 800 person hours were implemented using Dialogic Design Science. The report includes activities conducted in the context of small grants given to the participants, which were implemented after the main event.

### **Reinventing Democracy in the Digital Era – MENA Initiative.**

Yiannis Laouris, Kevin Dye, Andreas Andreou, Eleni Philippou & 20 others.

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## Contents

The setting	6
Background	8
Problem Analysis	9
Project strategy	10
The use of Digital Technologies	11
About Structured Democratic Dialogue	13
Using Cutting Edge Technologies	16
Further Information on SDD methodology	18
Selection of Core- and Shadow Participants	20
Webinar	21
The Co-Laboratory	22
Idea Generation	26
Voting Ideas	29
Structuring Challenges in an Influence Map	30
From Diagnosis to Action	32
Preparing for the Media, Interviews and other Activities	40
Action Group Grants	42
References	44
Facilitators	46
Participants	50
Annex I	54
Annex II	70

A textured wall with graffiti and the text "Once upon a time there was... HUMANITY". The wall is made of stone or concrete blocks, some of which are painted blue. There are various graffiti tags in red, green, and yellow. The text is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The word "HUMANITY" is written in a larger font size than the rest of the text.

Once upon a time  
there was...

**HUMANITY**

## The setting

Future Worlds Center (FWC), world-pioneer in the development and application of Structured Democratic Dialogue (SDD), has designed and implemented a series of three, week-long dialogues in 2012<sup>1</sup> engaging more than 60 youth leaders from 10 European countries aiming to identify the shortcomings of our current socio-, political-, economic system that discourage youth participation, and determine those characteristics of an ideal system of governance that would encourage them to participate. The results of those dialogues were quite encouraging and served as pre-cursor to the Reinventing Democracy in the Digital Era project. The FWC team decided to replicate the dialogues at a global scale, refine the focus adding the possible role of technology in shaping future systems of governments, and harness the collective wisdom of young leaders from across the globe to draft a Manifesto, which could serve as our compass towards a new global vision for youth participation in matters that influence their lives.

The results are based on the collective work of about 100 young leaders from more than 50 countries who have collaborated for a total of more than 4,000 person hours in face-to-face workshops plus unaccounted number of person hours working individually. This report is one of five: one per global region. The following Triggering Questions were used to guide the discussions:

**What are key shortcomings of our current systems of governance that could be improved through technology?**

**What concrete action, project or product would you propose to solve a particular shortcoming of current systems of governance?**

For summary data on all related activities visit:

<http://reinventdemocracy.info>

[http://futureworlds.eu/wiki/Reinventing\\_Democracy](http://futureworlds.eu/wiki/Reinventing_Democracy)

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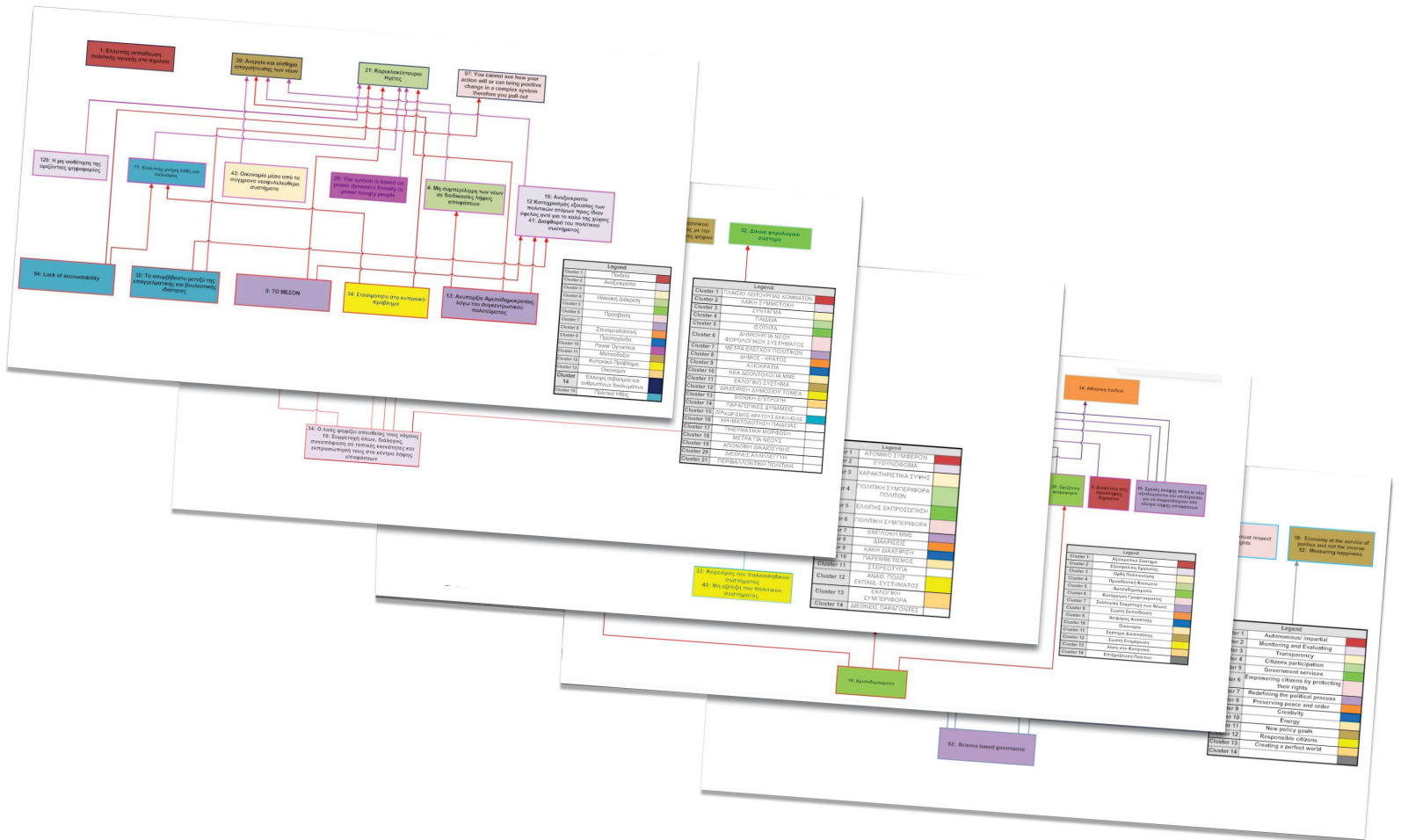
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<sup>1</sup>[futureworlds.eu/wiki/Reinventing\\_Democracy](http://futureworlds.eu/wiki/Reinventing_Democracy)



A screenshot of the videowall of ideas captured during a Structured Democratic Dialogue conducted in 2012 in collaboration with the Digital Task Force of the European Commission under the auspices of the EC Commissioner for Education.

[http://futureworlds.eu/wiki/Reinventing\\_Democracy\\_in\\_the\\_Digital\\_Era\\_\(2012\)](http://futureworlds.eu/wiki/Reinventing_Democracy_in_the_Digital_Era_(2012))



## Background

Our world is currently faced with a number of major challenges, ranging from increasing inequality, which leaves large parts of society without access to basic needs; wars and security threats; a food system in crisis: the carrying capacity of our planet being at its tipping point, and many others. The eight Millennium Development Goals have reached their end date in 2015, and a new global framework, known as Sustainable Development Goals has been negotiated among the world leaders: now with seventeen goals. The key question remains: Can our world ever be sustainable when the next generations are not consulted and are not part of decisions that influence their lives, and when our humanistic values are continuously deteriorating? This initiative is grounded on almost 30 years of action research grounded in Dialogic Design Science (the science behind Structured Democratic Dialogue), an approach that seeks to uncover underlying root causes to societal challenges, as well as actions with the greatest leverage towards achieving positive change.

Whilst the overarching goal is to increase the active participation of next-generation citizens at all levels of governance, the project's key objective is to increase youth participation in democratic governance by empowering young people from across the world to invent and propose new, innovative and concrete actions. The project specifically aims at strengthening the communication and collaboration among youth across the world using structured dialogue, new innovative ICT-based solutions and digital tools to increase participation.

More than 100 young people contributed ideas face-to-face and almost 1000 contributed directly or indirectly (i.e., shadow participants contributing through their respective Core Participants) in the context of five Co-Laboratories (i.e., one per global region) implemented using the Structured Democratic Dialogue (SDD) methodology and fully exploiting possibilities available in the digital era. The process was designed to mobilize young people and to increase interaction among youth globally, with the aim to advocate for and enable meaningful youth participation in democratic processes.

Despite representing a fifth of the world's population, youth remain largely absent from, or underrepresented in political decision-making processes. While the youth are active in social media spaces, most of the policy-making and advocacy still take place through traditional means and media.

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<sup>1</sup>[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennium\\_Development\\_Goals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennium_Development_Goals)

<sup>2</sup>[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable\\_Development\\_Goals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_Development_Goals)

<sup>3</sup>Flanagan and Bausch (2011) have shown "The growing irrelevance of traditional values and continuing failure to evolve new value system" to be the



## Problem Analysis

Despite low youth participation in political processes and elected institutions, young people participate in democratic life through other means, such as political movements, youth organizations, and ad-hoc community initiatives mostly on informal arenas. Their meaningful participation in these processes depends on the political, socio-economic and cultural context and requires both young people and youth organizations to have the opportunities and capacities for youth participation, as well as operate within an enabling environment for civil society and especially young people.

The disengagement of young people in formal democratic processes is the long-term problem to be solved. This project will directly address the following two more specific challenges:

### **Limited joint action for change**

While youths across the world are facing similar obstacles to access the political decision-making arena there are limited opportunities for them to share those experiences and to explore and propose solutions in a structured way and through personal or even virtual interactions.

*To have a stronger voice, youth around the world should unite.*

### **Limited use of ICT / social media to influence the political agenda**

Young people nowadays are immersed in a fast-developing virtual world, which has become part of their every-day lives at school and work; it is their preferred tool to network, to find a job; a platform for new ideas and online discussions. Today's educated and IT-skilled youth, who will be the leaders of tomorrow's societies, expect participatory processes to evolve in this very same framework. Official political processes however are still quite detached from these developments, and thus present yet another gap between real/virtual life and the political decision-making. Most policy-making and high-level advocacy take place through traditional means and media. Youths, with limited resources and contacts, often have limited access and possibility to influence. Through previous SDDs Co-Labs, other young participants identified the "outdated" political system with regards to technology as one of the main causes for low youth participation in democratic processes<sup>1</sup>. Among the younger generation social media is increasingly in shaping public opinion. It is therefore imperative that we strengthen these channels in order to mobilize youths more effectively. This project creates a platform for youths to meet, in person and through social media tools in order to enable them to envision, invent and propose innovative actions designed to facilitate their participation in democratic processes.

<sup>1</sup>[www.futureworlds.eu/w/images/d/d0/Digital\\_Era\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.futureworlds.eu/w/images/d/d0/Digital_Era_Report_Final.pdf) Page 21

## Project Strategy

Based on the problem analysis, and in order to reach the key objective, the project strategy is built on the following key components:

1. Sharing the experiences and outcomes from European SDD Co-laboratories with youth activists from other continents and develop a joint understanding of root causes for the lack of youth participation in official democratic processes;
2. Engaging 100 young participants from around the globe in regional SDD Co-laboratories during which they will design solutions for the key root causes previously identified, and thus contribute to the development of new and innovative systems of governance;
3. Empowering the young participants to take action and promote their very own ideas and solutions, both within their local community as well as on a broader national/ international level;
4. Utilizing the broad range of ICT tools available to young people, such as social media, videos, etc. to build a wide platform for Reinventing Democracy – accessible to young people from around the world.

The project uses Structured Democratic Dialogue (SDD). We chose this particular methodology because of its uniqueness in empowering and mobilizing participants to take action. In addition, the SDD methodology is based on scientific laws, which have been repeatedly validated, empirically and scientifically, in the arena of practice. This methodology supports groups of diverse stakeholders with conflicting opinions and interests to effectively discuss a matter of joint concern, integrate their knowledge, and democratically redesign their socio-organizational systems and practices reaching consensus agreement for effective collaborative action. Youth citizens' representatives develop a common language, a shared understanding of the problematic situation in which they are embedded, and become better equipped to formulate their ideas, suggestions, and strategies with clarity. The interaction empowers youth to take follow-up actions thus ensuring their strong commitment to change. Participants of the co-Laboratories design and develop concrete ideas for action and have the space and support to build their own action plans. The facilitating team assists the participants in identifying ways to promote their ideas, engage with political decision-makers, as well as mobilize members of the community. A manifesto grounded on a comprehensive analysis and compilation of all ideas, and jointly drafted, is finally used to engage more youth across the world and hopefully encourage the media to host live debates between project participants and national or international policy makers thus connecting them with youth and citizen pioneers.

Project activities were designed to empower participants to take the future in their hands and develop concrete action proposals that can enhance meaningful youth participation in local, regional and/or national

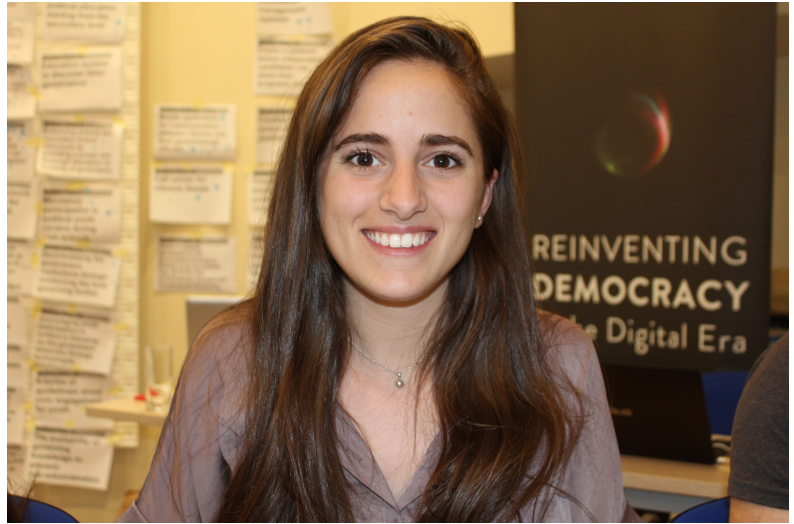
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governance. The key activity were regional Structured Democratic Dialogue (SDD) Co-Laboratories (Co-Labs) where 100 youths created action plans and laid the foundation to coordinated action, such as jointly authored e-books for change, a Manifesto for 21st Century and video clips with Proposals for Action.

To build on the results from the Co-Laboratories, and to ensure sustainability and effective implementation of the action plans, regional and global webinars were arranged among the participants whenever necessary and possible. Furthermore, participants were encouraged and supported to promote their own ideas and the outcomes of the project in their respective local communities and media.

## **The use of Digital Technologies**

In all the above, technology is used to support the process, as well as to ensure a wide outreach of the young people's actions and ideas via social media campaigns, digital videos, blogs and online articles etc. In addition, using the mobile application IdeaPrism™, the project engages large numbers of young people who might not be able to physically participate in the co-Laboratories. Through this mobile application, their ideas are shared and validated by their peers not only from their respective communities, but on a global scale. Participants are also invited to join regional and global webinars on Participatory Democracy. Online technologies strengthen communication and interaction among the participants.



## About Structured Democratic Dialogue

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

For about 3-4 hours participants submit single-sentence responses as well as long clarifications in response to a specific Triggering Question. In all Co-Laboratories (this term is preferred over 'workshop' to emphasize the fact that participants explore and discover together) of this project the same two Triggering Questions have been used:

What are key shortcomings of our current systems of governance that could be improved through technology?

What concrete action, project or product would you propose to solve a particular shortcoming of current systems of governance?

During the first few hours, other participants may ask clarification, but no judgment questions. A bottom-up approach is subsequently applied to cluster all Statements into groups according to similarity and then participants are asked to choose the five they consider most important. The Statements that receive two or more votes enter the final discussion in which participants explore influence relations such as:

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

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

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

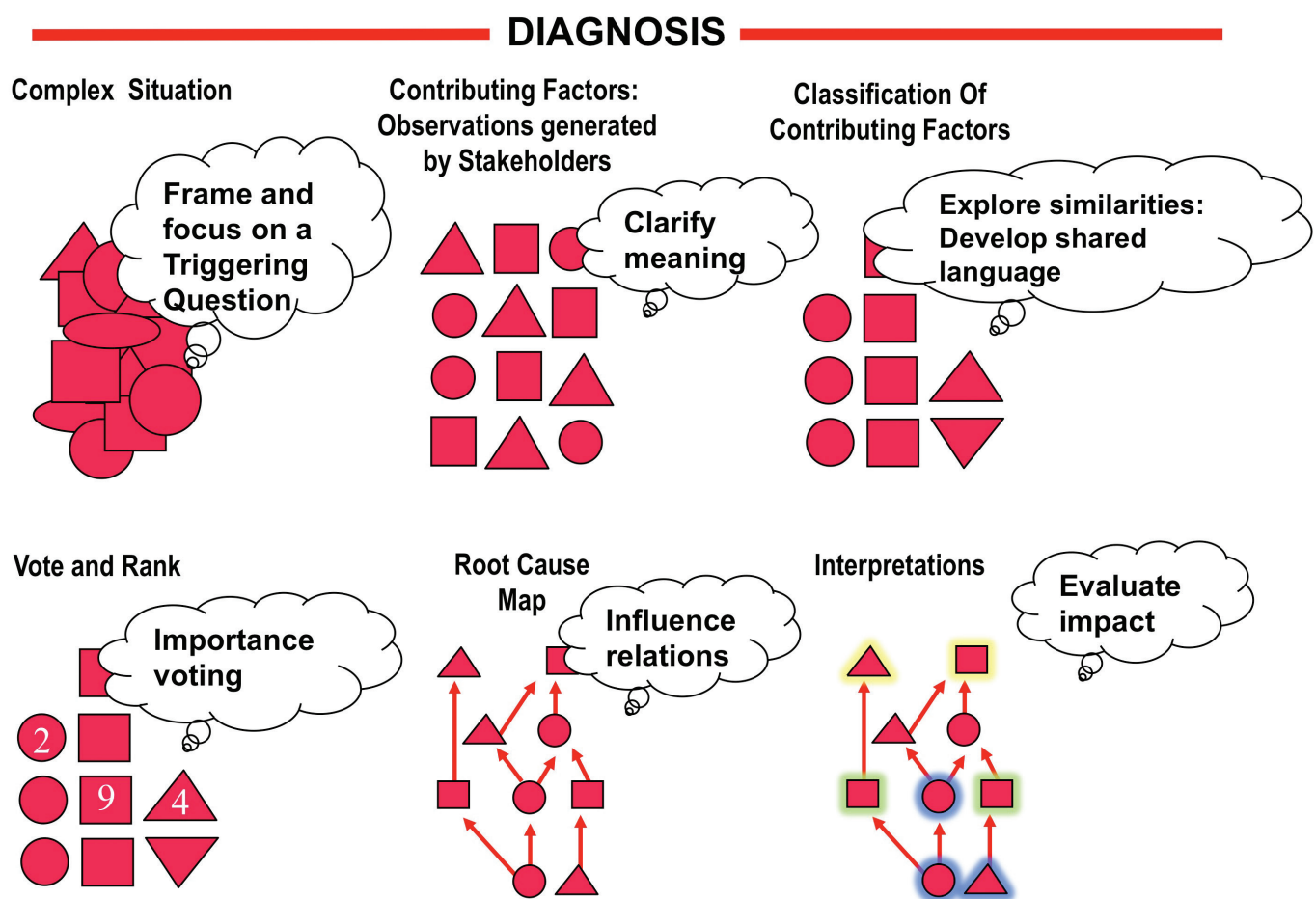
Özbekhan is credited for the formulation of the Axiom of Engagement, which states “it is unethical to design action plans for complex social systems without the engagement of the community of stakeholders.” The SDD evolved into its present format, which harnesses digital technologies with contributions of Yiannis Laouris and his group at Future Worlds Center. They have introduced a hybrid version, i.e., partly face-to-face and partly synchronous (Laouris and Christakis, 2007) and they developed a free App known as IdeaPrism<sup>1</sup>, which allows the collection of contributions (both text and video) as well as their evaluation using multiple criteria (e.g, SMART, Impact, Feasibility, Probability, etc.).



<sup>1</sup>[www.IdeaPrism.net](http://www.IdeaPrism.net)

They have also developed Cogniscope v3 using requirements proposed by the international community of practitioners for a next-generation tool (conducted as virtual SDD in 2012; Laouris, Y., Christakis, A. N., Dye, K. M., et al., 2012), ISM Parallel<sup>1</sup>, and other advanced tools used in the SDDs of this project (see section: Using Cutting Edge Technologies). Laouris is credited for the Law of Requisite Action, which states that ‘the capacity of a community of stakeholders to implement a plan of action effectively depends strongly on the true engagement of the stakeholders in designing it. Disregarding the participation of the stakeholders the plans are bound to fail<sup>2</sup>.’

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



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

<sup>1</sup>[ekkotek.com/index.php/products/wisdom-tools/ism-parallel](http://ekkotek.com/index.php/products/wisdom-tools/ism-parallel)

<sup>2</sup>[dialogicdesignscience.wikispaces.com/Laws+%287%29](http://dialogicdesignscience.wikispaces.com/Laws+%287%29)

## Using Cutting Edge Technologies

The Structured Democratic Dialogues for this project took full advantage of cutting-edge technologies both theoretical and technological.

### **SDD: Structured Democratic Dialogue**

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

### **ISM: Interpretive Structural Modeling**

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

[http://reinventdemocracy.info/w/Interpretive\\_Structural\\_Modeling](http://reinventdemocracy.info/w/Interpretive_Structural_Modeling)

### **DDS: Dialogic Design Science**

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

### **Cogniscope v3.2 Classic**

Software that supports the implementation of face-to-face dialogues designed in compliance with the requirements imposed by Dialogic Design Science. The original CogniScope™ was designed by Aleco Christakis and developed by CWA Ltd. and was running only on Windows 95 machines. The requirements for CogniScope v3.2 Classic were developed by theoreticians and practitioners from across the world, that participated in a virtual SDDP organized by Future Worlds Center and the Institute for 21st Century Agoras in 2012. The Classic v3, developed by Ekkotek Ltd., runs on Windows and Mac computers, and includes almost all requirements requested by the community. <http://ekkotek.com/index.php/products/wisdom-tools/cogniscope3>

### **Concertina**

Array of 14 tools that support the implementation of face-to-face as well as asynchronous and hybrid dialogues running on a variety of systems including web and mobile devices. Special versions for researchers and educators capture a wealth of data and indices such as timestamps, interactions, statistics, etc.

<http://ekkotek.com/index.php/products/wisdom-tools/concertina>



## IdeaPrism

Available as App and on the web, it facilitates the implementation of face-to-face as well as asynchronous and hybrid dialogues. The only tool that allows video clarifications, App-to-App communication, voting using multiple criteria as well as real-time virtual projections of all SDD outputs, either as web walls or as illustrations ready to be projected using a beamer.

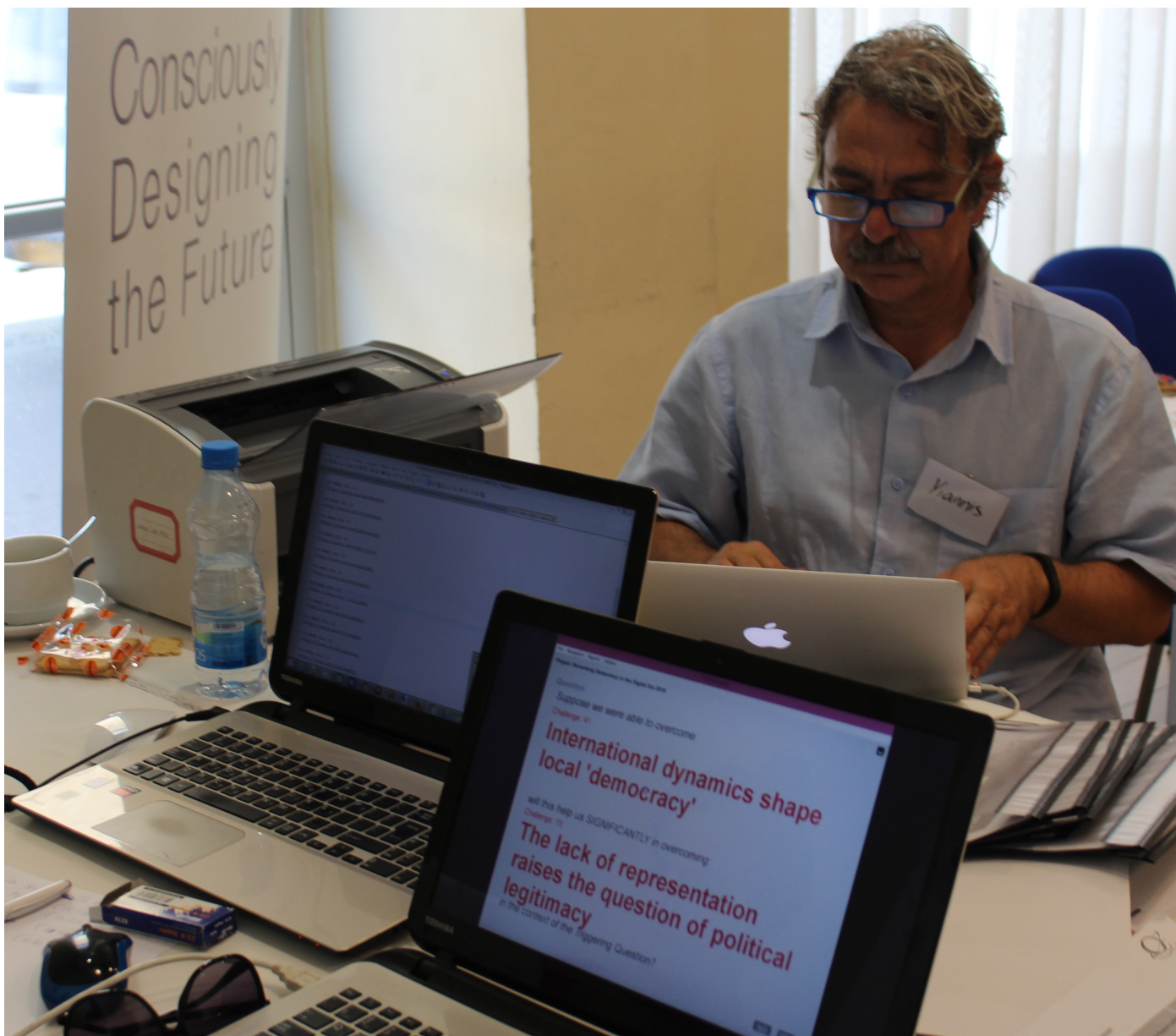
<http://www.ideaprism.net>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/idea-prism/id769448500?mt=8>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.iziss.ideaprism&hl=en>

## Idea and Video Wall

Special tool, also available within Concertina and IdeaPrism, which supports the virtualization of all SDDP outputs (i.e., A4 pages are projected on the wall along with Statements, Clusters, Influence Maps, etc.) using beamers to project them on the surrounding walls during a face-to-face SDDP implementation.



## Further Information on SDD methodology



### Begin your search on the Internet

Use keywords such as: Structured Democratic Dialogue, Dialogue Design, Lovers of Democracy, Hasam Ozbekhan, John Warfield, Aleco Christakis, Yiannis Laouris, Club of Rome, Civil Society Dialogue<sup>1</sup>.



### Books and Reviews

Christakis, A.N. and Bausch, K. (2006). How People Harness Their Collective Wisdom and Power to Construct the Future in Co-Laboratories of Democracy. Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Flanagan, T. R., and Christakis, A. N., (2009). The Talking Point: Creating an Environment for Exploring Complex Meaning. Information Age Publishing Inc.

Laouris, Y., and Dye, K. (2017). Manual for Organizing Structured Democratic Dialogue\* Events: The SDD Playbook, Future Worlds Center Press, Nicosia, Cyprus

Bausch, K. (2015). With Reason and Vision: Structured Dialogic Design, Ongoing Emergence Press, Cincinnati, OH 45274

Laouris, Y. (2012). The ABCs of the science of structured dialogic design. International Journal of Applied Systemic Studies, 4(4), 239-257.



### Software



<sup>1</sup>[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil\\_Society\\_Dialogue\\_project\\_in\\_Cyprus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Society_Dialogue_project_in_Cyprus)



### Wikis and Websites

<http://www.dialogicdesignsscience.wikispases.com>  
[blogara.wikifoundry.com](http://blogara.wikifoundry.com)  
[http://www.futureworlds.eu/wiki/Structured\\_Dialogic\\_Design\\_Process](http://www.futureworlds.eu/wiki/Structured_Dialogic_Design_Process)

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### Practice Centers

Future Worlds Center: [www.futureworldscenter.org](http://www.futureworldscenter.org)



Institute for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Agoras: [www.globalagoras.org](http://www.globalagoras.org)



### Demosophia

Lovers of Democracy: Description of the technology of Democracy: [sunsite.utk.edu/FINS/loversofdemocracy/](http://sunsite.utk.edu/FINS/loversofdemocracy/)

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### Selected Recent Publications of the Future Worlds Team

Laouris, Y., and Michaelides, M. (2017). "Structured Democratic Dialogue: An application of a mathematical problem structuring method to facilitate reforms with local authorities in Cyprus." *European Journal of Operational Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2017.04.039>

Laouris, Y., Dye, K. M.C. , Michaelides, M., and Christakis, S.N. Co-laboratories of Democracy: Best Choices for Designing Sustainable Futures (2014) In: G.S. Metcalf (ed.), *Social Systems and Design, Translational Systems Sciences 1*, DOI 10.1007/978-4-431-54478-4\_7, Springer Japan. 175-193.

Laouris, Y. 2014 Reengineering and Reinventing both Democracy and the Concept of Life in the Digital Era (2014). In: L. Floridi (ed.), *The Onlife Manifesto*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-04093-6\_16, Springer International Publishing Switzerland.

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## Selection of Core- and Shadow Participants

Special criteria were used for the selection of the Core Participants. For the Co-Laboratory we tried to choose about 20 (gender balanced) participants, with at least half of the participants travelling from other countries. A key concern was to keep gender equality among the participants, and to secure that those selected have extensive relevant previous experience, enjoy recognition among their peers in their respective countries and possess an extensive and powerful network, which they will be able to utilize in order to ensure maximum impact of their work and dissemination of the results and deliverables of the project. This was considered necessary to counterbalance the fact that politics are in general "monopolized" by men. By ensuring a balanced gender, social economic status and ethnicity representation in the Co-Laboratories, the perspective and ideas of the young women is now prominent in all outcome documents. Participants were recruited through online application systems, utilizing global alliances and through social media. The needs of marginalized and/or vulnerable groups were also taken into account in the project design and an overall balanced representation was attempted.

### **The selection criteria are detailed below with their respective weights:**

Gender (20%)

Age: young people 18 – 30 years old (15%)

Anti-discrimination criteria (10%)

Years of relevant experience or/and prior relevant activities (10%)

Potential for organizing follow-up activities (10%)

Belonging to associations with wide networks (5%)

Communication skills (5%)

Reliability / Commitment (5%)

Country of origin / nationality (5%)

Availability of sponsors (10%)

Uninterrupted access to social networking (5%).

Before attending the co-Laboratory, each participant should have secured at least 10 others (from the same country or region to serve as hers/his "Shadow Participants." These virtual participants contributed their thoughts and ideas during the events being in direct communication with their respective Core Participants and/or using the IdeaPrism™ App or through the website.

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## Webinar

The successfully selected Core-Participants were invited to organized webinars in order to meet each other (before the face-to-face events) and/or interact with the project staff, and/or interact with each other (after the face-to-face event). However, the participants created their own interactive groups using other technological platforms than the ones provided by the project, such as Whatsup, Viber and Messenger. Although it has been difficult to monitor and administer those groups, their initiatives were supported because participants developed a much stronger sense of ownership. Their interactions continue to the present date. They engage in many dialogues and share their everyday thoughts and experiences. These chat and video rooms have served and continue to serve as peer to peer empowerment tools.

## The Co-Laboratory

The Co-Laboratory took place in Nicosia (Cyprus) between 15th and 19th May 2017. The decision to organize it in Cyprus was dictated by the many obstacles and complications faced by the organizers in their effort to issue visas for all participants, and secure their safety. The first two days were invested



**What are key shortcomings of current systems and how could they be improved?**

in an SDD aiming to identify the root shortcomings. The next two days were dedicated to exploring solutions and actions. On the last day, the participants worked on their possible projects and practiced public speaking by presenting them to the group and answering questions. The next section presents the results of the Shortcomings SDD.



# Shortcomings of our of governance that through technology?

Middle East Initiative



Bengisu Colak  
**TURKEY**



Houda Halwani  
**LEBANON**



Fatma Younis  
**EGYPT**



Ano Surmava  
**GEORGIA**



Ivi Solomou  
**CYPRUS**



Abedalrahman ALzghoul  
**JORDAN**



Karim Chalhoub  
**LEBANON**



Eslam Elhossien  
**EGYPT**



Deloris Saad  
**LEBANON**



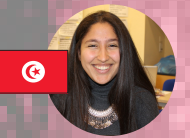
Ayman Abu Aishe  
**PALESTINE**



Incinur Yilgin  
**TURKEY**



Hassan Mahareeq  
**PALESTINE**



Takwa Makhlof  
**TUNISIA**



Hazim Musleh  
**PALESTINE**



Eytan Shafir  
**ISRAEL**



Omar El menofy  
**BAHRAIN**



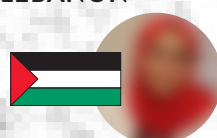
Hoda Touma  
**LEBANON**



Karim Chalhoub  
**LEBANON**



R.M.  
**PALESTINE**



N.B.  
**PALESTINE**



Andreas Andre  
**PROJECT CORDI**



Kevin Dye  
**SENIOR FACILITATOR**



Eleni Philipou  
**TECHNOLOGY EXPERT**



Leslie Ngam  
**VIDEO EXPERT**





Yiannis Laouris  
LEAD FACILITATOR



20 Core Participants



10 Countries



69 Challenges



59 Actions



Andreou  
COORDINATOR

## Key Challenges

- #34: Deficiency in the process of raising awareness around the rights of citizens
- #45: Lack of women's engagement in politics
- #30: Absence of meritocracy in governmental institution
- #18: Corruption

## Key Actions

- #14: Online interactive and fun platform dedicated in addressing the issues related to the youth's engagement in politics as well as the enhancing of awareness regarding the rights of citizens
- # 1: Mandatory participation in political youth centers during high schools
- #58: Awareness campaigns about human rights and the role of citizens
- #56: Creating monitoring and evaluation system in work places and governmental institutions
- #55: Development of effective supporting units
- #52: Create a platform where independent candidates can share their programs and views



Aspasia Ksidea  
ASSISTANT FACILITATOR

Disclaimer: Several participants requested that their identities not be revealed for personal security reasons. Their names, bios, and images have been either excluded from the reports and/or blurred.



## Idea Generation

After carefully examining together the Triggering Question and discussing briefly the ideas submitted previously on Idea-Prism, the participants were asked to state their ideas, responding to the TQ, using a single-sentence statement. In this phase, the Facilitator asked one by one, in a round-robin manner, all participants for their statements. The process continued in multiple rounds until all ideas have been collected. The ideas were recorded using the Cogniscope Classic v.3 software. In parallel, and during the short break before the next stage, the Technical Assistant copied the ideas in IdeaPrism and matched them to their corresponding authors.

The participants produced **69 Ideas** in response to the Triggering Question. ANNEX II - Ideas.

## Clarifications

The participants were then invited to stand in front of the group and actually “pitch” for 1-2 minutes. Each participant got the floor to explain his/her idea(s) to the rest of the participants. The goal was that everyone was clear about the meaning. Clarifications were now recorded directly through Idea-Prism and made available to the cloud and on YouTube, so that Shadow Participants as well as Core Participants would have the possibility to review them at a any later stage. The decision to place participants in front of an audience and a camera was a conscious one. It was justified by the fact that their generation grows up with digital devices, video messaging and more public sharing. Furthermore, the theoretical thesis of the project is that in order to achieve tangible impact in transforming society, young active citizens need to learn to verbalize and share their concrete ideas widely. Immediately after their pitches, the audience was given the opportunity to ask clarification questions. At this stage, no judgment questions or statements were allowed, in compliance with the SDD theory and practice.

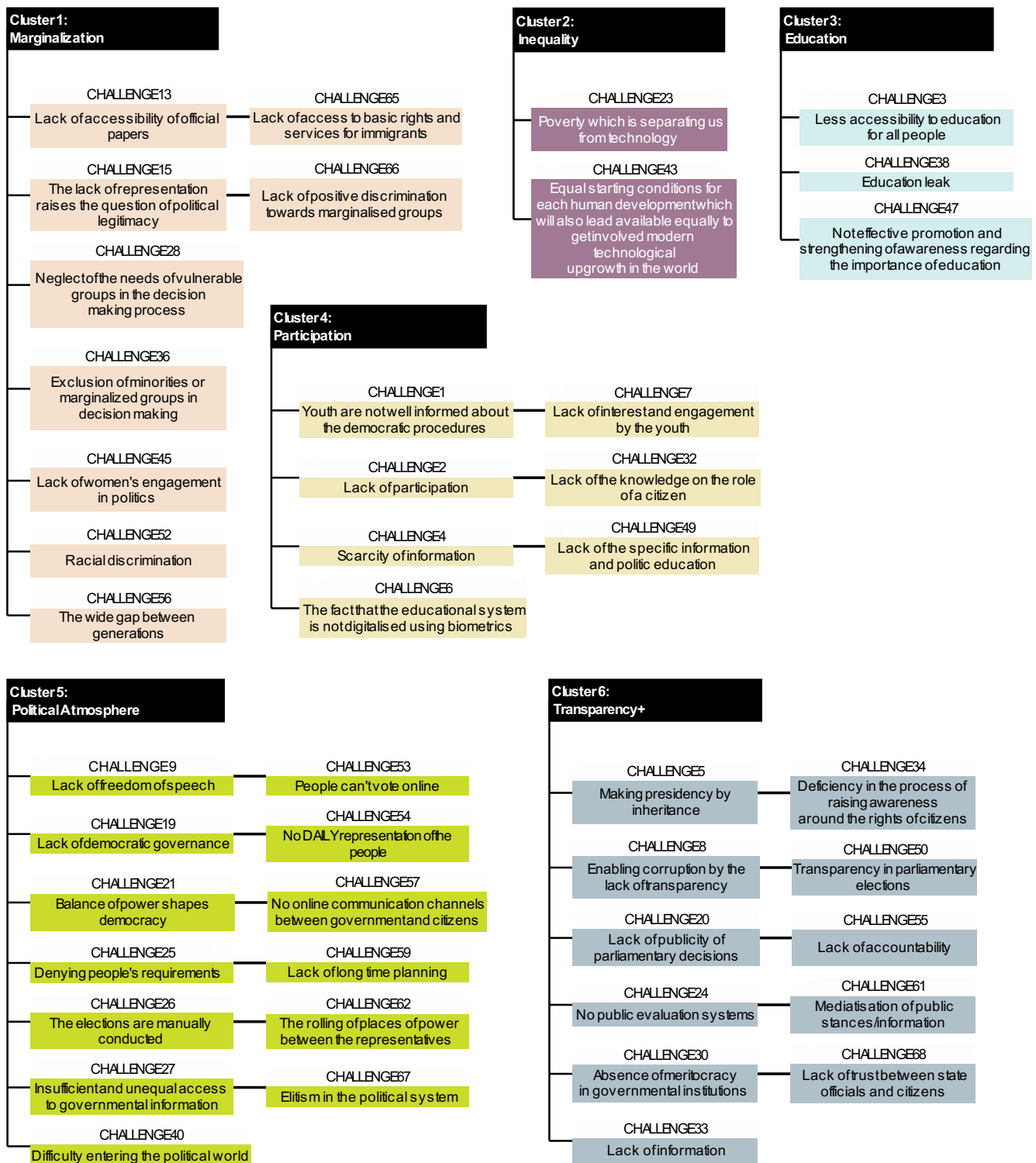
## Clustering Ideas into Groups

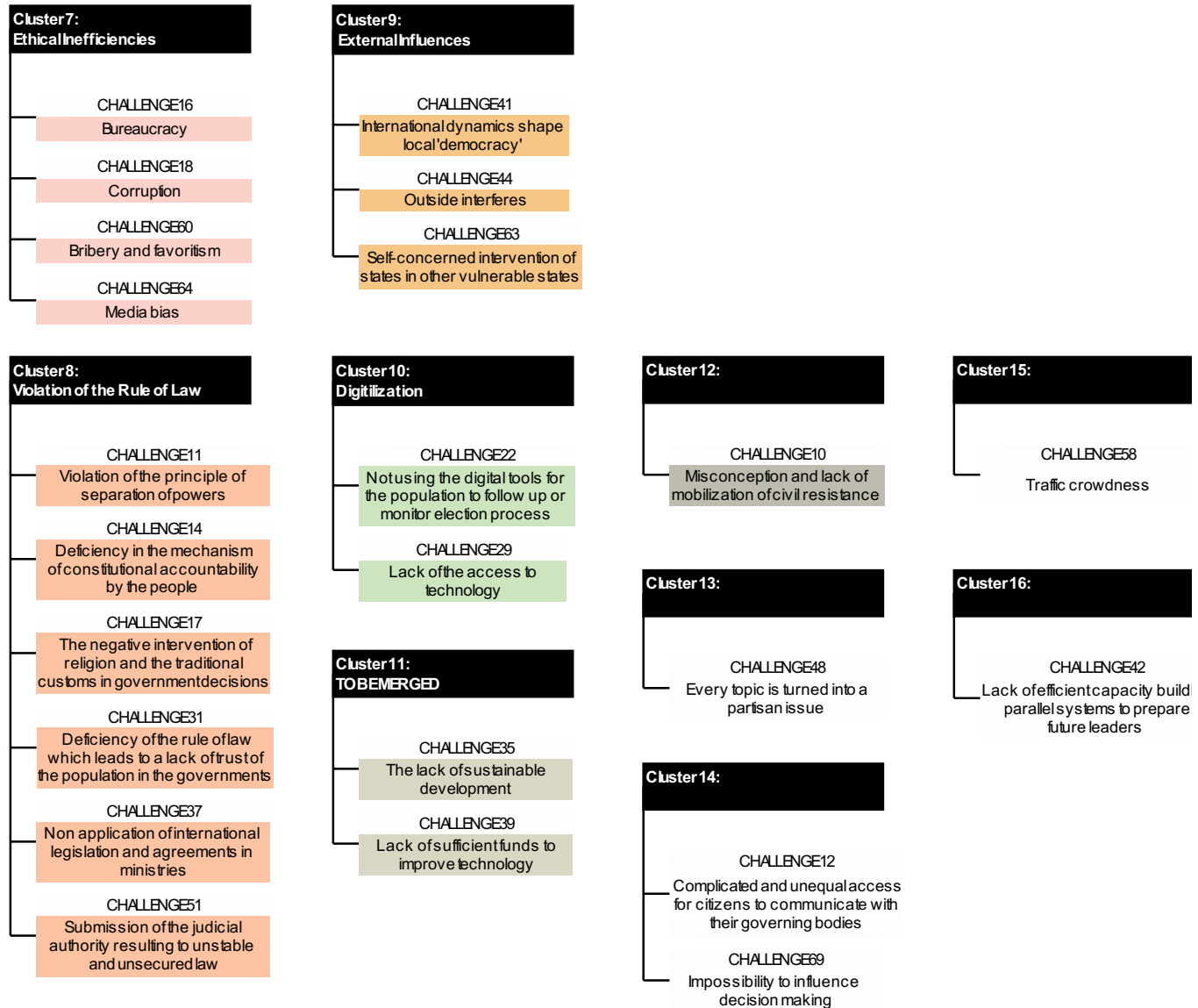
The next step involved the clustering of observations using a bottom-up approach. This process takes much longer than top-down clustering methods, because it encourages discussion. Evolutionary learning takes place as the participants are encouraged to explore how specific aspects of their ideas might make them similar to other ideas; a process that forces them to draw further distinctions. Participants were asked to respond to a question like the one shown below and if 2/3 of them agreed, then the ideas

were placed in the same cluster.

## Does Idea X have SIGNIFICANT common attributes with Idea Y to justify putting them in the same Cluster?

The ideas were clustered in 16 categories





## Voting

After all ideas have been clustered, the participants were asked to choose the **five** ideas that they considered as more important from the pool of all ideas. Ideas that receive at least two votes from the participants are selected to the next stage. Out of the 69 ideas only 27 received one or more votes, i.e., Spretthink was 34%, which represents a good degree of agreement between the participants regarding the challenges they face. This is remarkable because it is on the low end. One could explain that arguing that challenges in the MENA countries are more similar and homogeneous compared to challenges among other countries on the globe. It also means that the participants were in greater agreement among them.

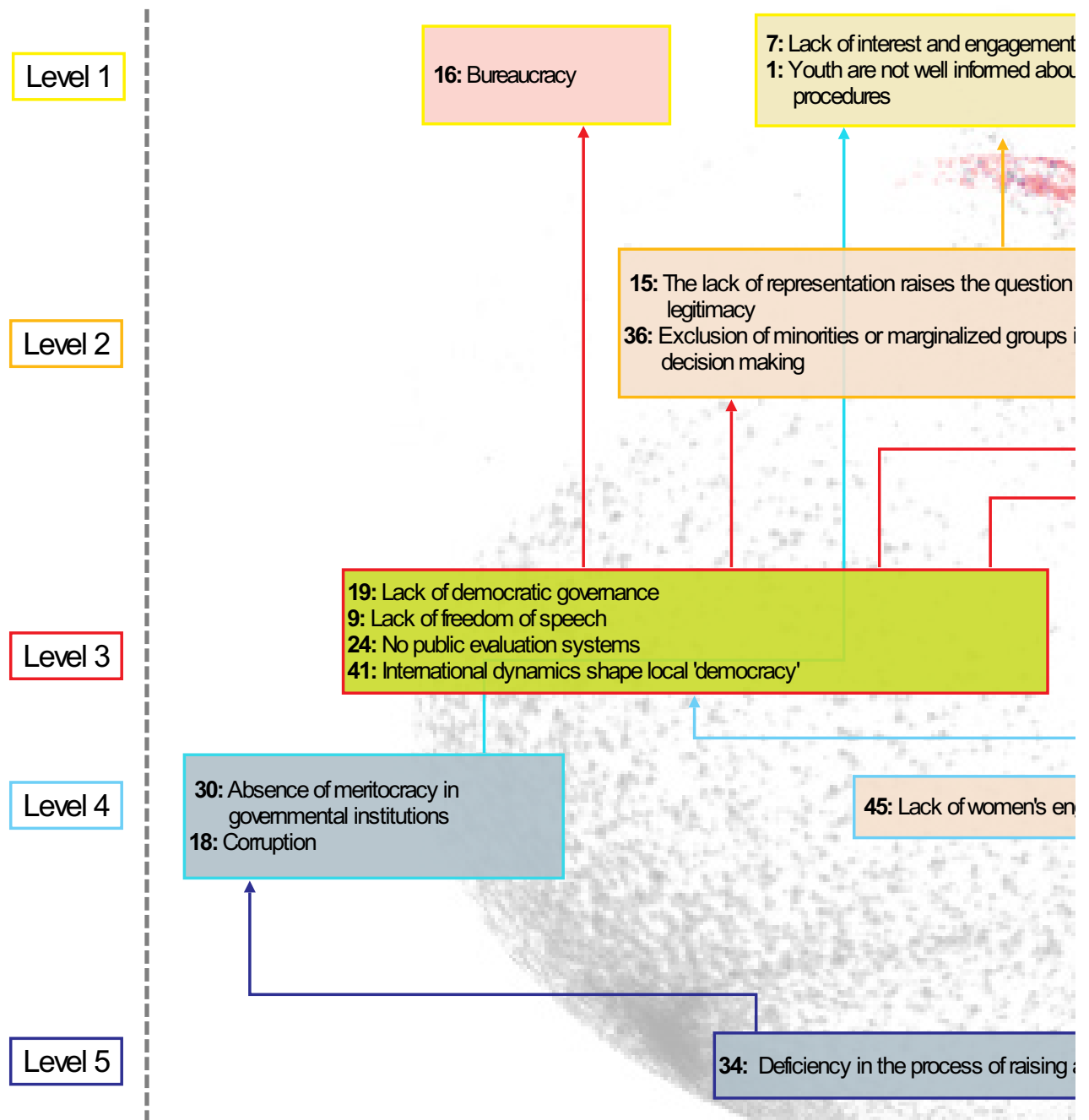
For this SDD the ideas that received votes were:

Votes	Idea
9	<b>16: Bureaucracy</b>
8	<b>30: Absence of meritocracy in governmental institutions</b>
7	<b>19: Lack of democratic governance</b>
7	<b>64: Media bias</b>
6	<b>37: Lack of civic engagement and social responsibility</b>
5	<b>1: Youth are not well informed about the democratic proceduresnology</b>
5	<b>18: Corruption</b>
4	15: The lack of representation raises the question of political legitimacy
3	9: Lack of freedom of speech
3	34: Deficiency in the process of raising awareness around the rights of citizens
3	36: Exclusion of minorities or marginalized groups in decision making
3	41: International dynamics shape local 'democracy'
3	45: Lack of women's engagement in politics
3	57: No online communication channels between government and citizens
2	43: Equal starting conditions for each human development which will also lead available equally to get involved modern technological upgrowth in the world
2	47: Not effective promotion and strengthening of awareness regarding the importance of education
2	66: Lack of positive discrimination towards marginalised groups
1	3: Less accesibility to education for all people
1	12: Complicated and unequal access for citizens to communicate with their governing bodies
1	14: Deficiency in the mechanism of constitutional accountability by the people
1	22: Not using the digital tools for the population to follow up or monitor election process
1	28: Neglect of the needs of vulnerable groups in the decision making process
1	32: Lack of the knowledge on the role of a citizen
1	33: Lack of information
1	38: Education leak
1	39:Lack of sufficient funds to improve technology
1	60: Bribery and favouritism

## Structuring Challenges in an Influence Map

At this stage, participants were asked to explore influences of one idea on another. They were asked to decide whether making progress in resolving one Challenge would SIGNIFICANTLY make the resolution of another Challenge easier. If the answer following a structured discussion was “Yes” with a great majority (67%), an influence was established on the map of ideas. The participants structured first those challenges that received four or more votes.

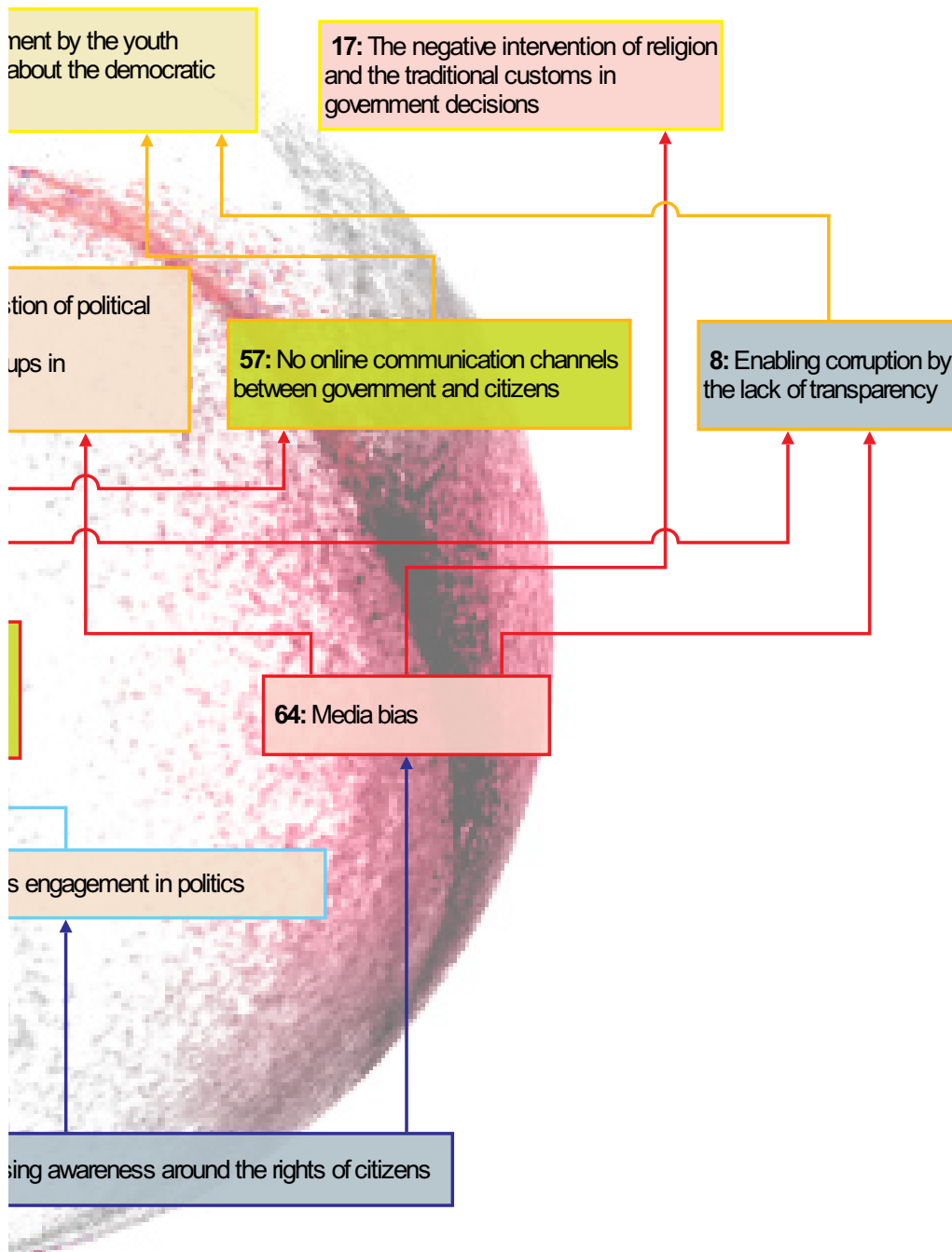
The resulting Influence Map, consisting of five different levels, is shown below. The way to read such a tree structure is that Challenges at the bottom are most influential.



The tree structure includes the 17 Challenges. Those with the greatest influences are the ideas that ended up in the root of the MAP as listed below.

## Key Challenges

- #34: Deficiency in the process of raising awareness around the rights of citizens
- #45: Lack of women's engagement in politics
- #30: Absence of meritocracy in governmental institution
- #18: Corruption



## From Diagnosis to Action

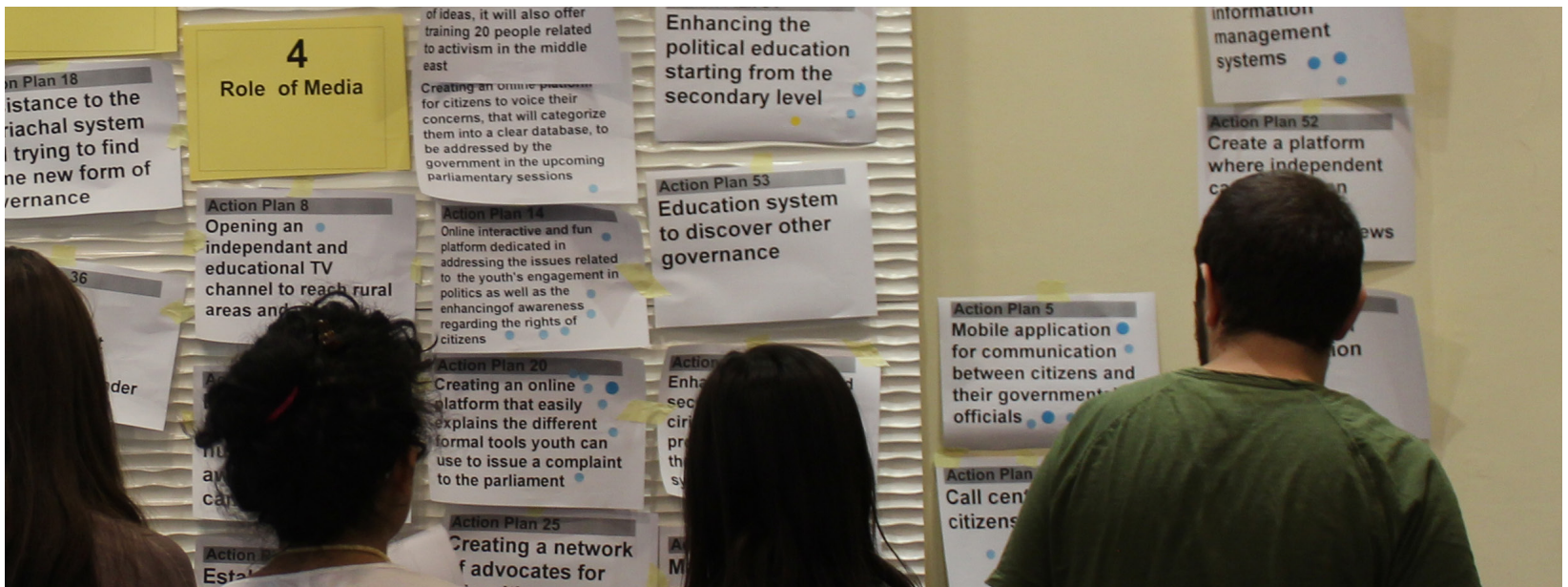
During the next two days, the co-laboratory focused on proposals for action. The participants were asked to propose actions through which shortcomings of our current systems of governance, as they identified before, could be resolved. They were encouraged to make proposals that took advantage of what the digital era could offer, but they were not constrained to only such proposals. The participants came up with a total of 59 proposals, listed in the ANNEXES section. They followed the same process as before to cluster,



# What concrete action product would you propose to address particular shortcomings of our current systems of governance?

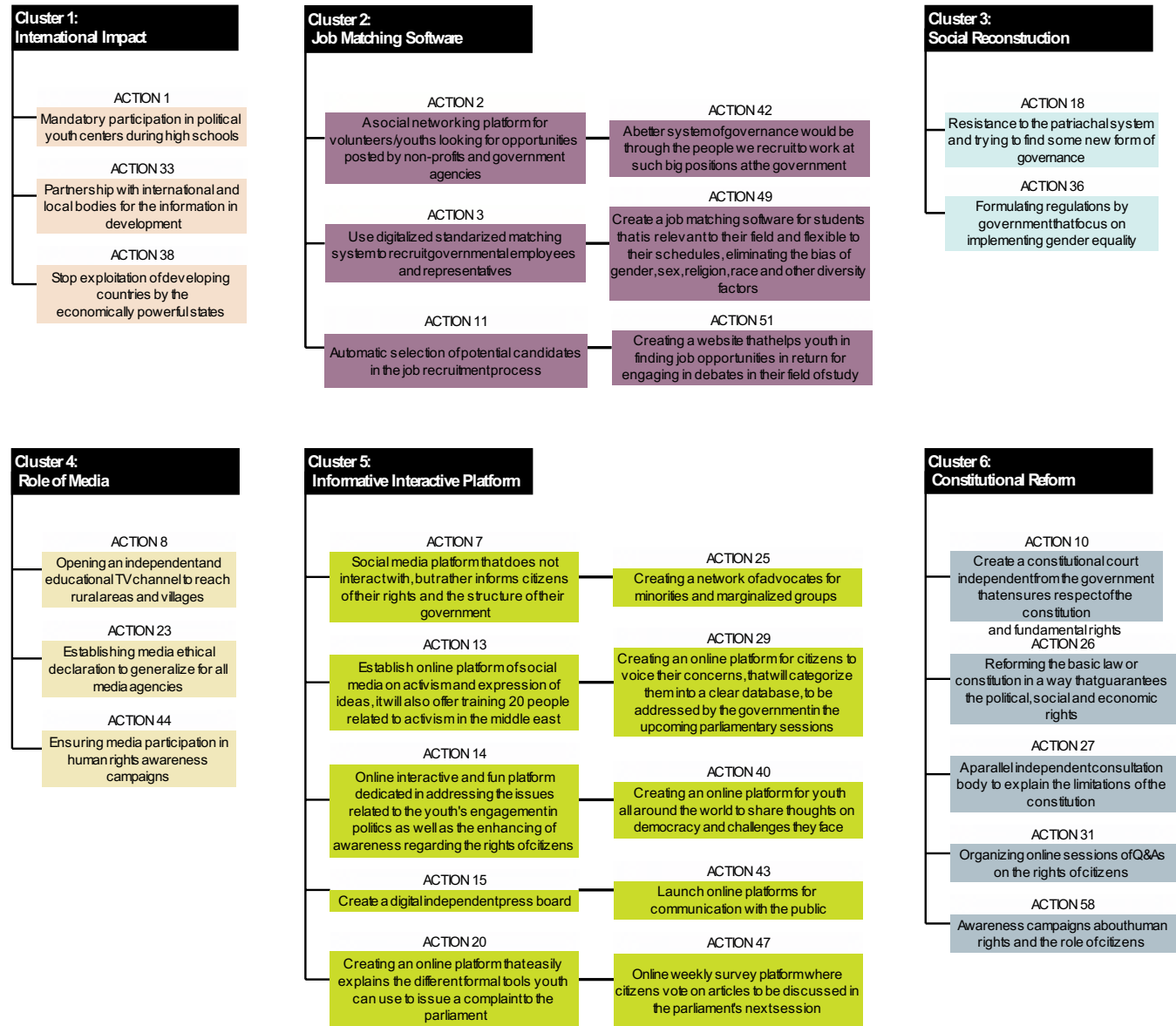


select and structure their proposals into Influence Maps. The clustering was conducted in three different groups, as shown in the pictures. The Table shows the results of the voting. Again they have completed their MAP in two stages, first structuring ideas with two or more votes and then using a re-voting process (choosing from proposals that received one or none votes) they agreed to structure additional proposals. The resulting maps are shown.



**action, project or  
I propose to solve a  
coming of current  
governance?**

## Clustering Actions



**Cluster 7:  
Political & Civic Education**

- ACTION 1  
Mandatory participation in political youth centers during high schools
- ACTION 6  
Decentralising the government institutions through reinforcing the local governing bodies
- ACTION 9  
Enhancing primary and secondary school curriculums by providing a proper and thorough education on systems of governance
- ACTION 19  
Encouraging youth participation in politics in following up the government behaviour through technologies
- ACTION 37  
The availability of governing knowledge to prevent mal-administration
- ACTION 45  
A series of workshops about civic engagement for youth

- ACTION 53  
Education system to discover other governance
- ACTION 54  
Enhancing the political education starting from the secondary level

**Cluster 8:**

- ACTION 5  
Mobile application for communication between citizens and their governmental officials
- ACTION 21  
Call center for citizens issues

**Cluster 9:  
Government Online Platform**

- ACTION 4  
Government data must be available online to increment transparency level
- ACTION 12  
Create a website that re-organizes data on politicians' financial information
- ACTION 17  
Government information management systems
- ACTION 24  
Creation of an online election platform
- ACTION 28  
Online voting systems for representatives
- ACTION 30  
Create a website developed by the government aiming to extend, in an accessible way, all of the law, governmental decrees and jurisdictional decisions

- ACTION 34  
Surveys for citizens in order to establish data based decision making
- ACTION 46  
Create an online platform for political consultation
- ACTION 52  
Create a platform where independent candidates can share their programs and views

**Cluster 10:  
NO NAME**

- ACTION 22  
Establish subsidiary government agencies to assist with the policies and problems faced in the countries
- ACTION 55  
Development of effective supporting units

**Cluster 11:  
Representative Policy**

- ACTION 50  
Make public every year the accounts of the political parties and establish a financial cap to ensure an equality for all parties
- ACTION 57  
Limit the possibility for an elected representative to be elected more than two times for the same mandate

**Cluster 12:  
Evaluation Systems**

- ACTION 32  
Confronting what studies show and what politicians say (for example factchecker)
- ACTION 56  
Creating monitoring and evaluation system in work places and governmental institutions

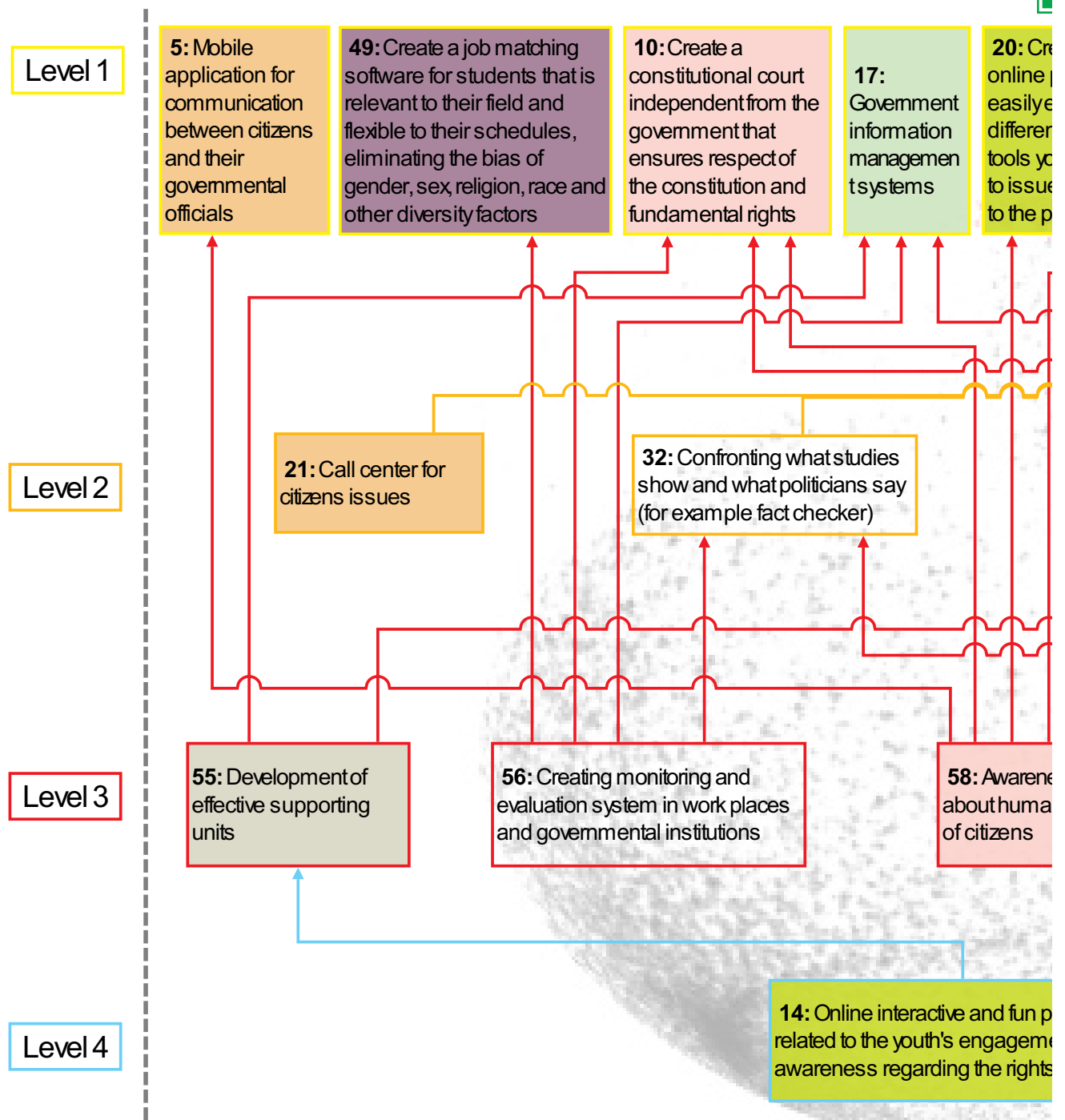
**Cluster 13:  
NO NAME**

- ACTION 16  
Formulating sub-committees to focus on the short term issues

#	Votes	Action Plan
5	8	<b>Mobile application for communication between citizens and their governmental officials</b>
55	8	<b>Development of effective supporting units</b>
20	7	<b>Creating an online platform that easily explains the different formal tools youth can use to issue a complaint to the parliament</b>
32	7	<b>Confronting what studies show and what politicians say (for example fact checker)</b>
6	6	<b>Decentralising the government institutions through reinforcing the local governing bodies</b>
14	6	<b>Online interactive and fun platform dedicated in addressing the issues related to the youth's engagement in politics as well as the enhancing of awareness regarding the rights of citizens</b>
56	6	<b>Creating monitoring and evaluation system in work places and governmental institutions</b>
58	6	<b>Awareness campaigns about human rights and the role of citizens</b>
10	5	<b>Create a constitutional court independent from the government that ensures respect of the constitution and fundamental rights</b>
12	4	<b>Create a website that re-organizes data on politicians' financial information</b>
1	3	Mandatory participation in political youth centers during high schools
17	3	Government information management systems
21	3	Call center for citizens issues
9	2	Enhancing primary and secondary school curriculums by providing a proper and thorough education on systems of governance
11	2	Automatic selection of potential candidates in the job recruitment process
28	2	Online voting systems for representatives
30	2	Create a website developed by the government aiming to extend, in an accessible way, all of the law, governmental decrees and jurisdictional decisions
31	2	Organizing online sessions of Q&As on the rights of citizens
34	2	Surveys for citizens in order to establish data based decision making
44	2	Ensuring media participation in human rights awareness campaigns
49	2	Create a job matching software for students that is relevant to their field and flexible to their schedules, eliminating the bias of gender, sex, religion, race and other diversity factors
54	2	Enhancing the political education starting from the secondary level
3	1	Use digitalized standardized matching system to recruit governmental employees and representatives
8	1	Opening an independent and educational TV channel to reach rural areas and villages
19	1	Encouraging youth participation in politics in following up the government behaviour through technologies
26	1	Reforming the basic law or constitution in a way that guarantees the political, social and economic rights
29	1	Creating an online platform for citizens to voice their concerns, that will categorize them into a clear database, to be addressed by the government in the upcoming parliamentary sessions
47	1	Online weekly survey platform where citizens vote on articles to be discussed in the parliament's next session
50	1	Make public every year the accounts of the political parties and establish a financial cap to ensure an equality for all parties
51	1	Creating a website that helps youth in finding job opportunities in return for engaging in debates in their field of study

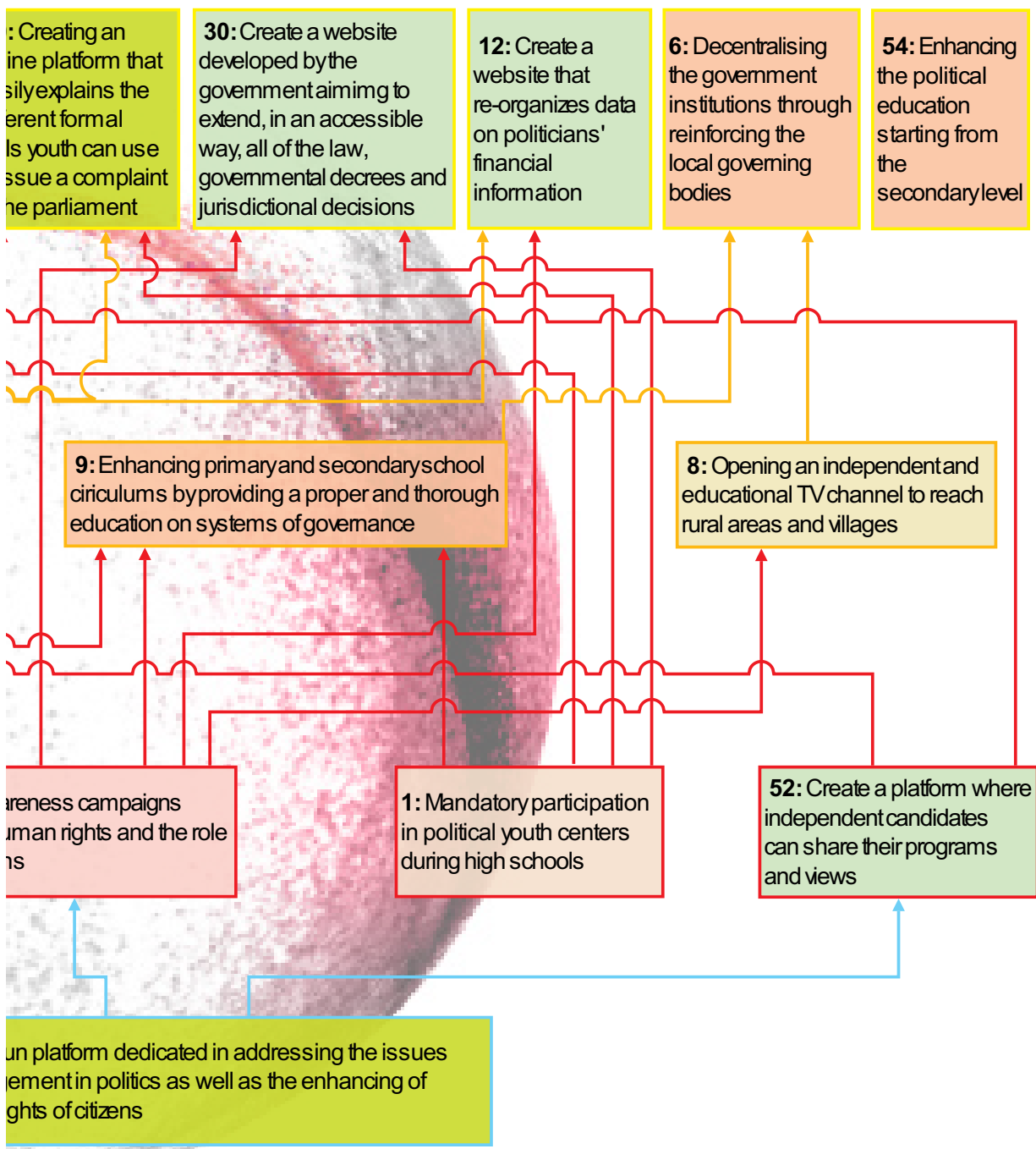


The proposals that the group, after almost 300 person hours of deliberations, has considered as the most influential turned out to be:



# Key Actions

- #14: Online interactive and fun platform dedicated in addressing the issues related to the youth's engagement in politics as well as the enhancing of awareness regarding the rights of citizens
- #1: Mandatory participation in political youth centers during high schools
- #58: Awareness campaigns about human rights and the role of citizens
- #56: Creating monitoring and evaluation system in work places and governmental institutions
- #55: Development of effective supporting units
- #52: Create a platform where independent candidates can share their programs and views



## Preparing for the Media, Interviews and other Activities

The participants had ample opportunities during the week to practice public speaking, debating and argumentation. However, especially the first and the last day was devoted to activities that aimed to empower the youth leaders in using modern media to disseminate their messages.

### Self Presentation

At project launch, the participants were invited to present themselves and share their personal dreams, vision and plans.

<http://mena.reinventdemocracy.info/introductions.html>

### Group work and Development of Action Projects

The participants selected ideas that were related, similar or which could benefit if tackled together. Their respective authors were asked to form small working groups to further develop a “project proposal” and subsequently present their ideas to the full group in a format simulating a press conference. The audience could ask questions. Three larger groups emerged.

### Closure with “Promises”

The project was concluded with a session during which those participant who wanted to reflect to the experience and/or commit to future activities were able to do so in the form of a “promise”:

<http://mena.reinventdemocracy.info/promises.html>





## Action Group Grants

Online youth consultations

### Team

Takwa MAKHLOUF

The project has been inspired by the fact that so many proposals submitted during the Co-Laboratory had to do with the lack of channels through which youth could participate and make proposals capable of achieving tangible change.

### Objectives – what is the problem

The project has created a website in which Tunisians have the possibility, first to submit suggestions and/or practical proposals on what youth could do, and subsequently, the public can vote on which proposals, according to their judgment, will have maximum impact. After ideas are voted, a group of active youth (i.e., something equivalent to a “Board”) examine the winning proposals (the ones that received the most votes), and prepare a report of the result of the online consultation and arrange to hand it over to the desk of the National Assembly of Tunisia.

At least three challenges that have been identified during the Co-Laboratory were addressed with this project:

-12: Complicated and unequal access for citizens to communicate with their governing bodies. The project hands the results of the online consultation in the form of a report to the National Assembly of Tunisia.

-7: Lack of interest and engagement by the youth. The project discusses the situation of youth, and puts forward their needs. It attracts the attention of the Tunisian youth who finally see their voice and concerns highlighted.

-69: Impossibility to influence decision-making. The report is handed to those who are taking the decisions. By giving them the youth’s point of view we are able to make their voice heard and so influence the people’s representatives.

### Activities

The website went live in November 2017.

Everyone has access and the possibility to submit suggestions during the first three weeks of December. During the last week, the team examined ideas for possible similarities or overlaps and put similar ideas under the same title. The voting was scheduled to opening between the 1st and 31st of January.

The group responsible for drafting the report arranged to meet beginning of February, and hand it to the National Assembly of Tunisia later that month. The report (s) is to be made public, just like the results of the consultation, on the website.

local 'democracy

will this help us SIGNIFICANTLY in over  
Challenge: 15

The lack of repres  
raises the question  
legitimacy

in the context of the question?



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## SDD Facilitators

### Lead Facilitator



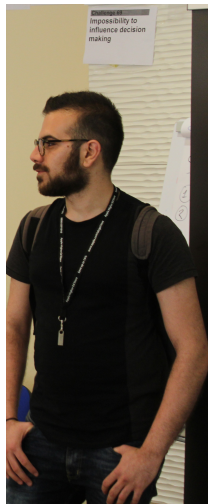
Dr. **Yiannis Laouris** is a social, science, and business entrepreneur trained as a neuroscientist and systems engineer in Germany and the US. He founded Future Worlds Center and his team runs over 15 research- and social intervention projects that focus at the interface of science and society. He promotes the application of broadband technologies as tools in peace building and to bridge the digital, economic, educational and inter-personal divides in our planet. He was the founder of a chain of computer learning centers for children, which expanded in 7 countries and received numerous prestigious awards. His contributions in education, peace and systems science applications were honored in more than 12 awards. Yiannis is an international leader in the theory and application of the science of structured democratic dialogue and conducts research towards developing systems to enable scaling up participatory dialogic processes to engage asynchronously thousands of people in meaningful authentic dialogues, thus accelerating institutional and societal change.

### Lead Facilitator



Mr. **Kevin Dye** came to an interest in Systems Science through his study of Thermodynamics. He co-founded a Venture Capital-based company Decision Support Systems Inc. in 1981. For ten years he led initiatives in Computer Supported Concurrent Engineering in building systems and aerospace. He was awarded a Sloan Visiting Fellowship at MIT to study Interactive Management for Large Scale Process Design through the lens of Coordination Science. Kevin has been a team member on large-scale, inter organizational applications of the CogniScope and Structured Dialogic Design teams involving a dozen to fifty organizations. His work includes Northern Ireland, Cyprus, the World Health Organization, the FDA and Pharmaceutical Companies R&D Strategy, the USDA, the National Patient Safety Foundation, the National Mental Health Association, State Departments of Education, City Creative Economy initiatives, Urban Health Care Leadership, long range futures work for Air Force Research, and local church leadership.

## Facilitator



Mr. **Andreas Andreou** took over the project coordination of the Reinventing Democracy in the Digital Era project in February 2017 while at the same time he was working as a Project Coordinator at the Global Education Unit of Future Worlds Center following an internship at the organisation. He holds a BA Humanities from the University of Essex and a Master of Laws from UCLan Cyprus with a focus on Peacebuilding, Conflict Resolution, International Human Rights Law and EU Constitutional Law and Governance. Among his professional interests in the Non-Governmental sector is democratisation and participation in democratic processes, political reform through modern media, global education, peace education and peace building. He is an experienced trainer in peace and human rights education and an experienced facilitator of the Structured Democratic Dialogue Process.

## Assistant Facilitator



Mrs. **Aspasia Ksidea** holds an Applied Fine Arts diploma from Polikladiko Kalamatas, and a Bsc of Civil Infrastructure from A.T.E.I. Patras. Having completed her educational studies in 2006, she decided to remain at Patras, where she started her career as a graphic designer. At first, she was working in a small company Promo-plan (2006-2007) as a junior graphic designer. In 2007 she was given an opportunity to work as an art director/graphic designer for a company named Fresh-Ideas. Making the most of it, she worked for Mattel's projects until March 2011. At that time, she felt it was the right time to take the big step of moving to Cyprus and building a whole new life and career. Having settled in the island, she found job in September of 2011 at Sppmedia, where she was working as a graphic designer until February 2013.

## Assistant Facilitator / Technology Expert



Mrs. **Eleni Philippou** joined the Cyprus Neuroscience and Technology Institute in August 2012, as member of the New Media Lab. Her main tasks included the development and upgrading of a series of educational software and other multimedia presentation applications. The scientific aim is to stimulate the imagination of young children. The inclusion of research engines that record various learning parameters helps monitor learning effectiveness and progress. Educational environments enriched with video-game interfaces (such as puzzles, spatial and temporal sequencing, fill-in the blanks and others) aim to make the experience more intensive and constructive. Furthermore, she works on upgrading the Mental Attributes Profiling System software to enable experiments to be implemented using iPADs. Eleni's responsibilities also include development and maintenance of all websites and electronic infrastructure of the organization. Eleni is a member of Scientific and Technical Chamber of Cyprus (ETEK).







## Participants

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

**Abdulrahman  
Ali Al-Zoghoul**

He is from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. He graduated from the Institute of Global Leadership for the Environment in the United States and he is a Jordanian youth activist in the fields of education, the environment and volunteerism, and a member of the local and international youth institutions. He is also a Member of the Peer Education Network (Y\_PEER Jordan)

**Ahmed  
Elsayed**

He is from Egypt. He has a Bachelor Degree in Medicine and General Surgery (2015). He also has a Non-Governmental Organizations Management Diploma for Cairo police and Economy College (2016). He has a 2 year working experience with UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) as Y-PEER Egypt focal point (2013-2015)

**Ano Surmava**

She is from Kutaisi, Georgia. She graduated from Tbilisi State University from where she obtained a Bachelor's Degree from the Faculty of Humanities and Science of art. Currently she returned to her hometown and she is working at Identoba (LGBTQ NGO) and for delivering educational activities for community and local youth.

**Ayman Abu  
Aisheh**

He has a bachelor degree in political science from the Bethlehem University. He has a working experience as a project coordinator in many international organizations such as Save the children in Hebron City, as well as in Global Society in Ramallah city.

**Bengisu Colak**

She is from Turkey. She studied Archaeology at Dokuz Eylül University. Currently she is doing an internship at a non-profit organisation called Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants.

**Deloris Saad**

She was born in Sierra Leone but raised in Lebanon. She has a background in Biology-Premedical studies and Public Health & Development Sciences. She is currently pursuing her graduate degree in Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut (AUB). She has been actively involved in the design, implementation and monitoring & evaluation of national, regional and international projects promoting human rights - particularly women's access to justice, domestic violence, early marriage, active participation of older people in humanitarian interventions, child protection, mental health among refugees and harm reduction & substance abuse since 2012 with major stakeholders such as UN Women, WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, Oxfam GB, Kvinna till Kvinna.

**Eytan Shafir**

He is from Israel. He studied Politic and Sociology in Tel Aviv University. He worked in a politic party in Israel for 2 years and after that he worked in a law office. In Israel he is involved in an LGBT organisation. He is currently working for a PR company.

**Eslam  
Elhossieny**

He is from Egypt. He graduated from the Menoufia School of Medicine in 2015. He is a Y-PEER (Youth peer education network) advanced trainer and international fellow and he has conducted many national and regional trainings about human rights, peace building and sexual and reproductive health issues. He has served as youth fellow with UNFPA Arab states regional office from August 2016 to February 2017 where he was in charge for coordinating youth programs in 14 Arab countries. In 2015 he has been the national officer on human rights and peace with IFMSA in Menoufia.

**Fatma Younis,**

She is from Egypt. She is a graduate from the Faculty of Arts, English Department of the Alexandria University in Egypt. She studied English Language and Literature. She has studied a wide range of subjects that includes: writing, translation, civilization, linguistics, research writing, media studies, literary criticism, and discourse analysis. She has good experience in Intercultural dialogue, cross-cultural education, and non-formal education, peace building and democracy, non for profit work and media field. Fatma has supported causes such as education for all, gender equality, human rights, literacy, democracy, poverty, and women and children. Currently she works as monitoring and evaluation specialist in the Research and Development Unit at NGO called INJAZ Egypt. She is Founder and President of Global Network of Young Leaders; which is a youth-led international non-profit network dedicated in promoting awareness of global issues.

**Hassan  
Mahareeq**

He is from Palestine. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science from the Bethlehem University and a Master of European Institutions at HHU in Germany. His Bachelor degree encouraged his commitment to this particular field even further whereas his Master degree exposed him to an international environment and enhanced his knowledge to a wide-range of issues related to various types of youth programs.

His work experience has provided him with the opportunity to practice his skills in practical ways. For example he was responsible for Designing training manuals and guidelines in order to enhance the leadership roles of youth and women, monitoring and evaluating program activities, preparing annual reports, and others.

**Hazim Musleh**

He is from Palestine. He is working at the Asociacion Europea de Cooperacion con Palestina – ASECOP – (The European Association for cooperation with Palestine) which is a Spanish NGO located in Malaga city – Spain with a representative office in Beit Sahour city – Palestine. He is responsible for the project coordination department in the representative office of Beit Sahour and also the person in charge of the International affairs in cooperation with General consulate of Spain in Jerusalem city. He is an official Translator for the Arabic-Spanish languages and vice versa. He is also accredited as an official teacher for the Spanish language and responsible for DELE Exams – Diploma of Spanish as a Foreign Language.

**Hoda Touma**

She is from Lebanon. She is currently pursuing a Master's program in Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut (AUB). She graduated two years ago with a bachelor's degree in Translation and Applied Languages. Her strong passion for linguistics alongside her language proficiencies have opened the door for her to truly embody her goals and partake in global affairs. Hoda works as a translator and an assistant to the Ambassador at the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Beirut, and has recently joined the Lebanese NGO AieServe, working mainly on youth empowerment, promoting its three core values of Respect, Acceptance and Love.

**Houda  
Halwani**

She is from Lebanon. She is currently studying International Development and Globalization at the University of Ottawa. She has completed all her studies in French, and therefore she is fluent in both English and French. She has worked at the University of Ottawa as a Computer Assistant. Currently she is the Information Management/ Web Design Assistant at Status of Women Canada. In 2017, with World University Service of Canada, she participated in a Youth delegation between the Netherlands and Canada to discuss immigration issues, compare and contrast resettlement plans of each country, and develop ideas pertaining to immigration that best suit each society.

**Incinur  
YILGIN**

She is from Turkey. She studies Law at Dokuz Eylül University in İzmir. She also studied International Relations at Anadolu University and Sociology at Atatürk University. She has been an intern at Önder Law Firm and works as a volunteer English Language Trainer in various English courses. She has been part of the European Law Students Association (ELSA), organizing various activities across Izmir. Recently she collaborated with a lecturer on his research on motivation which has been presented at Bogazici University, Istanbul and Oxford University, England.

**Ivi Solomou**

She is from Cyprus. She studied Law at the University of Salford, and after becoming a member of the Cyprus Bar Association she completed an MSc on Business with Marketing Management at Northumbria University, where she graduated with the highest grade.

**Karim  
Chalhoub**

He is from Lebanon. He is a Law and Political and Administrative Sciences student at the Saint Joseph University of Beirut. He participated in a training of the NGO DLR (Dialogue for Life and Reconciliation) and one of the ALEF (Act for Human Rights on the principles of fair trial). In July 2016 he was accepted in SUSI (Study of the United States Institutions) on US democracy and religious pluralism. He went on to co-found and co-lead the Human Rights club at his university.

**Omar  
Elmenofy**

He is half Greek and half Egyptian and has been brought up for the past 19 years in the island kingdom of Bahrain. In 2016 he graduated from the University of Sussex in the UK with a double major in Economics and International Development. He did his dissertation on The European Refugee Crisis. During his degree at the Sussex University, he worked as an International Student Ambassador where he represented the International Office at several campus-based events as well as travelled to UK based events with International Officers. Further, he also worked as a Social Media Ambassador.

**Takwa  
Makhlouf**

She is binational French-Tunisian student. She follows Law studies at the University Grenoble Alpes (Grenoble, France). She did two internships at the National Assembly of Tunisia. She also participated in various MUN (multiple times as a delegate and as the president of a council) one of them was organised in partnership with the WHO and WTO in their headquarters in Geneva. Takwa is also part of several student and youth associations which promote coexistence between people from various convictions, the knowledge of the Middle East and the strengthening of youth's debating skills.

## Annex I

### **List of Challenges:**

#### **Challenge 1: Youth are not well informed about the democratic procedures**

Usually youth are not well aware of the different democratic formal tools they can use to raise their issues/concerns and to address the parliament. In most cases, this means youth do not know that they can actually get their opinion through, through various means. This could potentially lead to resorting to violent civil resistance, tension and frustration within the country. Moreover, it can also lead to the loss of hope in the system and the immigration of the concerned individuals. In Lebanon, for example, one of the formal tools which could be used by each and every Lebanese citizen is petitions. However, it has never been used. This is because youth are not well informed of this possibility, how this procedure would go and what the technical details are.

#### **Challenge 2: Lack of participation**

Much of the disquiet among the young, is because they see so little opportunity for real change through the current political system. From academics to comedians, it's become a sort of aphorism that the young don't vote because they simply see no point in the political system anymore.

#### **Challenge 3: Less accessibility to education for all people**

Everything has one main reason this is fight for power and wealth. So, we need to recognise that we are all equal in the whole world and need to share our material well-being each other. Until we do not agree with all things, our fight for democracy won't be effective. The challenges that I present are in harmony with each other. Less accessibility to education causes less access to education leads us to shut down our political spaces. All of this causes our enslavement and poverty. Poverty separates us from the other modern and technological world. In this reality we don't have equal starting conditions. Challenge 3 - In the world of capitalism the society is divided into classes and not everyone has opportunity to receive required education. We all need education to be able to protect our rights.

#### **Challenge 4: Scarcity of information**

In the systems of governance we need good information to follow up and to continue. We do not have enough information for the people about the system itself; parliament, legislative, authority, how the government works... Maybe we are the ones to change this. How? To collect more information through technology and globalisation. The technologies and the internet can be a good source of information to know how other countries are dealing with the issue. We don't have enough time for this. We must begin now.

#### **Challenge 5: Making presidency by inheritance**

Making presidency by inheritance: We commonly see that spread widely in the Arab World and we can consider it as an outcome of the absence of the right democracy. For example in Libya, Gaddafi was planning and preparing his son Seif El Islam to take his place in the presidency without taking the citizens' opinions or making elections in the country. The best solution to address this shortcoming would be by making transparent elections for citizens where they would be given the freedom to choose the elected person they like.

#### **Challenge 6: The fact that the educational system is not digitalised using biometrics**

NO CLARIFICATION

#### **Challenge 7: Lack of interest and engagement by the youth**

Most of the younger people do not even know what is happening in the political world and governance, and there are many reasons causing this. For instance, there is a shared belief that politics lacks relevance for

them or their preoccupation with other interests and concerns. Furthermore, the complexity of politics and the difficulties younger people have in understanding politics and processes, the lack of trust and respect for politicians and of course the educational system, may also be considered as fundamental factors affecting the youth's engagement and interest. With respect to the aforementioned, there is a need of connecting the youth with influential and inspirational leaders, decision makers and politicians, capable of raising their interest and of making them realise the importance of their engagement as citizens and future decision makers. Given the digital era, technology is a vital part of the younger people's life, and therefore, it could be used as a powerful tool of overcoming this challenge. A good example of its use could be through the creation of an online platform that focuses on the youth and the enhancing of their awareness, engagement and interest. By connecting them with inspirational specialists and representatives of the political world, they will receive information, exchange ideas and express concerns more effectively, and thus a stronger relationship between them will be established and will lead to the raising of their trust and respect towards politicians and the system. Consequently, they will be more prepared in becoming active members of the society, capable of bringing the change that is needed for ensuring the world's sustainable development.

### ***Challenge 8: Enabling corruption by the lack of transparency***

Most countries in the world are subject to corruption, some more than others. This dishonest and fraudulent conduct by those in power comes in a lot of ways and forms: bribery, hiring unqualified people in the wrong positions, embezzlement and so on. The level of corruption depends on how democratic a country is and if it has appropriate systems to fight the phenomena. In more developed countries, some laws are in place in order to fight corruption and stop leaders from seeking to achieve their own personal goals. The problem is that these regulations are not always effective enough as leaders work around them in order to keep enriching themselves using the system, a blatant example is what the current president of the United States of America is doing. First, Donald J. Trump refused to release his tax returns thus opposing a norm that had been established since Richard Nixon released his tax returns in 1973 after the Watergate Scandal. Since Nixon, Gerald Ford is the only president not to release his tax forms, he however provided a public summary of a decade of his past tax data. Second, the president didn't fully let go of the control of his companies and is enriching himself by using his power as the president. In less developed countries, such laws don't really exist and don't stop authorities in no way. What countries need to become democratic and stop corruption is to be more transparent. They need to develop tools and systems in order to check what their rulers are doing and how public funds are being used. In order to do so people are gonna have to put pressure on their governments as they are the ones who decide if they're gonna stop being corrupt themselves or not. A major problem, even in countries that have laws guaranteeing transparency, is the inaccessibility of the information and its comprehension. This is where technology comes in play, creating systems and programs in order to filter the information creating graphs and making the numbers given by the people in authority speak, comparing different spendings, how much money has been made and how much should have been made and such.

### ***Challenge 9: Lack of freedom of speech***

freedom of speech Freedom of expression is one of the most important requirements and requirements for the achievement of democracies in the world. Freedom of expression is a fundamental part of spreading the concept of truth to democracy, a human rights that no longer exists in the Arab world. Including the various sectors of the most important demands for legitimate rights, In the substance of freedoms It is necessary to systematically distinguish between the dimension of freedom, that is, the collective dimension and the individual dimension, both at the level of the legal framework that regulates this freedom and the level of philosophy that gives it its intellectual legitimacy. Collective freedoms, such as the freedom of minorities, ethnic groups and religious groups, remain hostage to the effectiveness of the principle of individual human freedom. For this collective freedom to be the basis

for building a modern society, The absolute support for the massacres committed by Israel against the Palestinians and the siege of the Palestinian democratic option by boycotting Hamas and the siege of Gaza, as well as barbaric practices carried out in Iraqi prisons by American soldiers, are examples that have deprived freedom and the concepts associated with it - And every attraction. It is clear that the issue of the absence of freedoms in the Arab world is not only related to the existing authoritarian regimes, but rather is a matter of self-consciousness whose components have been formed throughout social history and which continue to interact negatively with the current political situation, For example, the classification of the state in the freedoms of expression in the Arab world has been continuously affected The Middle East is by almost any reckoning the world's worst region for freedom of expression. Reporters Without Borders, a press freedom lobby, puts war-torn Syria 177th out of 180 countries on its latest annual ranking, in 2014. Iran is 173rd, Sudan 172nd, Yemen 167th, Saudi Arabia 164th. The highest any of the region's countries make it is 91st, with Kuwait, which has a democracy of sorts. According to the Pew Research Center, a think-tank, as of 2012, 14 of 20 Middle Eastern countries criminalise blasphemy and 12 of 20 make apostasy-leaving Islam-an offense

#### **Challenge 10: Misconception and lack of mobilization of civil resistance**

The misconception of civil resistance is that people tend to forget that it involves the use of non-violent resistance, rather than the violent one. Civil resistance is often grasped in the context of protests and demonstrations. However, in actual fact, peaceful protests constitute only one of a hundreds of methods that could be adopted in a civil resistance. The understanding of this concept has exponentially spread with the achievements that were brought about by Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi in the twentieth century. Ever since, civil resistance has been gaining international support. Still, however, people tend to overlook the power that the civil resistance holds within international politics, as it is still an under-discussed political topic, pushing people to underestimate the results it can actually bring about. As a matter of fact, however, history has indeed demonstrated that a rightful mobilization of civil resistance can give the voice to the people and help in achieving democracy. Recalling a recent effective civil resistance, the 2005 Lebanese Cedar Revolution comes to mind, and its effectiveness was portrayed in the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanese territory as a direct result of the civil peaceful protests that gathered around 1.5 million people on the streets of Beirut. Thus, the mobilization of civil resistance plays a crucial role in determining the sequence of events and how it will turn out to be. While a right mobilization will give a push and reinforcement for the civil resistance, a misuse of the mobilization, on the other hand, could have drastic results. The most salient example that could be given in this regard, would be the Syrian civil war, which had erupted at first in the form of peaceful protests, but had later on turned into a never-ending civil war, due to the wrong mobilization of the civil resistance. In terms of technology, the latter holds a prominent role in shaping the mobilization and framing it in a specific way. An obvious example of the latter would be the role that social media has played in regard with a mobilization of people in the context of the Arab spring. The people power revolution, which spread all throughout the Arab countries, was a main and direct result of the social media, which again strengthens and emphasizes the idea of a right mobilization of civil resistance, as a way to achieve democratic political systems.

#### **Challenge 11: Violation of the principle of separation of powers**

The separation of powers is a model of governance which is usually divided into three branches : the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. It concerns the representatives and their prerogatives established in the Constitution of each state. The purpose of the separation of powers is to avoid the concentration of power in one governmental body.

#### **Challenge 12: Complicated and unequal access for citizens to communicate with their governing bodies**

The existing one-sided communication line between governing bodies and citizens results in a misalignment of priorities. Addressing this issue with a legitimate, organized and accessible platform for all cit-



izens to voice their concerns would allow our governance systems to be more efficient and focused on the well-being of the population. In addition, creating this formal and digitalized database to track the interest, and the priorities of the population will enable citizens to better hold their governing bodies accountable, and to evaluate the governance system in play more efficiently.

**Challenge 13: Lack of accessibility of official papers**

Official Documentation Should Be Made More Easily Accessible Bureaucracy exists in almost every branch of the government and every level of the government. Rather than make it easier for the public to access legal documents and any other paperwork that might be necessary throughout the course of their lives, the government instead buries the public in ‘red tape’. This red tape is literal in terms of the procedures and steps that need to be fulfilled to reach the final legal paper; or metaphorical where the clerks neglect their duties, sometimes to the point of refusing to function (either due to a lack of motivation at the desk, holding out for a payout or subjecting the public to Cartman complex). This widens the timeline for task completion. A country striving towards democracy need to ensure that the public is aided in getting through all these petty restrictions and act in a timely and streamlined manner to ensure a strong sense of nationalist unity and positive approach to the governing entities. A solution to this is creating a government e-portal that makes all the documents an individual might need available at the click of a button. For rural areas a government monitored kiosk can be established with a built in printer to provide the same facility at a fraction of the cost the government is willing to part with for the clerks. Some people might argue that documents of such sensitive nature should not be available digitally due to the threat of hackers and viruses. However, a very easy fix exists for that. A new government department of cyber security can be established to monitor any active threats and counter them. Most countries already have internet monitoring authorities already established and those could be expanded to cover these duties as well. Such steps would go a major way to encourage a feeling of trust and support to the government system which would lead to a stronger democratic nation.

**Challenge 14: Deficiency in the mechanism of constitutional accountability by the people**

This point reflects the way the constitution, in some countries, does not allow citizens to appeal to constitutional courts/councils to challenge the legality of constitutional articles related to their fundamental rights. This is inspired by legal practices in both Egypt and Morocco whereby an appeal is accepted only if submitted by a political figure (ex: deputy, minister, president), hence preventing the citizen from directly intervening in challenging the established system. This regulation reflects the manner in which the government deals with the citizens, and by which it questions the citizen’s ability and right to decide his/her role in the political realm. As such, this challenge falls within the same boundaries of many other challenges suggested in the workshop, but mainly aligns with the lack in public evaluation systems whereby citizens are allowed to voice their doubts and be actively engaged in the supposedly continuous improvement and development practice. This point is only one of the many elements that define the notion of “democracy”, and which put too much weight on elected representatives using democratic principles (i.e. since they were elected then they have the right to represent the citizens in every aspect of life), but resulting instead in depriving citizens from their basic rights to directly participate and question the system and demand an alternative version of constitutionally acknowledging and protecting their fundamental rights.

**Challenge 15: The lack of representation raises the question of political legitimacy**

the legitimacy according to max weber is the need and feeling for justice. In fact, ideology of the people and not of the rulers, is the main source. of legitimacy. In democratic legitimacy is indicating by its ideas, popular consent, representativeness, election, rule of majority, civic liberties, and similar privileges available to the people. political legitimacy is a virtue of political institutions and of the decision about laws, policies and candidate for official offices but the authority stands for right to right to rule, right to issue

the commands, using coercive power. therefore the requirements of legitimacy are the representation of all groups. the political participation of youth and women and the representation of their interests during the implementation of policies.

### **Challenge 16: Bureaucracy**

**Bureaucracy:** Getting an official paper has become a nightmare in many countries. Even in any country that we can call “democratic country”, we can find bureaucracy in many forms. In my opinion, bureaucracy is a system of administration which runs by non-elective government officials. It is hierarchical form of governing in which decisions are usually made by those officials instead of elected representatives. Many citizens are unsatisfied with the rigidity of this system and see it as inefficient and wasteful. With the 21st century radical transformation in technology, major administrative reform needed to be done. Instead of spending hours, weeks and sometimes months, and instead of standing in long lines, why not spending couple minutes on your computer and get the papers done? The fact that officials influence the power and decision making, so by digitalizing the process we will share the power and be included in the process. In addition, by doing that we will improve the efficiency of the work using technology and overcome any administrative barriers.

### **Challenge 17: The negative intervention of religion and the traditional customs in government decisions**

The religion and politics of the Middle East have special significance in view of the history and politics of the Middle East. After all, the three great monotheistic religions find their roots in the Middle East. History tells us that the three main faiths of Middle East “have used religion to justify and legitimate expansion and warfare”. Modernity in terms of “secularism, individualism, democracy, and economic rationalism” have had little latitude over the Middle East as a whole. Hence, many governments use religion to justify their authoritative political systems within the Middle East. The religion in politics has proven to have a significant place in the Middle East. The leaders of most Middle East nations understand that implementation of Western technology is important for success in the world community. After all it is very much possible to adapt the technology and reject the social structure. Many societies in the Middle East feel that it is the social structure of the West that is at war with their traditional or religious structure, which entails the revival of strong religious sentiment. But many of the leaders of the Middle East have abused this sentiment of the public to their advantage. In conclusion, I see religion in politics as a very important issue in the Middle East because it determines the current and future role of the region in the world community. Over time, I believe many nations will see the fall of authoritative rule and a move towards democracy. But we will not see the usual Western democratic setup, but rather, democracy that has some religious basis. In my view, religion will continue to play an important role in the future for the Middle East

### **Challenge 18: Corruption**

**Corruption:** In my opinion it means getting more than your rights or taking other people rights through illegal ways or defects in the laws by paying bribes or using public relations. Technology can help a lot in solving this problem by many means such as putting standards and using modern innovative ways in monitoring and evaluation of the performances. Also, using digitalised approaches will help eradicate the bureaucracy that is a major cause of corruption. Government and people both have a major role in this together.

### **Challenge 19: Lack of democratic governance**

Lacking democratic governance means the society would not have the freedom of speech to allow them to voice their opinions. By not having a voice will lead to the needs of the citizens not being met and to a more authoritarian society. The concept of democratic governance has a very broad meaning which combines economic, political, social and human factors. The economic factors consist of politicians and

ministers who control the allocation of money and diverge it away from technology and benefit from it for their own motives. A real life example could be Sub-Saharan African countries where democratic governance is not present. The elite, such as politicians and ministers, would control the decision making process of policies in the country and will follow their self motives with the income coming in the country, such as foreign direct investment (FDI). However, investing in technology will improve the key shortcomings of the country's current system of governance which will then be linked to social factors. The social factors are the voice the citizens will have when technology will be improved through online platforms and online voting/evaluation systems. The political factors are elitism in the political system where the elites have the biggest say and decision making of policies in the economy. Lastly, the human factors are the rights the society has, if they are represented daily and the balance of power which shapes democracy and gives equal rights to society. Investing in technology will lead to an improvement or an establishment of the online platforms and online voting systems which will eventually lead to a more democratic government. In result, people will be able to express their opinions freely, feel empowered and actively taking part in the decision making of their country.

#### ***Challenge 20: Lack of publicity of parliamentary decisions***

In many governments the parliament members are making rules, laws and decisions that are affecting the citizens. When they don't publish it the people are not understanding the affects and meaning of the governments, they don't want to know more about it and they avoid the political life.

#### ***Challenge 21: Balance of power saves democracy***

In many countries, politics and the constitution in general are shaped within the framework of power-sharing. This means that seats in parliament for example are selected according to sect division. Thus, elections and all the related "democratic" procedures are molded to fit within this framework. Any change that has to be implemented at this level should start with acknowledging this fact and finding gaps and loopholes within this system to be able to participate in the democratic procedures. This does not comply with the general definition of democracy; however, at the practical level, this is the case of many countries and the only way to address the major challenges is to clearly understand the already-existing system of governance.

#### ***Challenge 22: Not using the digital tools for the population to follow up or monitor election process***

In Egypt and many countries, you can find digital screens in the street counting the number of the population which is updated every millisecond. However I never saw a digital screen showing the number of votes for each election's candidate. so I guess developing such tool would ensure transparency and would attract people or at least drag their attention to such processes.

#### ***Challenge 23: Poverty which is separating us from technology***

Still capitalism and unequal/unjustice economic power of different countries lead to enequality. Some people are reach and have more oportunities and some people are poor with less accesibilities. It causes that poor people don't have knowledge and power ro engage in civil activities.

#### ***Challenge 24: No public evaluation systems***

The public evaluation system evaluation itself is systematic determination of subjects worth and significance using criteria governed by a set of standards. in every democratic political system the citizens votes to elect who are to represent them in the parliament and they elects periodic . and sometimes it goes through 4 years or more in current semi democratic mideternian governance system. so we are considering elections the only public evaluation system which considered indirect and far away. and the elections day is judgement day for entire government or for the political party. herby the election is the most democratic tool for evaluation.but the dramatic and rapid change in the world through globalization and technologies although the international changes in politics and decisions which affected directly and

indirectly through continuous crises and rapid change in the world. In my opinion we need most elastic and high responsive evaluation system for public to be sure that who we are elect is going well against our expectations. So we can use technologies as useful tools for reliable trustful, sustainable evaluation methodology for public polices and the chosen government.

**Challenge 25: Denying people's requirements**

Denying people's requirements: It is about ignoring what the citizens are calling for. For example in Lebanon the citizens called for about 3 months for a solution to solve the rubbish problem, there was no response until the citizens started to demonstrate in the streets. After 1 month of demonstrations the action taken was to landfill the rubbish. And the obstacles would be worse than the expected since the citizens are able to stop life; education and work by just doing demonstrations and strikes.

**Challenge 26: The elections are manually conducted**

Okay well the election system could be digitised using biometrics to ensure fairness. Currently the elections are manually conducted which causes: A. Much more paper load B. More opportunity for rigging C. Less outreach towards the isolated community D. Slow overall process of election Technology can help overturn all these around. Current advancements in technology such as cellular 4g and internet dongles enable us to expand the outreach of the digital elections. The solutions could be anything from a voting app which people can use conveniently on their phones. In areas where phones might not be common a small station setup with the same digital setup... With one representative overlooking the process it would not only be fast, but also fair and a big boost to the nationalistic feeling of the public. Paper and natural resource consumption used throughout the election, should be reduced with technology Technology is necessary both for recycling and for minority and marginal parties to do not feel alone on the election process.

**Challenge 27: Insufficient and unequal access to governmental information**

We either do not know enough or we know what they want us to know. Things that we know in a public way is what they tell us (from newspapers etc). With 'governmental information' we mean processes, information about how things work and how different procedures are done. We do not know enough and so, by not knowing enough, we do not know about our lives and steps that we can take and obstacles to avoid. Through technology we can develop a database in which all the information that we need to know as citizens will be there. Everyday things are changing and we must know these because they affect us directly. E.g. new regulations, new decisions...

**Challenge 28: Neglect of the needs of vulnerable groups in the decision making process**

Taking decisions in democratic countries require to take all of the population into consideration and this is a big problem even in the most developed countries. Where the majority takes control of the reins of power in order to have their own needs met without the rest of the population. In some cases, however, the majority tries to grant the minority their rights but only those which align with their own or grant them rights they don't need. Consequently, we need to create channels where minorities can voice their actual opinions and not have them twisted and changed to meet the majority's will.

**Challenge 29: Lack of the access to technology**

Lack of the access to technology Technology and access to it is one of the most important things to ensure democracy. There are many circumstances that have changed the digital revolution, which has contributed positively and negatively to a large group. Access to technology is limited to a certain category, and also because of global circumstances such as wars, lack of opportunities and high cost. In addition to the global challenges, which limited access to everyone because of ignorance, poverty, unemployment and inequality, The readings from class have highlighted for me what will herein be referred to as the

“digital divide.” Access to digital technology promotes literacy, and the converse is also true. In the last ten years since the digital divide and pioneer technology access issued in the national conversation, not a single article in the three major communication journals addresses the digital divide or technology access issues (Banks, 2006). Apart from city and town libraries that support access to digital technology among low-income families, infrastructure aimed at bridging the digital divide is non-existent

### **Challenge 30: Absence of meritocracy in governmental institutions**

“Wasta” is a common practice in the Middle East, and one of the most influential problems hindering the implementation of democratic governance. It is defined as a misuse of one’s own public relations for recruitment in governmental institutions, thus overlooking competence, qualifications, academic and professional backgrounds, and eligibility. In other words, it is the exact opposite concept of meritocracy, which is a system of governance whereby policy makers are chosen on the basis of their merits. The “wasta” practice has epidemically spread throughout the Arab countries, and has influenced the process of decision-making, since general managers in the ministries are usually appointed/recruited, according to the connections they have rather than the skills and the experience required for a specific position at stake. Hence, it has become a vicious circle. The latter has had an influence on the youth, as it has induced a brain drain, since young people do not believe that they can access the job market in a fair manner without having to employ their connections. Fact is, what has actually made this worse is the fact that young people are starting to get comfortable with this idea and are trying to adapt to it. They believe that no change can be made in this regard, and thus they feel obliged to integrate themselves within this corrupt meritless system. With regard to technology and the role that the latter can play in reshaping efficient democratic systems throughout the world, the implementation of a programming system that would automatically filter out the people who do not meet the requirements needed for this specific position could be much influential in addressing the absence of meritocracy. At the risk of turning the recruitment process into a mechanical process, I believe that at this stage, such a digitalized program would enhance the process of recruitment since the people who do meet the requirements will be automatically selected in as eligible candidates, whereas those who do not meet the requirements will be mechanically filtered out, in a way that their public relations and connections would make no sense whatsoever in a digital program. Based on the above, I believe that the latter could be a good start to tackle the absence of meritocracy affecting the Arab world, and would give more opportunities to qualified young people who would usually not even make it to the job interview if they do not have the renowned “wasta”.

### **Challenge 31: Deficiency of the rule of law which leads to a lack of trust of the population in the governments**

The rule of law is a principle of governance in which the government and its officials as well as every individual are accountable under the law, the laws are clear, publicized, accessible, stable, just and protect Human Rights, and the justice is delivered by competent and independent body. If one of those conditions is not respected it results to a lack of trust of the population in the representatives and in the state of law.

### **Challenge 32: Lack of the knowledge on the role of a citizen**

We define democracy to be a system for the people and by the people. Such governance cannot be achieved without the active participation of citizens. Enabling every citizen to be an active participant begins with ensuring the understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this system of governance. Today, we can observe that the voice and rôle of citizens has become over-powered by the upper-class, elite of each society. Citizens have lost their voice, and thus their ability to guide or pressure their governing bodies to act for the well-being of the entire population. This has resulted in extremely economically driven societies, with disregard to social development, reinforcing a mentality of hopelessness and lack of trust amongst the majority of the population. In addition, younger generations raised in these environments are taught to accept this fate, not knowing their rights and ability to demand change.

The lack of knowledge on the rôle of a citizen enables governments to act without punishment, and limits the ability of societies to hold their governments accountable of their shortcomings.

### **Challenge 33: Lack of information**

One of the more remarkable quotes of Hitler was: “How lucky for those in power that people don’t think.” These few words resonate a very deep problem that still persists in today’s society. The lack of literacy and basic information leads to ignorance, and while it might be considered bliss in a raw sense of the word, it totally deviates a country from moving forward. Democracy in itself being one of the pillars for a nation’s growth, it is of utmost importance that education and impartment of knowledge take a center stage in our world. An excellent example of this exists in South Asia in Pakistan. A county holding the sixth largest population in the world stands at a literacy rate of 57 percent. That is an appalling number and something which is reflected on the state as multiple coups and rigged elections are littered across its history. People vote on the basis of caste, lineage and the politicians are also not partial to ‘buying votes’. The aftermath leads to a horribly mismanaged country where the politicians exploit the country, instigating in corruption and putting money on projects which indirectly benefit the politician’s personal wealth. A current example of this would be the under construction metro project in Pakistan’s major cities which is being built by the prime minister’s sons construction company and gets its basic construction materials from their own fabrications. Yet this is ignored by the public due to the lack of knowledge and the understanding that the government actually exists to serve them, not the other way around. Another example is the recently passed US elections where despite all the pundits and analysts slamming Mr. Donald Trump he stood victorious in a major upset. Upon inspection of the spread of votes you could see that the Trump camp used the concepts of white supremacy, racism and aggressive propaganda to sway the results in their favor. Major votes came from states that held either low education quality or were still stuck on the prior mentioned ideas. This was all due to a lack of knowledge on the public’s part, not just in terms of how the politician’s play but also due to how they still haven’t grasped the general concept that the USA stands as an immigrant nation. Providing information on how to properly vote, on the candidates and their track records, the value of democratic elections and the power that the public hold should be a minimum to ensure a strong democracy. In the long term an excellent education system encouraging critical thinking would go a long way to positively impact democratic pursuits. iPhone’umdan gönderildi

### **Challenge 34: Deficiency in the process of raising awareness around the rights of citizens**

Civil actions without knowledge could account for very little, as the system (i.e. those in power) tends to manipulate people’s demands to serve the status quo rather than the change aspired. In this light, raising awareness would rank as the most vital and indispensable element in the process of change towards a ‘more’ representative democracy. However, this element is of a long-term nature, as raising awareness could not achieve its goals if it was implemented sporadically; it needs to become an essential module in the early phases of a change process without which better democracy cannot be guaranteed. Moreover, awareness raising campaigns around the rights of citizens should accompany all established democracies as their appendices to ensure that the same values that brought these democracies still hold and to provide an environment for continuous improvement. This step is key to allowing people to take advantage of their benefits as many people do not know enough about their rights as citizens, and hence their ‘ignorance’ either perpetuates the undemocratic reality, or it withdraws legitimacy and representation from the existing democracy. As such, failing to raise awareness contributes to the lack of transparency in governance and promotes ‘false’ democracies whereby citizens are not informed and do not actually participate in the decision making, thus rendering the representatives more powerful and less sympathetic to the need and demands of their constituencies.

### **Challenge 35: The lack of sustainable development**

We need stability and a continuous development to guarantee and empower democratic values and dem-

ocratic institutions. Without stability and a sovereign state, we cannot talk about democratic systems because there is no state and it is impossible to establish a democratic system that represents people's needs without a state.

**Challenge 36: Exclusion of minorities or marginalized groups in decision making**

There is no democracy achieved unless ALL citizens are given equal rights. In many countries, minorities or marginalized groups ( who have religious, racial, ethnic, gender or political differences) struggle to get their equal rights and equal opportunities in decision making. Their unequal treatment may result in social alienation; minorities will eventually lose interest or will not get engaged in the society. Equal and inclusive participation of minorities is crucial aspect of democracy that many countries fail to achieve.

**Challenge 37: Non application of international legislations and agreements in ministries**

As we already know the concepts of human rights and good governance are mutually reinforcing, both being based on core principles of participation, accountability, transparency and State responsibility. Human rights require a conducive and enabling environment, in particular appropriate regulations, institutions and procedures framing the actions of the State. Human rights provide a set of performance standards against which Governments and other actors can be held accountable. At the same time, good governance policies should empower individuals to live with dignity and freedom. Although human rights empower people, they cannot be respected and protected in a sustainable manner without good governance. In addition to relevant laws, political, managerial and administrative processes and institutions are needed to respond to the rights and needs of populations. Institutions and processes evolve over time. Human rights strengthen good governance frameworks. They require: going beyond the ratification of human rights treaties, integrating human rights effectively in legislation and State policy and practice; establishing the promotion of justice as the aim of the rule of law; understanding that the credibility of democracy depends on the effectiveness of its response to people's political, social and economic demands; promoting checks and balances between formal and informal institutions of governance; effecting necessary social changes, particularly regarding gender equality and cultural diversity; generating political will and public participation and awareness; and responding to key challenges for human rights and good governance, such as corruption

**Challenge 38: Education leak**

Dropping out of education is one of the major causes of literacy in the developing countries. It makes the countries lose their constructive power. There are many reasons and pillars to that issue as low quality of the educational facilities and institutions with low opportunities provided after the graduation. Another cause is poverty which obliges family to make their children leave school and go out for work. Using technology will help overcome the challenges of printing huge some of books with specific curricula and spending thousands of dollars on educational institutions and infrastructure. One of the solutions is distant online learning where students can take courses from their homes anytime with specific standards and go through exams also from home. Another ideas is to provide students with access to information banks and platforms and stop using the system of unified curricula which limit the creativity of the students.

**Challenge 39: Lack of sufficient funds to improve technology**

If a country is less developed then it would not have the sufficient funds to pay for the advanced technological equipment which will lead to the country not improving its key shortcomings of its current system of governance.

**Challenge 40: Difficulty entering the political world**

The political world is very close. It is difficult to part taking in the political world. Many people with ideas

and suggestions about local political and world political are not heard because of their background.

**Challenge 41: International dynamics shape local 'democracy'**

By international dynamics shape local democracy, the role of international players in maneuvering local political systems is highlighted. As a matter of fact, political parties supported by international players are highly affected by the positions and situation of these players within the global context. Thus, upon any change, local political parties change their local positions. This has been apparent in the Lebanese presidential elections which were highly shaped in a way that is synchronous with the positions of the related supportive international players in Syria. The vacancy in presidency which seemed to be an unsolvable issue was thus solved within a month and a president was selected. This is not to highlight some kind of conspiracy or adopt the plot theory, but rather to understand how local democracy is affected by international players to be able to address the issue more comprehensively and predict the possible stresses and hindrances that might arise throughout this process.

**Challenge 42: Lack of efficient capacity building parallel systems to prepare future leaders**

In many countries, we can see how government is dealing with young people's capacity building as a priority. They develop methods to engage them in decision making. I could see some countries having children and youth parliament where all young people discuss social issues. Others developed simulations of the government to make decisions parallel to the government's ones that are taken into consideration during.

**Challenge 43: Equal starting conditions for each human development which will also lead available equally to get involved modern technological up-growth in the world**

Because some of us are privileged and live in more developed countries and city with more information and opportunities while some of us live in village or non-developed countries we don't have equal starting conditions and are separated from the modern, technological world. The system doesn't need people who knows their rights and can resistance. Main priority is use as a worker for business and capitalism. Without knowledge and information, you are getting exploited from the other powerful country. The governance does not allow poor countries to educate. People who are exploited and poor don't have power to fight, to change their reality, because first of all they need to fight for food to survive. We demand from them to fight for their rights? from people who are fighting everyday for set up. How can we resolve this problem? We need to find strength to develop our selves and each other and resist any INEQUALITY. Inequality and different start-up conditions are a global problem. We think that there are developed, democratic countries, but in reality it's just a fraud and its only is expressed in the distribution. The neo-liberal agenda has established a fraudulent competitive environment and tell us that only the strong will survive.

**Challenge 44: Outside interferes**

There is interference in money, the military, the media... This was happening in many countries. There is no healthy democracy.

**Challenge 45: Lack of women's engagement in politics**

Unfortunately several communities still till now underestimate the power of women due to the restricted familial thinking and old mentalities. And that she can do and have the ability to participate in politics and in everything in the society, but communities most of the time set her apart from politics and do not give women the appropriate space and the equal opportunity to be involved in politics. We cannot neglect that before engaging women in politics we have to work on eliminating the gender inequalities between men and women and to achieve the equality in the house duties for example so that these duties would be divided equally on both of them and as a result she will be able to go out and involve herself into the community and to find a good job opportunity so that both of them can even share the responsibility and



leadership at house. Added she can continue studying the masters, or PhD and that would be a chance to raise herself and considered as an added value to her personality and that would encourage her more to participate in public life and to be a politician. In addition to raising the awareness of women through campaigns to realize their right in being an effective actor in the community as long as the men are and to build their confidence and assuring on supporting that awareness by government to adhere the women's rights. Moreover giving the marginalized women the chance to express herself in the community and building their capacities to be leaders in the conflict areas where they might leave in especially that this type of women are really in need to someone who can listen to their opinions and their demands, as well as if that happened we would have been solved a part of the problem because women will feel they are sharing and benefiting their society and their communities care about them and about what they feel. The best suggested solutions for this challenge is that to prepare like a training for the women who have not finished their post secondary education and the women who do not use technology effectively so that they will be able to acquire new skills that will improve them.

#### **Challenge 46: [Deleted]**

#### **Challenge 47: Not effective promotion and strengthening of awareness regarding the importance of education**

Education is the systematic process of gaining knowledge and skills through study, instructions and feedback. Unquestionably, it has a vital role in shaping tomorrow's leaders and society, as it allows the acquisition of skills considered as essential for productive members of a civilized society. Every person has to gain knowledge in order to actively achieve and meet challenges that can produce changes in which are productive for attaining innovations, as well as political and economic objectives. While education is nowadays widely accessible, it is taken for granted, it is not appreciated, and the youth fails to realise the importance of it. Surely, teenagers' age plays a crucial role given that they are in a new phase of their life where they meet new friends, they are exposed to new experiences, and more generally they are more excited about life and having fun. Therefore, they sometimes lose track and develop a perception where education and school are not a priority and of great importance. I believe that this is happening due to the system's insufficient efforts placed on the promotion of the importance of continuously learning and developing skills. People should, as early as possible, realise that education is not something to be taken for granted, and most importantly it is not something to be perceived as not vital for their lives and the sustainable development of the society. This can be achieved by using technology to effectively spread and promote this importance, and step by step to change perceptions and establish a common belief and way of living, where children, teens and adults love to learn and develop themselves and others.

#### **Challenge 48: Every topic is turned into a partisan issue**

Politics infiltrates every part of a citizen's lives and that shouldn't always be the case. For some topics are not up for debate, they are not a political matter but rather a matter of fact. For example, global warming has been turned into a left vs right issue, where being part of a certain party will imply what people think about the reality of global warming and its link to human activity. This interference of politics in every aspect of life is a big problem for people as it turns obvious things into a debate and a problem that needs to be discussed, refuted and campaigns while it is very obvious

#### **Challenge 49: Lack of the specific information and politic education**

The lack of sufficient information to make the subject important and exciting for young people, political education is complex and not easy for many groups, which made it difficult to access a lot of information and there are many specific opportunities that reduce access to information is the Arab Spring and the

absence of specialists in the management of political action To the lack of a platform to play the role of political information in addition to the parties do not work to update the political issues every minute there is a constant change in the way of thinking and changes in the world in addition to the difficulty of access to everything that is new in the Arab Spring

**Challenge 50: Lack of transparency in parliamentary elections**

Taking Lebanon as a context, the parliamentary electoral process is highly influenced and affected by the sectarian background, to the extent that the electoral results are usually set up before the electoral process even begins. Emanating from the latter, elections become a symbolic act, promoting a so-called democratic system. That being said, a lack of transparency in parliamentary elections stands at the core of an alleged democratic system.

**Challenge 51: Submission of the judicial authority resulting to unstable and unsecured law**

The submission of the judicial authority in our democracies has its roots in the independence given to it in the Constitution and to the practices of the representatives with it. For instance the parliamentary immunity or the right of pardon exercised by the President. Both of these examples violate the independence of the judicial authority but are in place in most of the democracies.

**Challenge 52: Racial discrimination**

Due to the refusal to accept and acknowledge the presence of structural racism in our current systems of governance, racial discrimination has disseminated into popular culture throughout the middle east. Racial groups are kept at the bottom of the labor system with no opportunity to move up. Major political parties do not consider these marginalized groups in their political agendas. With no voice, and no representation in the governance system, these groups are left with very few rights and services, not to mention a growing resentment from an entire population. Time and time again we've noticed that the increase in inequality tears at the social fabric. It is necessary to consider the impacts of racial discrimination in the process of reinventing democracy.

**Challenge 53: People can't vote online**

Lack of Online Digital Voting Systems We live in a digital age where hundreds of miles can be erased by the click of a button and access to every information in the world lies at your fingertips. As the digital era grows so did the need for portable internet. This call was spectacularly answered through the invention of Wi-Fi, 3G, 4G and 5G cellular along with their by-products such as portable dongles and internet hotspots, the world wide web can be accessed literally anywhere. Hence the question arises on why this amazing advancement hasn't been utilized in the electoral process. Most elections are conducted through ballots manually. This leads to issues such as vote miscount, ease of rigging, wasted votes on account of unclear stamps to name a few things. It is also a challenge for people who are based in other cities or countries but are registered to vote in a different place all together. All this leads to a general distrust in the electoral and by extension the democratic system and many potential voters are actually non participants in the election. A use of digital electoral software could be an excellent and cost effective solution to this. Armed with the same safety as most high end online shopping sites, voters could log in from the comfort of their homes and vote, ensuring a high turnout. For rural or underdeveloped areas a simple kiosk and a small internet dongle or hotspot led by a guide would be sufficient. This process would boost the speed of the whole process while bringing a very high degree of transparency to the election, ensuring that democracy is not only upheld but actually strives for the betterment of the nation.

**Challenge 54: No DAILY representation of the people**

Overcoming this challenge leads to the creation of the backbone of democracy that 'allows' citizens - and does not force them - to participate and voice their demands and concerns on a daily basis. The feasibility

of this point depends on the use of technology, hence an online platform should be established to ensure a smooth participation by the citizens.

**Challenge 55: Lack of accountability**

Decision makers and policies, decisions taken should be accountable to the people. The development of the EU (for example the Parliament's authorities) is a good example of accountability and it developed the democratic process inside the EU and encouraged other countries to engage with EU policies without being afraid of control by strongest countries.

**Challenge 56: The wide gap between generations**

A wide gap between generations Nowadays we have a wide partisan and ideological gap between between older and younger generations. Young people are not taken seriously by the older generations as they don't believe in their abilities in taking a leading position. Young people are usually passionate about their ideas and can come up with revolutionary ideas which older generations have difficulty in accepting them. As a result, young people are unsatisfied with their governments and eventually lose interest in participating in political life. Young people are not the leaders of tomorrow but rather leaders of today and they should be heard.

**Challenge 57: No online communication channels between government and citizens**

No Online Communication channels between Government and Citizens We as a part of the Middle East Countries we actually lack of Direct Contact and communication with our Governments and we think that Online Discussion with our Presidents or with their legal representatives can democratize community voices and can bring new opinions and actions for the benefit of the Society as a whole. The new technologies such as internet offers a new means by which citizens may contact government to express their views or concerns, and it raises interesting experiential and theoretical questions about whether citizen contacts are affected by communication media. Citizens in online environments enjoy the equity in the ability to share thoughts and ideas. When dealing online the playing field is leveled and opportunities are in place such as commenting on posts, videos, and Ministries work or participating in discussion forums. These environments provide citizens with varied opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas." "Group decision-making experiments generally indicate that online discussions, relative to face-to-face group meetings, generate more open exchanges of ideas, suggesting considerable utility for considered work." Unlike an unrecorded verbal conversation, online discussions are lasting and can be revisited and reinterpreted for answers to different questions using different analysis techniques using analytical packages. As a conclusion: Using online forums as a conversation documentation tool is one of the key benefits our clients gain from online engagement processes. That the comments are captured literally and can be downloaded, archived and made readily available to the public or for analysis purposes presents huge analytical, administrative, governance transparency benefits, as well as significant cost savings.

**Challenge 58: Traffic crowding**

In many countries specifically these with huge population size, face the huge problem of crowding. This problem affects all the aspects of life specially the daily activities of the citizens. The good thing about this problem is that it could be easily tackled by the use of technology. Using Cameras and digitalised traffic signs will help substitute the huge number of traffic police officers and soldiers and provide better control of the traffic. This will lead to saving a huge amount of money paid for their salaries and help shifting their efforts used in another more beneficial direction and will also lessen the bias in this sector.

**Challenge 59: Lack of long time planning**

Governments are changing frequently and they do not plan many projects for a long term. This problem

affects the whole population, governments and the systems. We can change this problem by putting all the decisions online so that the people can take part and supervise decisions, even if governments are changing.

**Challenge 60: Bribery and favouritism**

Bribery and favoritism: It is mostly occurred at the governmental institutes. I have seen that in many Arab countries, when you want to make a certain document for example you have to pay bribery or buy a gift for the employee or sometimes to several employees just in order to finish your thing as quick as possible.

**Challenge 61: Mediatization of public stances/information**

Social media has always been intervening in people's daily lives by shaping and re-shaping every discourse and every public debate existing on the political agenda. The role that the latter plays in influencing the process of policy-making is influential, and the way in which it reframes and reinvents public discourses is also noticeable, in light of the digital era. I believe that technology can play a major role in this matter, in the sense that they would portray a transparent opinionated perception of the "truth", regardless of local and international political dynamics.

**Challenge 62: The rolling of places of power between the representatives**

This new trend is really common nowadays. Once a representative get into politics, he enters in a movement of rolling of seats which complicates even more to enter in politics and it accentuates the oligarchy already existing.

**Challenge 63: Self-concerned intervention of states in other vulnerable states**

The intervention in the Middle East is one of the root causes of a lot of political instability. This intervention is self-centred motivation under the umbrella of altruism and peacekeeping, and especially in times of conflict, when a lot of countries go and claim protection of security but they stay longer than needed and take advantage and exploit populations. The reason for that is that powerful states are too economically-driven.

**Challenge 64: Media bias**

Media bias: Media bias is a controversial issue since decades. In my opinions, media bias is when reporters select certain stories or news to report on or cover; leaving one side of the story and focusing on only part of the picture. Since the media is mainly owned by the government, the media is controlled and manipulated. Therefore, citizens cannot make decisions on public policy if they depend on the incorrect twisted information. Since we live in the age of misinformation, it is needed to restore public confidence in the media by creating online platforms to explain the role of citizen, to spread awareness, and to encourage participation. Media must be fair and unbiased; as It should be accessible to all citizens through different channels.

**Challenge 65: Lack of access to basic rights and services for immigrants**

Our current systems of governance do not acknowledge the migrants and they do not provide enough services because of the lack of travel documents or other documents which they might have lost if they were forcefully displaced. Technology can be beneficial because these documents can be available on a platform.

**Challenge 66: Lack of positive discrimination towards marginalised groups**

We should create new democratic tools to facilitate engagement with youth and women in the political system.

### **Challenge 67: Elitism in the political system**

A major problem in our political systems today is that only a handful of people have access to the positions and the needed coverage by the media. This problem makes that changing and refreshing the system is really difficult, nearly impossible too which is why fighting this problem is necessary to reestablish a proper democracy that answers to the people's needs and gives people access to positions of power instead of keeping it between a few people.

### **Challenge 68: Lack of trust between state officials and citizens**

As a result of bureaucracy, corruption, inequality, and lack of democratic governance in general, trust in governmental institutions has declined. Citizens began to lose faith, trust and confidence in their governments. This distrust can cause instability, uncertainty and fragile societies.

### **Challenge 69: Impossibility to influence decision making**

When less developed countries get aid from multinational companies or the EU and other organisations, the big problem is that this does not answer the problems of the people. So they give them solutions to problems they do not face – eg they give them car without them needing a car, but they need buses. That's why we need to at least channel what the people's needs are not only through political leaders, because in a lot of ways they are not answering to the needs, as they have their own agenda. We need to ensure that there is an actual benefit from the aid and the money spent.

### **Challenge 70: People fight for power and wealth**

Everything has one main reason this is fight for power and wealth. So, we need to recognise that we are all equal in the whole world and need to share our material well-being each other. Until we do not agree with all things, our fight for democracy won't be effective. The challenges that I present are in harmony with each other. less accessibility to education causes Less access to education leads us to shut down our political spaces. All of this causes our Enslavement and poverty. Poverty separates us from the other modern and technological world. In this reality we don't have equal starting conditions.

## Annex II

### **List of Action Plans:**

#### **Action Plan 1: Mandatory participation in political youth centers during high schools**

High school students will study politics and about the political world in their country. This would make them more educated and more interested about politics and will make them want to take part in their local policy making. In less than 4 years we would be able to see more young people part taking in politics parties.

#### **Action Plan 2: A social networking platform for volunteers / youths looking for opportunities posted by non-profits and government agencies**

In our generation, digital media is very advanced whereby most of us, especially the youthful population, use it nowadays to bring attention to the world about a major issue. By implementing a social networking platform for volunteers and the youths to look for opportunities posted by non-profit organisations and government agencies, will allow the youths to apply at these organisations and voice their opinions and the challenges through the help of the agencies.

#### **Action Plan 3: Use digitalized standardized matching system to recruit governmental employees and representatives**

To fight the Vicious cycle of corruption we need to start by recruitment of the efficient people to work in the governmental institutions. We can start this on a country scale by putting standards for employees selection in 1-2 years time then use those standards to select the highly scoring applicants. Those selected applicants will be the most effective in their areas which will lead to increased meritocracy of the government and will enhance the participation of youth in the decision making process which in turn will help limit the Media bias. It is very ambitious cycle and will take 5-7 years to be achieved.

#### **Action Plan 4: Government data must be available online to increment transparency level**

I think that governments must develop its own website where the citizen can has access to the governmental procedures and comun laws . through the online websites all citizens can get information about their rights and obligations in the society, as well as they will be more familiar with any type of changes in laws and rules. I believe that government should update ministries websites monthly

#### **Action Plan 5: Mobile application for communication between citizens and their governmental officials**

In order to narrow the gap between citizens and government. It is needed to create some kind of communication. Since we live in a digital era and since most of people of not all have smart phones, we can create application for citizens to: 1- Ask questions 2- Send complains 3- Share concerns 4- Be updated with what's going on in their country 5- Suggestions

#### **Action Plan 6: Decentralising the government institutions through reinforcing the local governing bodies**

the process is to redistributing functions, powers away from central location or authority. this aims to give citizens more in pupluc decision-making and also supoorts democratization by giving people or their representatives more infuence in the formulation and implementation of policies.

#### **Action Plan 7: Social media platform that does not interact with, but rather informs citizens of their rights and the structure of their government**

This platform will be dedicated to inform the citizens of their rights and duties within the state's structure. As a first step and due to the lack of resources, the platform will not open the floor for people to share their concerns and complaints. It would be more appropriate to first help citizens understand their rights,

for that would serve as a filter to their complaints. The second step would open up an interactive feature for citizens to communicate and request clarifications and consultations.

**Action Plan 8: Opening an independent and educational TV channel to reach rural areas and villages**

Opening An Independent Educational TV Channel To Reach Rural Areas While the major cities enjoy a major influx of information in terms of news from all sources through the advent of an global internet revolution, the rural areas are fairly neglected in major parts of multiple countries. This concept revolves around a government funded programme where kiosks or stations are established that feature a transparent informative news outlet. The outlet, based on a TV show format divulging news in a rural friendly manner (in terms of language and simplicity of content to ensure maximum retention). To ensure transparency of information provided NGOs already working on rural development can be asked to mediate. The outlet would aim to provide daily political ongoings, governmental progress within the country, performance reviews and analysis of significant members of the government amongst other relevant things with the aim to educate people without standard internet facilities and try to bring them up to par with city dwellers ensuring well informed decision making on the public's part, leading a staunch and booming democracy.

**Action Plan 9: Enhancing primary and secondary school curriculums by providing a proper and thorough education on systems of governance**

The lack of knowledge channels into a lack of engagement of the citizens and more specifically the youth, because it starts from a young age. Thus if we address it from a young age we can see effective change. Adjust this lack of education firstly by ensuring that public and private school systems have qualified employees and the necessary tools for success. By having online workshops/trainings can make employees more qualified. This can lead to a collaborative process through which the curricula could be enhanced / updated / rewritten. In the new curricula the students can be taught about the electoral systems, the structure of the government and their role and capabilities as citizens.

**Action Plan 10: Guarantee a constitutional court independent in the government that ensures respect of the constitution and fundamental rights**

The constitutional court's role is to ensure the respect of the Constitution and the fundamental rights. It ensures that every law, and every decree are not violating neither the Constitution nor the fundamental rights. Constitutional courts are today already established in most of the countries but they are established in a restrictive way. In fact, in a lot of countries, this constitutional court is, first of, corrupted by the influence of the executive and legislative powers and, second of, it can be only appealed by the President, the prime minister or the presidents of the assemblies. We should guarantee the constitutional court, first, ensures that every law and decree obeys to the Constitution and the fundamental rights, secondly, guard that citizens, in addition to the heads of the governments, receive the right to appeal the constitutional court if they believe, during a trial, that their fundamental rights or that constitutional principles are violated. So basically if a litigant believes that one article used against him in the trial is violating one of his fundamental rights as a legal person, or is disrespecting constitutional principle then he can engage a procedure of questioning the constitutionality of a law. If the litigant engages the procedure in the first jurisdiction or the appeal court, than this jurisdiction will have to decide on whether or not the demand is acceptable. If it is than the jurisdiction transfers the case to the constitutional court. The court will have to decide on whether or not the article is violating a fundamental right or a constitutional principle. If it is in fact violating, than the article will have to be deleted or will be given an interpretation by the constitutional court. If not, the trial continues and the article remains in effect. This action plan is really important because the constitutional court is a real guardian of the respect of every fundamental rights and constitutional principles. And it's even more important because this action plan gives back to the citizen its power to ensure for himself the protection of his rights.

**Action Plan 11: Automatic selection of potential candidates in the job recruitment process**

The idea is to create a digital program that would automatically filter out the candidates who do not meet the job requirements and would mechanically select those who are eligible for the job offer. In this manner, the latter could be a starting point to tackle the absence of meritocracy in governmental institutions and would give more opportunities for the qualified youth who are unfortunately not part of the elites, to have a chance to be recruited.

**Action Plan 12: Create a website that re-organizes data on politicians' financial information**

Ensuring transparency cannot be done by simply asking rulers to share their financial information, it needs to be faced by raising awareness for citizens about their right to know, to lobby for laws and eventually create a website that would take in the information published and reorganise it in a comprehensive way in charts and so for it to not only be accessible but also to be understandable to the general public.

**Action Plan 13: Establish online platform of social media on activism and expression of ideas, it will also offer training 20 people related to activism in the middle east**

It is very important to have platform for sharing and exchanging relevant information and also offering training on activism, social campaign etc. These 20 people who will be trained will then be able to train / lead others and achieve transformation. If it is online it will be more easy to be disseminated and reach the people.

**Action Plan 14: Online interactive and fun platform dedicated in addressing the issues related to the youth's engagement in politics as well as the enhancing of awareness regarding the rights of citizens**

During the identification of challenges affecting democratic governance, we recognised that the lack of engagement and interest by the youth, as well as the unawareness of our rights as citizens are fundamental issues that need to be addressed. Hence my suggestion is to create a website and an application specifically designed for young people. Simple language, colourful and interactive features would be used in order to make it easy for them to engage and become more interested. It will incorporate different aspects, programs and activities, and thus while a visitor's experience would be fun and smooth; success can be monitored through the number of subscriptions and feedback received. The focus of the page will be on resolving the issues arising from the complexity and lack of relevance politics entails, on connecting inspirational and influential people with the youth, and through direct communication and discussions to establish relationships that benefits all of us. The page will also emphasise on various activities that enhances awareness regarding our rights and that effectively educates and develops skills necessary for the sustainable development of our society. It will directly assist on changing negative perceptions the youth has regarding politics, representatives and governance, and it will also prepare them for becoming active members of society and influential decision makers.

**Action Plan 15: Create a digital independant press board**

There must be an independent digital organization for preventing wrong info distribution. In this organization, people who have different ideas, objectively audit each other. All ideas should be able to say in prejudiced press ambiance.

**Action Plan 16: Formulating sub-committees to focus on the short term issues**

Sub-committee is a group of people that is composed of some members of largers committees or other groups like: House Committee on Agriculture, House Committee on Energy, and House Committee on Education. So that they play the role of a mediator or connector between government and people, as a result citizens will feel that they are close to the fovernment and a part of the society and they will have the opportunity to express themselves and what they want, on the other hand sub-committees will upload them to the government. Sub-committee's role is about focusing and working on specific pathways to achieve the broader goal and to tackle the short-term issues so the government will just



finalize the process by studying the issues and taking the final action.

**Action Plan 17: Government information management systems**

To develop information management systems is to create a platform for all ministers and executives to upload all their plans of action so that in case they left their positions, their successors could proceed with their work instead of starting from the beginning and also having these systems will manage the citizens to track the progress of the government's plans which will form a transparent environment of governance which is so healthy and useful for any society.

**Action Plan 18: Resistance to the patriarchal system and trying to find some new form of governance**

In our reality every form of governance is that democratic or something like that, a political agenda end etc. is created by the men. It is clear to us that the systems created by them do not work and again leads us inequality and injustice world. We need to take a look our gender roles in politics and let's agree that Personal is political. In this way we will be able to self-reflect and find out who we are. All this is necessary to put in doubt and in the given present they receive as social constructions.

**Action Plan 19: Encouraging youth participation in politics in following up the government behaviour through technologies**

All of us recognise that the youth is a huge power in the society and we want them to be engaged in the political systems. The young people use technologies and social media heavily, everyday. We can invest these efforts to correct the behaviour / actions of the governments.

**Action Plan 20: Creating an online platform that easily explains the different formal tools youth can use to issue a complaint to the parliament**

This is an informative platform which will include the procedures and details relating to procedures that could be used by youth and all other citizens in general to address and induce change at the levels of the government and the relevant institutions. For example, it would include that every single individual could submit petitions if they have any complaints, as well as how they would draft the petition, whom to address it for and how many individuals should sign

**Action Plan 21: Call center for citizens issues**

The center will be a call center to all the people that are interested in getting news and clarification from the government and the parliament. The call center would be sponsor by the government and non governmental organization so there be a possibility for authoring what the call center answer would be. It is important that the caller would feel safe to say their opinion with no fear. The aim for the center is to be the home for the people questions and problems. When the parliament or the government is making new decision that people can't understand or they don't agree with they can get an explanation from the center and to register their complain. The complain would go to a special unit in the parliament that would read it and in the end of the year would send a report regarding the people opinion of the parliament work and in some cases would recommended to change laws that the current government had done.

the people would feel that their voice is been heard not only every election but also everyday if they wish. It can be manage to see the result of the center by number of phone calls; the more phone calls the more interest from the people. We can know the efficiency of the center in one year, the people will call and after what they said will go to the parliament and they can make changes or at list be aware of the people opinion on their work. We will be able to see if the idea is good.

The situation can be worse if the people won't call and won't care regarding government decision. Lack of interest from the people will make the country and the politic situation much worse.

**Action Plan 22: Establish subsidiary government agencies to assist with the policies and problems faced in the countries**

By establishing subsidiary government agencies to assist with the policies and problems faced in the country will allow the problems and challenges to be tackled but also speed up the process of informing the central government with the problem arised. It could be measurable by having annual audits and assessing if any changes or improvements were being made. It would be achievable once these agencies would be set up and effectively passed on their concerns to the central government. It would be realistic and time bound once the central government funds these agencies, when it will fund them and when it will agree to take action to all the challenges.

**Action Plan 23: Establishing media ethical declaration to generalize for all media agencies**

The idea is to have declaration with all the ethics of journalism by agreement between all the press and media agencies in a country. This declaration is supposed to be binding these agencies with incentives. This is planned to limit media bias and make them neutral in news transfer. The challenge in this is gonna be following up with them with making them abiding to it.

**Action Plan 24: Creation of an online election platform**

from my point of view government should create an online platform exclusively for the general elections where citizens are able to get information about the dates and candidates whom are participating in all electrical periods. municipalities and local councils can also get use of this platform too as a way to let citizen be more familiar with everything related to elections and general rights.

**Action Plan 25: Creating a network of advocates for minorities and marginalized groups**

In many parts of the world, we can see violations of human rights. It is needed to create a network of passionate youth who can advocate for spreading awareness about minorities' rights and motivate them to get engaged in their societies. The network should have people from different parts of the world such as: Europe, MENA, Africa, The Americans and Asia.

**Action Plan 26: Reforming the basic law or constitution in a way that guarantees the political, social and economic rights**

The basic law / constitution must be updated annually to keep it responsive to the people's needs. Political rights to allow all the people to participate and engage in political processes. Social and economic rights to be improved and to allow people to participate in the economy and create economy projects to empower the middle class to reshape the social structure. Without empowering the middle class, rich people will keep control the situation and the government and all of the political affairs.

**Action Plan 27: A parallel independent consultation body to explain the limitations of the constitution**

This body will offer free legal consultation to the citizens, and will act as a mediator between the citizens and the constitutional court. It will thus overcome, to a certain extent, the obstacle that separates citizens from the court and that allows only political executives and deputies to appeal to the constitutional court.

**Action Plan 28: Online voting systems for representatives**

Online Voting Systems for Representatives after the general elections have been conducted, people should be provided with a platform to communicate with the representatives of the standing parliament. In the digital world this is pretty easy to arrange through a form of cyber presence. A website platform could be provided to the citizens where citizens can sound their ideas or attempt the polls that could be posted there to get an overview of the situation on hand. The public could login through their National IDs yet hold full anonymity to protect their freedom of speech. The website itself would consist of a separate section for every active ministry within the government as well as a separate pitch section. These would

allow the citizens to voice their concerns over the policies on hand or on the parliament floor. It would also allow them to follow specific heads and significant personnel and rate their tenure on the basis of how much of their mission statement do they accomplish and rank them overall on their performance. The website would also focus on the youth, specifically the 15 to 18 age demography. The purpose of the section would be to mobilise the voice of the future voters of the country and get them involved in the active ongoing and reactions to every government step taken. Such a step would also allow an early interest and understanding of democracy ensuring a thriving, successful system.

**Action Plan 29: Creating an online platform for citizens to voice their concerns, that will categorize them into a clear database, to be addressed by the government in the upcoming parliamentary sessions**

This online platform will first have accessible information, clear and easy to understand. It will have links to the legislations, the actual articles and the more complicated information for those who want to see them. After that, citizens will be able to voice their concerns in a categorised manner. To ensure that the voices of the citizens are heard, these complains will be digitalised and categorised and then given to the parliament for discussion. This online platform will come out with a report at the end which will be given to the parliament and addressed at the parliamentary sessions.

**Action Plan 30: Create a website developed by the government aiming to extend, in an accessible way, all of the laws, the governmental decrees and the jurisdictional decisions**

Even though this idea seems really obvious, most of today's democratic countries don't have this type of platform. Even the well known democratic France doesn't have it and doesn't even have something close to it, in France even though "ignorance of the law is no excuse", the law is not accessible, you need to buy the the codes to access the law. In the rule of law, the law has to be just, clear and accessible. And requiring people to buy the law is completely against the rule of law. This is the basic right of a citizen, have access to the law under which he is living in. Regarding the government decrees it should be as important to have them published so that the citizens follow what the people they elected are doing. Information of the evolution of the work of the government should be the minimum that they provide to the citizens who elected them. Finally, concerning the publishing of every decisions of the jurisdictional authority on this website could establish a bigger transparency of this authority's decisions and avoid largely corruption in this body. Create a constitutional court independent from the government that ensures a respect of the constitution

**Action Plan 31: Organizing online sessions of Q&As on the rights of citizens**

The idea is to establish online sessions of Questions and Answers about the rights of the citizens that would explain the latter in a simplified and informal manner, making the information comprehensible and accessible for all people because people who are not daily involved in politics tend not to have a clear image of their rights/responsibilities. It would also be a practicality for the daily lives as citizens, in the sense that people would refer to the Q&A whenever they are having a specific problem. Therefore, people and more specifically the youth, will start getting more engaged, given that they are becoming more informed about their rights and what they can do about them. In fact, looking back at the erroneous priority effect, challenge no 34 titled "deficiency in the process of raising awareness around the rights of citizens", which is at the bottom of the list, is the most influential and is usually a factor that is the least taken into consideration, according to our votes. By tackling this challenge, this would impact the whole system, and its effects would spread to all the challenges, up to challenge no 7, which is at the top of the tree, titled "lack of interest and engagement by youth". Thus, starting from a concrete action plan to tackle challenge no 34 would automatically affect the abstract challenge no. 7.

**Action Plan 32: Confronting what studies show and what politicians say (for example fact checker)**

Citizens don't always have the time, patience or luxury of looking up every topic and the truth behind every issue which is why creating a fact checker that would only check if the statements made by rulers are

true if it is based in fact and not a political statement. So when suggesting an economic plan or discussing global warming, or the impact of refugees in the countries, these statements need to be verified by the fact checker that will base its answers on conducted studies

**Action Plan 33: Partnership with an international body for the information in development**

It is important because every project finishes after funding, but sustainability in the long term is very important. Sustainability must be a part of a project and integrated in it.

**Action Plan 34: Surveys for citizens in order to establish data based decision making**

We have identified the absence of public evaluation systems as an important shortcoming and challenge of the current governance system. Accordingly, my suggestion is to create questionnaires that citizens could answer twice a year. By doing so, people will get the chance to evaluate political and governmental processes and actions, as well as to express concerns and suggest ideas regarding the current system of governance. In turn, the government will identify trends and recognise common issues, needs, beliefs and concerns of its citizens and henceforth they will be able to take decisions and actions that address the issues and needs of the majority. P.S. Transparency in the process of analysing and publishing the findings will be ensured if both governmental representatives and independent bodies engage in the collection, storage and analysis of data.

**Action Plan 35: [Deleted]**

**Action Plan 36: Formulating regulations by government that focus on implementing gender equality**

In regards to the shortcoming “lack of women’s engagement in politics” government must issue regulations that oblige and force accomplishing tasks and duties equally between men and women, in order to give away the old perception which says women’s best place is at the house, so house duties for example must be divided equally on both of them so that women will be able to find an appropriate job vacancy or even to complete her education such as the post secondary. And in case of the occurrence of violations either the man or woman has the free decision to report.

**Action Plan 37: The availability of governing knowledge to prevent mal-administration**

The idea is that there is a big difference between being a leader and having a leadership skills. Leaders have to be trained once they are in the position on governing skills and receive a comprehensive courses to gain governing knowledge, the matter that would improve the governance.

**Action Plan 38: Stop exploitation of developing countries by the economically powerful states**

States who have strong economical situation should stop using developing countries as a cheap workers. On the example of the Middle east countries we can say that rich countries are invading as protectors, but in reality they only need from us cheap labors and our resources. The Middle East does not need to help them to get their resources. They have knowledge and power how to develope indipendently. That is why they should go th their countries and stop interfering in the formation of developing countries. Because todays problems are caused by their rude interference. We need resources of our countries for local people not for the creation of world capital.

**Action Plan 39: [Deleted]**

**Action Plan 40: Creating an online platform for youth all around the world to share thoughts on democracy and challenges they face**

This platform would be an interactive platform used by youth all around the world to communicate and explain to other youth stressing issues all around the world. This tackles the issue of international players supporting media bias to make sure populations are not fully aware of how their particular nation is intervening in another states. Thus, communication would be direct between youth in different countries. How the platform would be organized would be in a living libraries kind of way (a method of non-formal education) whereby experts and youth knowledgeable of a particular issue would add their ideas and create an interactive informative dialogue.

**Action Plan 41: [Deleted]**

**Action Plan 42: A better system of governance would be through the people we recruit to work at such big positions at the government**

A better system of governance would be through the people we recruit at such high positions at the government because by recruiting the right people for the right job would lead to the right decisions being made for the country. The right decisions made for the country means that these decisions should be fair which will lead to a more equitable society. We would implement an intense recruiting process where we would assess each person for each job role posted. The person who meets all the criterias for the specific job will be recruited and trained. Later they will be assessed on their performance through a 6 month probabation period. If they satisfy the probation criteria then they will be offered a full time contract.

**Action Plan 43 : Launch online platforms for communication with the public**

This is to make an effective a double way communication channel between the public and the leaders and governmental officials. With the available technology advances this should be easy through mobile Apps , FB pages , official websites , etc that people can ask whatever question they want that reach directly and can be easily checked by the leader or official communication office or spokesman or himself in an anonymous way to guarantee the privacy and security for the public.

**Action Plan 44: Ensuring media participation in human rights awareness campaigns**

the media is considered one of the powerful medium that disseminates information and consequently influences published opinion and mobilization which in turn influences the perception and stability of policies and larger governmental structure. so we should always ensure the engagement of media in our political and social life

**Action Plan 45: A series of workshops about civic engagement for youth**

Despite that fact that youth have a vital role to play in decision making in their counties, the rate of lack of interest and engagement is getting higher in many countries. The workshops aim at spreading awareness about the importance of participation and civic engagement among young people. In addition to that youth will be able to acquire gained skills, tools and approaches to enable them to participate fully in decision making.

**Action Plan 46: Create an online platform for political consultation**

We can create an electronic platform just to receive comments of people and suggestions in order to increase their engagement and involvement in politics and also receive their suggestions about how to improve the system. A platform based on participatory approach that engages all of the people and their opinions and encourages people to represent their interest through the system.

**Action Plan 47: Online weekly survey platform where citizens vote on articles to be discussed in the parliament's next session**

This represents the citizens' weekly participation platform. It will provide them with the parliament's agenda for the upcoming session, and will give them the chance to voice their opinions on matters that concern them and affect them. The parliament will thus have access to the opinions of the citizens which they (i.e. Deputies) could/should take into consideration.

**Action Plan 48: [Deleted]**

**Action Plan 49: Create a job matching software for students that is relevant to their field and flexible to their schedules, eliminating the bias of gender, sex, religion, race and other diversity factors**

The government and other organisations will be posting job opportunities and the qualifications that they are looking for and then students will make a profile, upload their resume and list all their qualifications. The system will match them and after that they will be going to the interview process.

**Action Plan 50: Make public every year the accounts of the political parties and establish a financial cap to ensure an equality for all parties**

The political parties should have to publicly publish, every year, their accounts to, first of establish more transparency. And secondly they make sure to avoid financial cap between parties, which usually leads to the closing of the political competition.

**Action Plan 51: Creating a website that helps youth in finding job opportunities in return for engaging in debates in their field of study**

This action plan aims at establishing a website that would help the youth in having access to job opportunities, in return for taking part in debates that would enhance the public debate in their field of study. In fact, when taking Lebanon as an example, there are specific websites that give you access to specific job opportunities, in return for paying them the two first monthly salaries as their service fee. Instead of having students pay for an agency to help them secure a decent job, this action plan would help them secure a job, and they would, all the while, be benefitting their society. In other words, this agency/website would be investing in the youth in return for having them develop their ideas, enhance their critical thinking and consolidate the public debate as a whole, through getting them engaged in dialogues, talks, and roundtable discussions in their field of study. This way, we would be tackling both the youth empowerment and the unemployment rate, and more importantly, the meritocratic system.

**Action Plan 52: Create a platform where independent candidates can share their programs and views**

While some countries have embraced the principles of democracy in theory and are letting people present their candidacy to various positions a major problem is the lack of diversity of the opponents in these countries. For example, in Lebanon, elections can be held but people don't have hope in change for the same traditional parties are the ones with the most visibility to the public and independent candidates struggle to get their message out there. Traditional parties have power and control over media outlets, voters, as well as governmental institutions and use them all in order to mobilize people to vote for them in the coming election. While the region has been witnessing a lot of mobilizations by youth all around, their movement is limited to pressure on traditional parties and not getting into the parliament to get laws voted. Which is why I propose creating a platform that regroups independent candidates showing their programs, views and positions on various topics. Making finding people who think like you easier and thus showing youth that they are not alone, that other people think like them and they can, together, get their candidates elected.

### **Action Plan 53: Education system to discover other governance**

With the online platform that to be established, the democracy understanding and management forms of other countries can be follow and discuss easily. This system can also be shown in schools and it helps students make comparisons. In this way, we will criticize with a single understanding.

### **Action Plan 54: Enhancing the political education starting from the secondary level**

Because education aims to consolidate the knowledge and it is the base for any human being so building the political awareness through education starting from the school specially the secondary level is one of the best ways to raise the awareness of students who are going to be the future generation of the community and that would be achieved through the ministry of education to set a curriculum by educational experts who can formulate the curriculum in an easy way using certain language so that the information would be delivered and understood easily by the students and make them motivated to study the material because they want to not because they are obliged to memorize the information just to pass the exams.

### **Action Plan 55: Development of effective supporting units**

The governments always complain about the huge burden they have in running their positions. If the government ask volunteers to form a supportive unit in order to listen to the burdens that they have, this will be a great opportunity for volunteers and for people to contribute in government and for the government to lessen the problems they have.

### **Action Plan 56: Creating monitoring and evaluation system in work places and governmental institutions**

It is necessary to create monitoring and evaluation system which means planning and implementation. These systems should include survey, data base, supervision, data auditing, evaluation and research. So the goal is to identify the strengths and weakness of the current system and implement the action plan.

### **Action Plan 57: Limit the possibility for an elected representative to be elected more than two times for the same mandate**

This should be obvious, a representative should not be elected more than two times during the same mandate. In fact you can find a representative who is mayor, regional adviser and working as a minister. This is not normal, first because this phenomena of being elected more than two times for the same mandat results to the closing of the political competition, and secondly because this doesn't make sense that one same representative is being elected more than two times to work on more than two governmental posts.

### **Action Plan 58: Awareness campaigns about human rights and the role of citizens**

In order to create educated engaged citizenry, it is important to spread awareness on their rights, responsibilities and roles. The goal is to educate the citizens and especially At young age through awareness campaigns online and offline to reach out to many people. Learning about democracy has to be experiential and not only theoretical. This can be done through simulation models and activities. Once the citizens are empowered, they can take responsibility in engaging effectively in their societies.

### **Action Plan 59: [Deleted] -Create a website that provides a classification of all of the decisions of the judicial authority**



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