

Community Engagement

Session 5

May 2026



RES-MAB
Empowering Change/Embracing Resilience



PRIMA
PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA



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OBJECTIVES AND AGENDA

What should we expect from today's



Objectives

1	Understand the key concepts and tools of community engagement and participation
2	Learn how to identify community strengths, stakeholders, and support networks to build collaborative initiatives.
3	Explore participatory dynamics and co-creation methods



Agenda

16:00 - 16:15 h	Welcome
16:15 - 16:30 h	Key concept: the steering group
16:30 - 17:00 h	Community engagement
17:00 - 17:30 h	Mapping stakeholders
17:30 - 17:45 h	Pause
17:45 - 18:15 h	Participation dynamics
18:15 - 18:45 h	Activity: stakeholder map and discussion
18:45 - 19:00 h	Closure

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Key concept: steering group

Key concepts

Steering group

What is the steering group

The steering group is a group of people who have the will to dedicate time and effort to lead the design and creation of the project. They must represent the interests of the potential agents that form part of the business and must make decisions to design the project, which will then be finalised by consensus with the rest of the agents.

- **Ideal number:** it depends!
- **Some criteria for taking part:**
 - Availability to attend and prepare for the various meetings
 - Representativeness: age, gender, and interests
 - Explicit motivation to participate in the process of establishing the business (for different reasons!)

Key concepts

Steering group

What do we expect from the steering group

1. Being **enthusiastic**
2. Support the project and **contribute with ideas**
3. **Make decisions** about the project
4. Act as a **sounding board** to validate the progress of the business
5. Carry out the **necessary tasks** to start the project

What are the functions of the steering group?

1. Setting **community objectives**
2. Discuss **services to be offered**
3. Validation of the **technical study and economic viability** (understand the demand)
4. **Financing** model
5. Discuss the most suitable **governance** model
6. **Involvement** of new agents

Key concepts

Steering group

To lead a social business we would expect you **to be enthusiastic** about...

1. putting a **stop to the climate emergency**.
2. **reducing poverty** in your area.
3. **getting to know your neighbours** and strengthen your community.
4. **strengthening the economy** of your region and your community.
5. **demonstrating to other communities** that it is possible.
6. contributing to the creation of a **more local and circular economy**.
7. building the kind of **world you want to see**.

and **be aware of the responsibilities**

- Do you assign tasks to each other?
- How do you make decisions?
- How often do you meet each other?
- Do you work together?
- What are your strengths?

Key concepts Steering group

Conditions for collaboration

Minimise **hierarchies**

Generate a **positive interdependence**

Identify **common objectives**

Ensure **continuous and positive communitation**

Promote **shared responsibilities**

Find a good balance between **involvement and responsibility**

External collaborations

1

For what reason do we want to create the alliance?

2

At which stage of our project's value chain do we want to create the alliance?

3

What degree of depth do we want the alliance to reach?

4

What are our red lines and our requirements?

5

Which organisations meet our requirements?

6

What is the nature and characteristics of these organisations?

7

What will each of the parties contribute?

8

What benefits will each of the parties obtain?

9

What will the process of creating the alliance be like?

Now let's assume our steering groups is working

Key concepts

Steering group

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Generate a **positive interdependence**

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Ensure **continuous and positive communitation**

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Now let's assume our steering groups is working

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Community engagement

Key concepts

Why?

What problems or barriers could we face in our social business?



- 1 Conflicts with neighbours or public administrations**
- 2 Staff shortage, and technical or logistical limitations**
- 3 Low access to technology or finance**

Any others?

Key concepts

Why?

What problems or barriers could we face in our social business?



- 1 Conflicts with neighbours or public administrations
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Most of them can be worked out through

Participation



Community
engagement and
governance

Key concepts

What

Community engagement

The process of working collaboratively...

- with **people or organisations near us, sharing some interests or in similar situations**
- to address **issues affecting their well-being**.
- based in a dialogue that **ensures they have a voice** in the decisions,

Asset-based approach

A **methodology that focuses on a community's existing strengths and assets rather than its deficits or problems.**

Instead of asking "what is wrong and what is missing?", this approach asks "**what is here and how can we build upon it?**"
Empowering individuals to use what they already have to drive positive change.

Community strenghts

Collective resources, skills, and capacities available within a specific group or area.

These include physical assets as well as **intangible assets in the form of social capital...**

(local knowledge, cultural heritage, resident expertise, and the networks of trust).

Key concepts

What

- Governance is the way in which the government of an organisation or entity is developed.
- Democracy is based on people taking an active part in the various spheres of the organisation.
- The structure of social coordination relations establishes the patterns of interaction between actors in the decision-making processes that affect the collectivity.



Adapted from *Guia per impulsar la Governança Democràtica a les organitzacions del Tercer Sector Social*. La Confederació Empresarial del Tercer Sector Social de Catalunya, 2017.

Key concepts

What for?

Internal democracy

Value generation

Transparency

Accountability

**Gender, social, or
environmental
perspective**

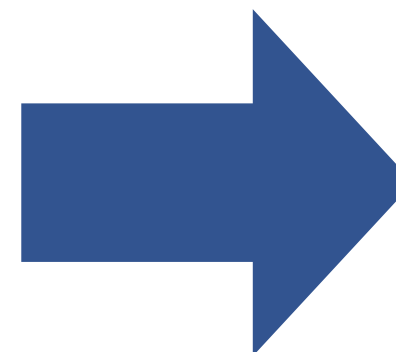
**Community
management**

Empowerment

Learning

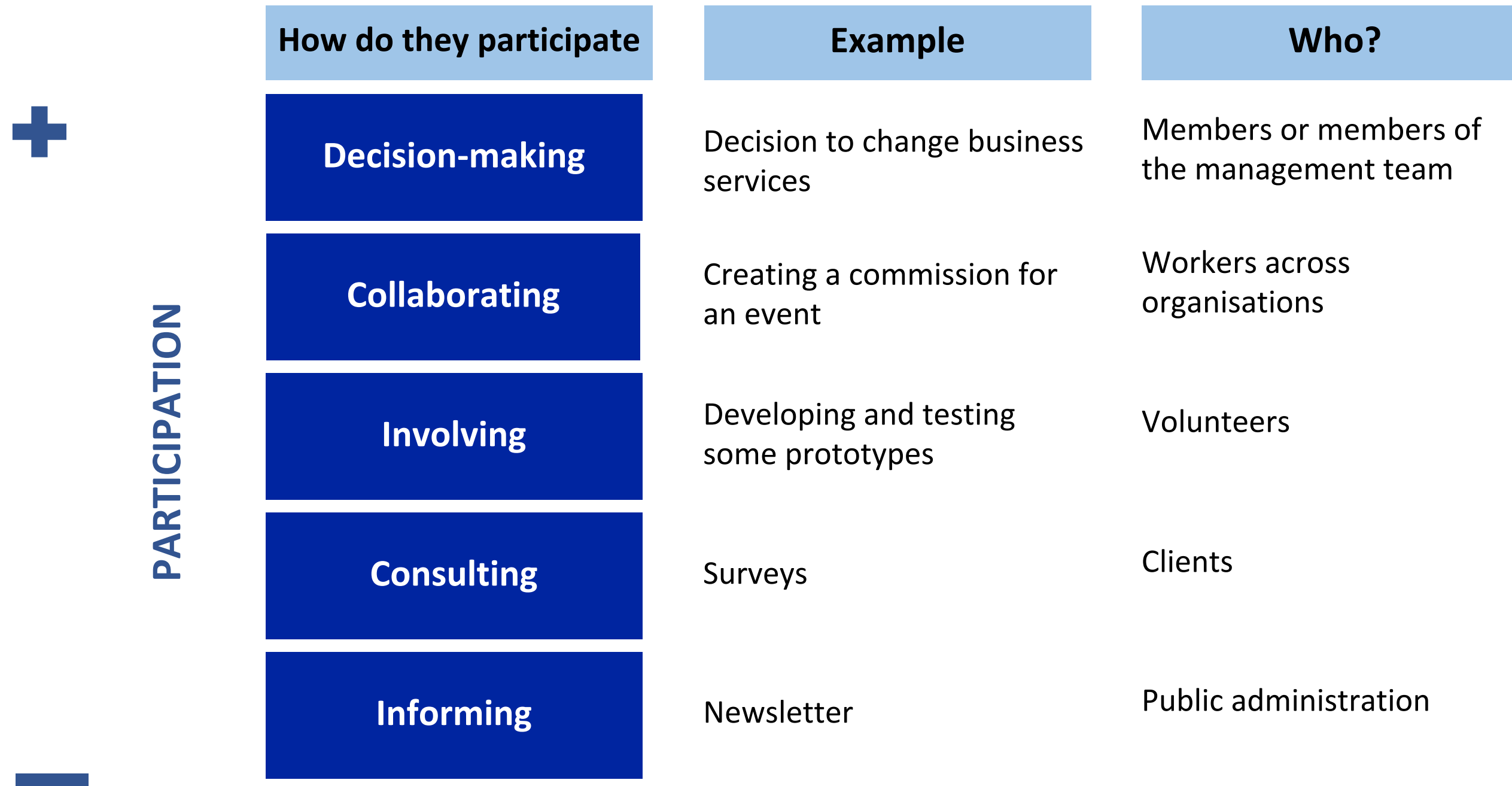
Sense of belonging

Key concepts Who?



The ultimate expression of democratic governance is that everyone can decide within the spaces where they play a role.

Key concepts How?



Mapping stakeholders

Examples

Alliance

- Union or pact between two parties to achieve a long-term objective.
- Diversity of spheres: alliance between entities, people, towns, political groups, etc.

Intercooperation

- It is the relationship mechanism between organisations proposed by the Social and Solidarity Economy, in opposition to the tendency to compete and seek self-interest, in order to open up income-generating opportunities and to make socio-business projects viable.
- It is based on the creation of networks to build a social market beyond the strict relationship between client and provider. That is to say, it is not just a matter of collaboration but a process of joint construction of economic relations from a perspective of social transformation.

02

Mapping stakeholders

Mapping stakeholders Community engagement

It is not necessary to have grand strategies, but it is necessary to have control over certain elements.

What do I want to achieve? (objectives)

With whom do I want to achieve it? (alliances)

Where are these people? (channels or platforms)

What interests me and what interests/concerns them? (message)

Who is in charge of what and when will we do it? (action calendar)

What do we need to do it? (budget)

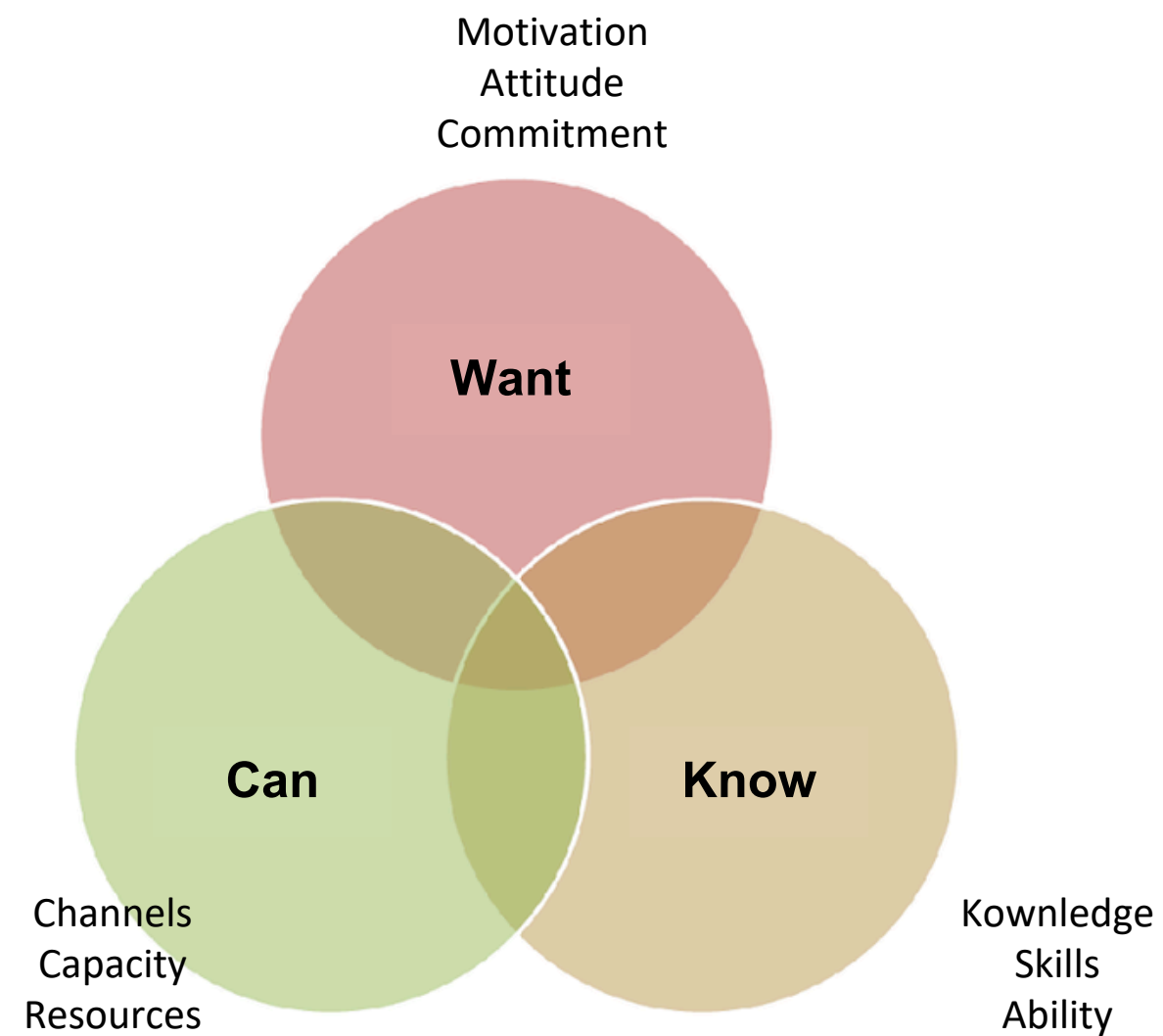
How will we know that what we are doing is working? (evaluation indicators)



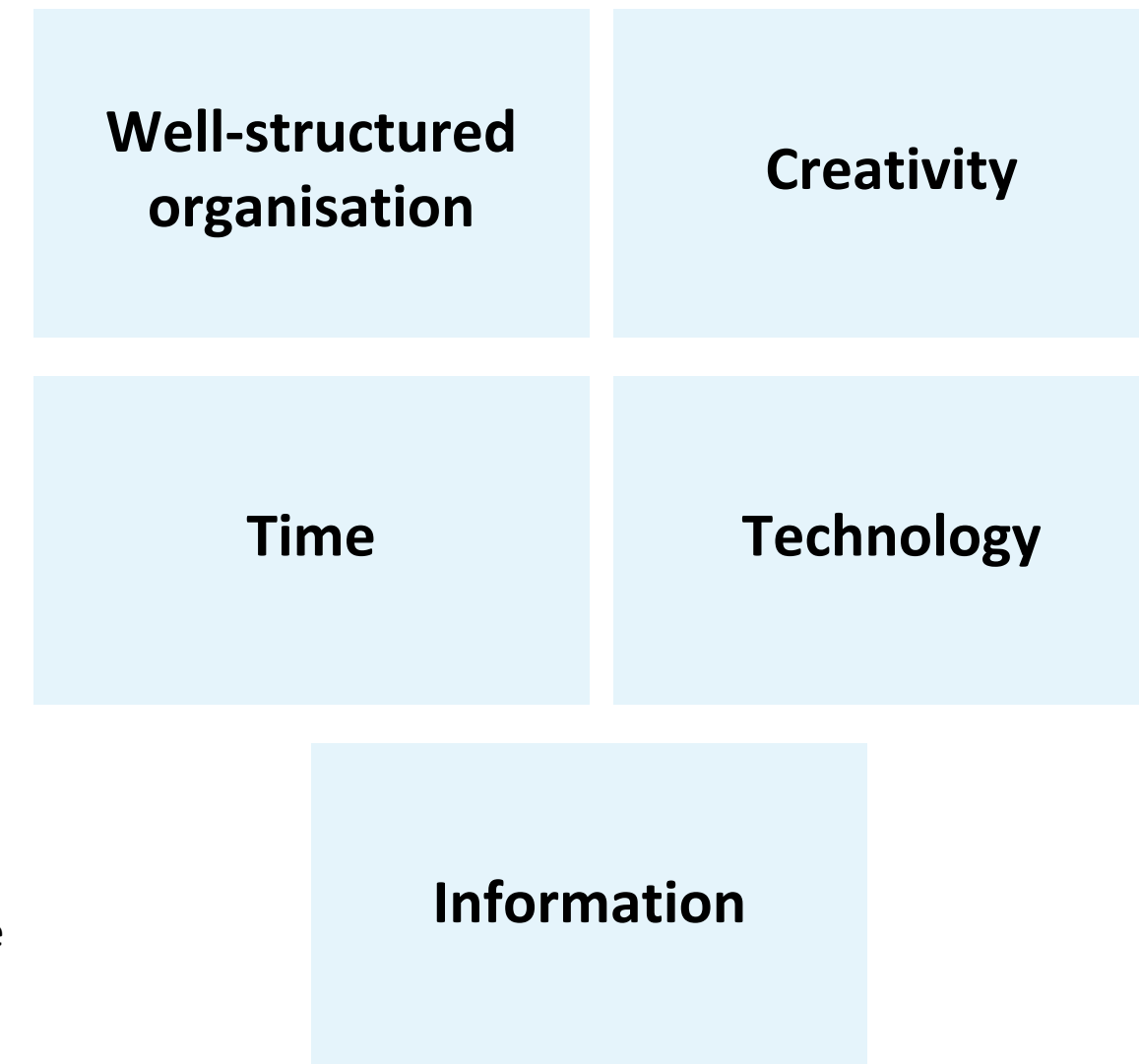
Mapping stakeholders

Community engagement

Requirements



Drivers



Mapping stakeholders

Community groups



Mapping stakeholders

Community groups

**Segmentation is key to moving from informing to connecting.
Communication ceases to be mere information and becomes a meaningful
proposal for the recipient.**

Mapping stakeholders

Areas of participation

Area of participation	Agents	Type of participation
Strategy	Founders and funders	Decisions and advising
Daily operations	Team	Contributing
Community benefits	Networks	Involved
Providers	Public administrations	Informed
...	...	...

What else?

Mapping stakeholders

Pros and cons

Advantages

Fosters involvement and co-responsibility	Enrichment of ideas and points of view
Motivation and commitment	Legitimacy of decisions
Cohesion	Competitive advantage: cooperation, creativity, and innovation

Inconvenients

Slower decision-making	Does not always guarantee the representativeness of all people
Can generate conflicts	Can dilute responsibilities
Can generate exhaustion	Requires time and dedication

Any others?

Pause for 15 minutes



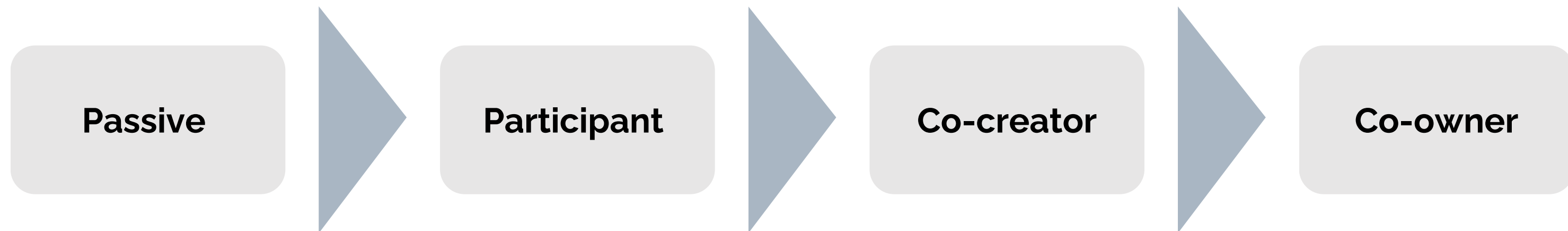
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Participation dynamics

Participation dynamics

What do we mean

- How people actively take part in collective decision-making
- Shared ownership, responsibility, and governance
- Redistribution of power within communities
- Collaboration between users, producers, and stakeholders
- From passive users → active co-creators



Participation dynamics

Real-world models of collective participation

Why
participation
matters in
practice

From theory to
real community
models



1. Energy Community
2. Worker Cooperative
3. Consumer Cooperative



Participation dynamics

Case study 1: energy community model

- Collective production and/or consumption of renewable energy
- Citizens, local institutions, and small businesses participate
- Shared ownership of energy infrastructure
- Local energy generation (solar, wind, etc.)

- **Benefits:**
 - a. **Lower costs**
 - b. **Energy independence**
 - c. **Environmental sustainability**
 - d. **Local empowerment**

Investment



decision-making



shared benefits

Participation dynamics

Case study 2: worker cooperative model

- Company owned and managed by workers
- Democratic governance (one person, one vote)
- Workers are both employees and owners
- Collective decision-making on:
 - Strategy
 - Salaries
 - Working conditions

- Benefits:
 - a. Fairer distribution of profits
 - b. Stronger engagement and motivation
 - c. Higher job stability
 - d. Shared responsibility

Governance



ownership



labor
contribution

Participation dynamics

Case study 3: consumer cooperative model

- Owned by the consumers themselves
- Members collectively decide what is produced and offered
- Focus on affordability, ethics, and quality
- Often used in:
 - Food systems
 - Retail
 - Local supply chains

- Benefits:
 - a. Lower prices
 - b. Transparent sourcing
 - c. Ethical consumption
 - d. Community-driven demand

**Purchasing
power**



**decision
influence**



**membership
governance**

Participation dynamics

How participation changes

Model	Who participates?	Type of participation	Main value
Energy Community	Citizens + institutions	Ownership + production	Sustainability
Worker Coop	Workers	Governance + ownership	Fair work
Consumer Coop	Consumers	Demand + governance	Ethical consumption

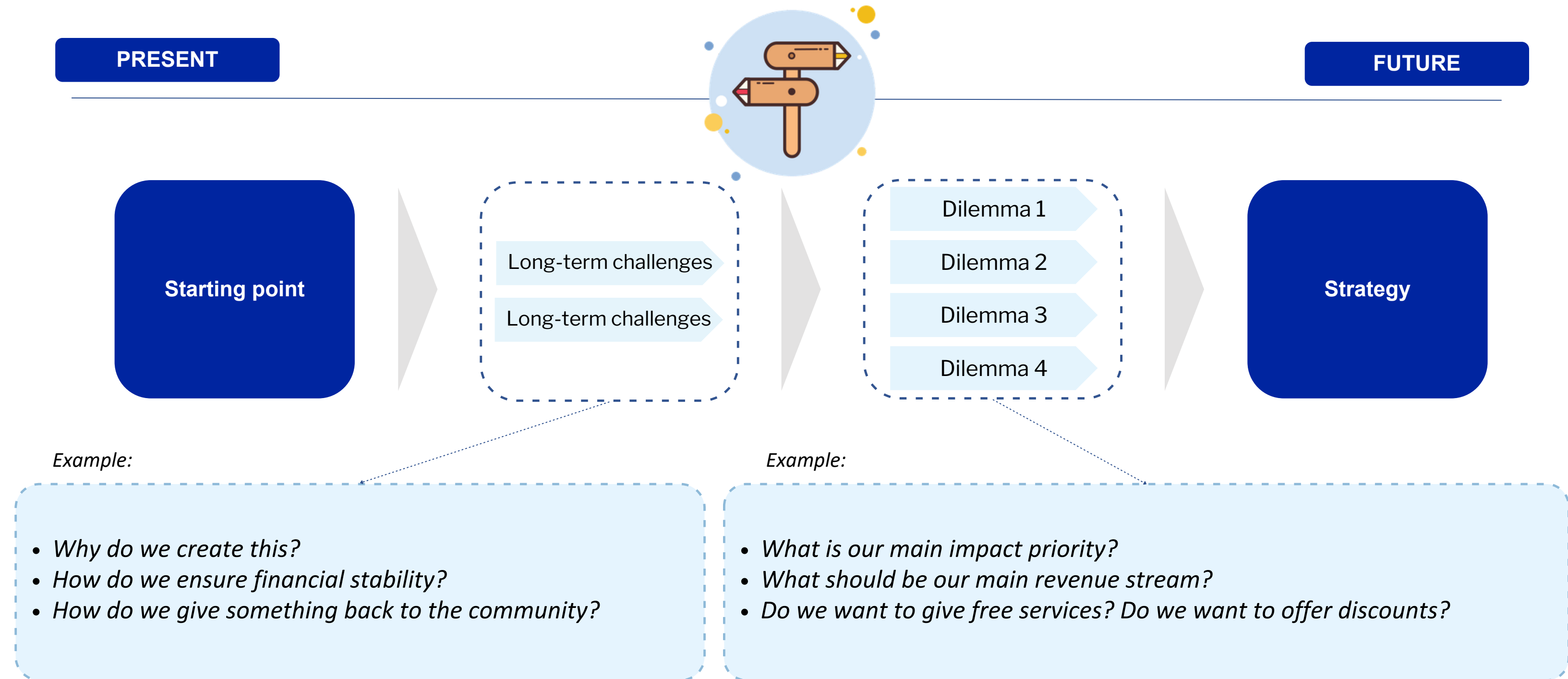


- Participation can take many forms (not just “engagement”)
- Power can be redistributed in different ways
- Communities can be producers, workers, and consumers
- Strong participation = stronger resilience and impact
- Collaboration is a structural model, not just a strategy

04

How do I animate a discussion?

Group discussion Example



Group discussion Example

How do you want to distribute your time and money?

**Support people
with mental
health problems**

**Mental health
awareness
campaigns**

**Research and
development**



Ask people to position themselves in a tight situation: it's not about doing a little bit of everything, it is about being able to rank your priorities and make business decisions accordingly.

05

Activity: stakeholder map and discussion

Community engagement

Activity

The objective of this activity is that you...



1 Discuss the **stakeholder map of your region**

2 Think of their **potential involvement**

3 Share some engagement dynamics

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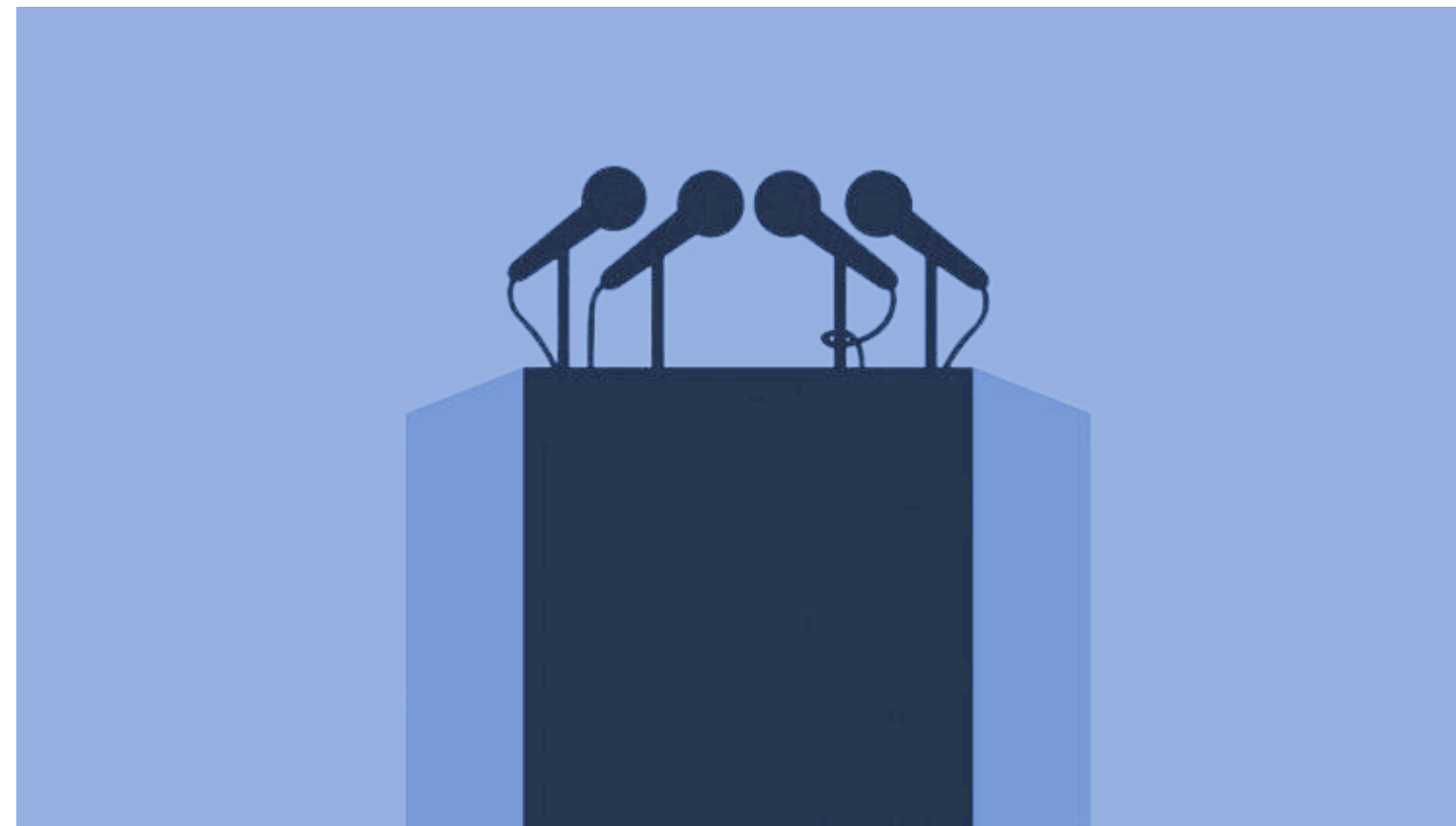
Conclusions

Closure

2 key ideas you keep
from this sessions

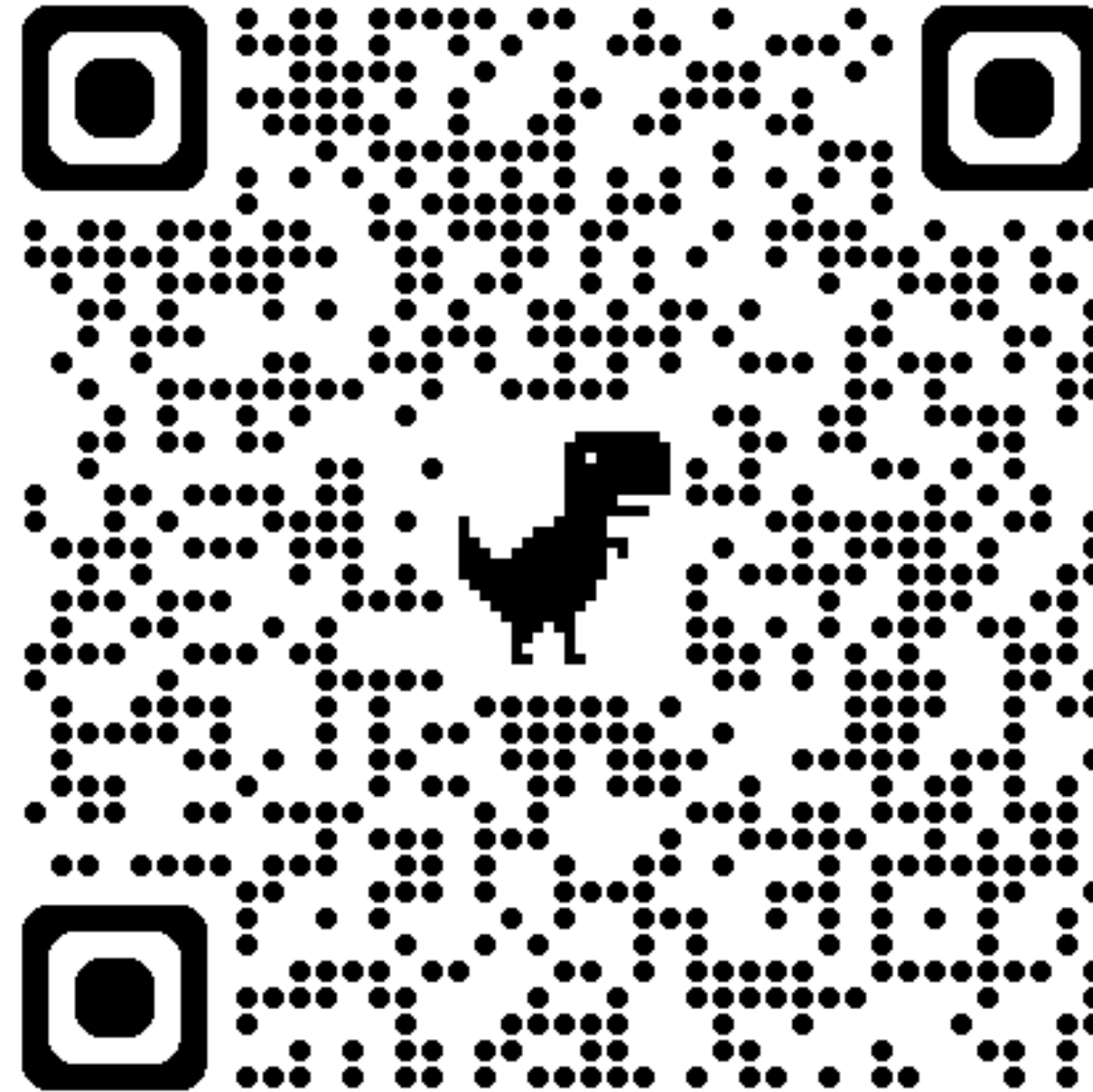
Any **doubt** you would like
to discuss with the group?

Thanks for your **attention**
and participation!



We strongly encourage you
to work **on the practical**
exercises before next
session 😊

Closure



Next session



No more lessons!

***Now...** Individual or group mentoring*