



# **ΔΗΜΟΣ Community College**

*A learning community around the concepts of  
civic engagement and participation,  
active citizenship and democracy*



**Record**  
**10 – 18 October 2005**  
**Rhodes, Greece**

**ΔΗΜΟΣ Community College**  
**European Youth, Demos and the Role of Community Colleges**  
**European Active Citizenship and Youth Participation**  
**An Open Space Learning Community in Greece**  
***Record***  
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# Day One

## Welcome & Context by Maria Bakari

Maria Bakari welcomed us to the Demos Community College by sharing the story of the conception of this gathering:

*Approximately six years ago, I attended a Minority Course in Denmark. We had these morning sessions, where we were invited to 'show us your culture'. When it was my turn to show my Greek culture, I asked myself the question, 'What do I represent?' Three words came to mind, which also capture why we are here at this gathering – “ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ/Democracy” in Greek this means Demos (people) and cractia (power), “ΔΙΑΛΟΓΟΣ/Dialogue”, to talk things through and “ΕΥΡΩΠΗ/Europe”, which means the one with the big open eyes. It was at this gathering that I met John and came in contact with both the Folk High School movement of Denmark and the Association for Community Colleges (ACC). As a result of participating I was inspired to create a local ACC committee here in Greece.*

*Not long after, I met other people some of who are here with us now and will be hosting our exploration during this gathering. These people are practitioners of methodologies that transform individuals into being more authentic, so that people discover what is most important to them. I was fascinated by this different way in which people could live and learn together.*

*So, my deep desire is to have a different and unique experience that will give us empowerment to host spaces for real democracy where we can meet each other in authentic ways – in ways of Democracy, Dialogue and Europe – people in our power, meeting through the word that connects us to a larger field with our big eyes open. I invite us to practice what we envision here and now – to step forward to what it is that you care about and to experiment now together.*

## Opening Circle

Sarah Whiteley invited us to 'check in' using a method called Circle Practice. She explained the three practices involved of speaking with intention to the questions, listening with attention and everyone taking care of the group. Sarah invited people to use a 'talking piece' so that the person holding the piece speaks and everyone else listens. Lastly, she invited people to speak to the questions 'Who am I?' (My name), 'Where do I come from?' (My country), 'Why have I chosen to be here?'

The following was shared:

- I come from the Netherlands – I am studying Internationals Relations – I am interested in learning more about European Democracy

- I come from Central Europe – I am Slovakian and Czech – I am here to explore Europe identity and how we can make this broader
- I come from Turkey – I am here because I am wanting to create my own Learning Centre working with Open Space and I am here to learn how I can do this
- I come from here, Rhodes, Greece – and I am here as an opportunity to share and learn some new and innovative ways of learning together
- I come from Turkey and I am here to meet new people from different countries and places and to discuss what does it mean being European
- I come from Denmark and I am here because I heard a call from Maria Bakari so I am here to share my hosting skills
- I too come from Denmark and I am the Chairman of ACC – I came here because I am extremely curious about these new methods
- I am from Portugal and I am here through a friend who said I should attend – this is very new to me for I have never been to anything like this, but it felt right for me to come and be in Greece discussing democracy
- I come from Poland and I came to make new friends and to discuss democracy
- I come from Romania and I am interested in learning about different cultures by meeting people and I am also very interested in politics
- I too come from Romania and I wanted to come to Greece not as a tourist and coming here to discuss democracy felt very right
- I am from Latvia and I am here because I am curious about new methods of learning
- I am Portuguese and I too came through my friend who said I should come and I am wanting to experience freedom and an adventure
- I come from Denmark and I am here because I think this world is perfect and we see this perfection when we meet one another
- I am Greek and I am here because of Maria Bakari and to learn about new ways of learning
- I come from the Netherlands and I am interested in the topics of Democracy and European Democracy and especially how to change people's apathy
- I come from Spain and a friend of mine recommended me to come so I am here to learn
- I come from Greece and I am here to discuss democracy especially between young people
- I come from Estonia and I am here to explore democracy
- I am Danish and I am here for many reasons, but especially because I believe in the 'global village' – that the human species is one and I want to live to the fullest by being with others
- I come from the United Kingdom and I am here because this year I did not vote during the national elections because I do not believe in this form of democracy – I voted with my feet and now I want to create a new level of democracy
- I am also from England – I am here because I do not believe that our existing formal structures serve us and that it is time for us to create new ones
- I come from Estonia and I have participated in other conferences and I am especially interested in learning new ways of being together
- I come from Denmark and I am here to explore democracy and new ways of learning
- I come from Hungary and I here to meet other cultures through dialogue
- I am Greek and live in England and I am here to learn about democracy by practicing it with you through hosting each other

- I am Italian from Napoli and I am here to meet others and learn about more about democracy

## Daily Rhythm & Programme of the Day

Toke Moeller introduced the rhythm of each day as:

7:00 -8:00 Morning practice (optional)  
 8:00 - 9:00 Breakfast  
 9:00 - 12.30 Morning session  
 12.30 - 2-30 Lunch  
 2.30-6-30: Afternoon session  
 7.30: Dinner

He explained that the longer lunch break was to allow time for reflection, which is crucial to the learning process.

Toke went on to share the focus of the day as **Building our Learning Community** and the programme of today as:

Welcome and Context – Maria Bakari  
 Opening Circle  
 Building our Learning Community  
 Lunch  
 Perspective on European Public Sphere – John Pedersen  
 Identifying our Issues of European Democracy  
 Exploring our European Democracy Issues/Questions Further  
 Check out  
 Close

## Building Our Learning Community

### Our Dreams

Working in pairs, we shared stories of when we had experienced democracy and based on this what we dreamed possible for the Demos Community College – our learning community.

The following are examples of the stories and dreams shared:

<p><b>When have I experienced real democracy that has touched me?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election 89 – first democratic elections in Poland – though not fully democratic in the parliament</li> </ul>
<p><b>What was particularly good about this experience?</b></p>

- Feeling of common good of society, feeling of reforms, changing of political system

**If I could translate this experience, what would I dream possible for this learning community?**

- Activity of citizens and involvement
- Trying to understand each other

**When have I experienced real democracy that has touched me?**

- Seminar in the middle of the Baltic Sea

**What was particularly good about this experience?**

- People close to each other
- Just travelling in a boat
- No politics – just experience
- Every task for everyone
- Touched my emotion
- Making rules as they come
- Sophocles play
- Poetry, diary, etc.
- Everyone busy but free

**If I could translate this experience, what would I dream possible for this learning community?**

- People not pushed to do anything
- No rules
- Free to give their contribution

**When have I experienced real democracy that has touched me?**

- At university (in Bulgaria) – 10 years ago when for the first time students were asked about what they cared about followed by elections

**What was particularly good about this experience?**

- People being aware of their position
- People being able to fight for what they believe in
- People feeling involved not ignored
- Meaningful action
- Sense of influencing their destiny

**If I could translate this experience, what would I dream possible for this learning community?**

- Important that Young People are here to exchange their ideas
- Balance of geographical origin (democracy is a given in Western Europe whilst still

under construction in Eastern Europe)

- Inspiration by the place; have the chance to compare with ancient democracy
- Incentives and motivation to move forward and be more confident to follow this democratic principles/learning

**When have I experienced real democracy that has touched me?**

- Council at a learning village in Slovenia
- People were given the opportunity to make common decisions

**What was particularly good about this experience?**

- Allowed everybody's voice to be heard
- Brought up originality – allowed everyone to speak their truth and not be restricted
- Everything human to be freely expressed

**If I could translate this experience, what would I dream possible for this learning community?**

- To discover a little treasure – everyone will find something valuable to keep for oneself and to share with others
- Sense of open space – everyone to be themselves
- Empowered to do work as we mean it

**When have I experienced real democracy that has touched me?**

- In Athens – when Maria was a volunteer with approximately 100 people – they had the opportunity to have a room for common activity in a big students hostel. They decided upon what to do with it. After some discussions they started to feel as one big community, with common goals and vision.

**What was particularly good about this experience?**

- Transformation of the feeling of being an individual to the feeling of being part of a community
- The opportunity to do something for themselves

**If I could translate this experience, what would I dream possible for this learning community?**

- Learning to live in a community with respect to others and sharing visions

**When have I experienced real democracy that has touched me?**

- Summer 2005 in Jutland, Denmark – ACC minority and majority relations – sharp discussions – Basque/Spanish sit at same table and overcome problems/tensions – Russian/Latvian conflict – having dialogue and finding compromise

**What was particularly good about this experience?**

- That we can have different, even opposite opinions and still have dialogue and agree

on something
<p><b>If I could translate this experience, what would I dream possible for this learning community?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maybe each of us can tell others about learning</li> <li>• You do not have to waste time in places just because of structures when you cannot learn anything</li> <li>• Lets go to places we can learn the most</li> </ul>
<p><b>When have I experienced real democracy that has touched me?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real democracy is the power of people to do something good</li> <li>• An organisation that helps children living in an orphanage</li> <li>• Twice a year they organise events that give joy to these people</li> </ul>
<p><b>What was particularly good about this experience?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The experience of having the power to do something good</li> </ul>
<p><b>If I could translate this experience, what would I dream possible for this learning community?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The feeling that we have the power to make this learning community work and that something good for others will arise</li> </ul>

Then, still in pairs, we were invited to combine our dreams into one statement as a 'provocative proclamation', i.e. a bold statement that will provoke us to move towards making our dream a reality, of the purpose of our Learning Community.

The following 'provocative proclamations' were made, that became our 'ship of dreams':

- TEAMWORK
- NEGOTIATION
- Freedom which includes every bodies initiative and responsibility
  - Consider every ones opinions
  - Compromise different standpoints
- To assimilate the concept of democracy so we ourselves live it together now and create new ideas to plant in our communities
- To share the experience of having the power as a community, to go after our visions
- The freedom of word, thoughts and activities
- A way of contributing
- Getting as close to real democracy as possible
- "Shared power"
- Giving the possibility to everyone to feel included – without it being a demand
- That people stand up for their causes – opinions, rights, interests
- Let's go to the places where we can learn the most!
- Genuine dialogue without fear or prejudice- "Meeting beyond right and wrong" (Rumi)
- Experience the next level of democracy – both individually and collectively.
- Preserving the multi-nationality by surfacing the similarities and connections

- We dream possible...that we enrich ourselves and feel empowered to make a difference.
- Let's inspire each other to change our home communities.



## Our Principles of Co-operation

Sven Ole Schmidt invited us into using the power of play through a group exercise of imagining we are on a deserted island, surrounded by a sea that is infested by insect eggs that are going to hatch soon. In order to destroy an epidemic of insects, we will have to create an electric current in the water to destroy the eggs. So, everyone must stand on the island. Points were given for the size of island – with the more points for the smallest island.

Using the experience of this exercise as a foundation, we created together principles of co-operation that we recommended that we practice during the Demos Community College. The following principles were recommended:

- Focus
- Trust
- Listening
- Playfulness
- Take chances
- Believe in it!
- Value each other's contributions
- We will help each other to understand the purpose
- Cooperation happens when we sense/ help each other balance and ground
- Trust in the collective fun!

## **Perspective on a European Public Sphere – John Petersen**

John Petersen, Chairman of the ACC, framed the afternoon by sharing his perspective on the wider context in which this gathering is taking place:

*I will contextualize the European situation and conceptualize Demos within this wider sphere. Within this I will share the story of ACC and how at the heart of this is the creation of a European public sphere and I will speak of the importance of this through the example of creating a European Constitution.*

*I will begin by sharing my own personal journey of how I discovered the importance of creating a European public sphere. I was working in Danish Folk High Schools - schools that offer non formal education that allow the community of students a living and learning experience. It was within this context – where people come to learn and build relationships with each other, as well as gaining knowledge both from teachers and the interaction of the experience – when in 1997 we held a gathering of young people from across Europe. This gathering created a European public sphere en miniature where Europeans could bring together their diverse identities and create a new understanding with one another. Based on this ACC was formed. With the aim of promoting the format of the Nordic Folk High Schools as a tool for allowing a European public sphere to come into being, we decided to ‘re-baptise’ the Folk High Schools format into a European sphere and calling it European Community Colleges.*

*To bring life to the European Union we have to create opportunities where citizens of the different states of Europe can come together to have dialogue on cross national-identity basis. We should not replace the national public sphere. Instead, we should add another layer - a European public sphere. This does not mean we should install a European folk, ethnos or culture – it means space for dialogue among Europeans. European democracy is dependent on allowing the former to happen through creating opportunities and experiences where we can come together as European citizens and debate our different and similar issues.*

*The Demos Community College is such an opportunity. It is the chance to come and meet other young people from across Europe – to exchange experiences and ideas and have dialogue on issues that are important to us – to create a European public sphere experience now.*

## **Identifying our Issues on European Democracy**



Following on from John, Maria Scordialos invited the community of the Demos Community College to begin practicing being a European public sphere by creating a group Mind Map on ‘what are the issues facing European demos/democracy’. This approach is based on the assumption that we all hold knowledge and that by bringing together our different perspectives we create a whole of the bigger picture. Using the rules of creating a Mind Map – all ideas are valid, whoever names the issues says where it is placed on the Mind Map, opposing issues are OK and give examples where possible – the following issues of European Demos/Democracy were surfaced:

Theme	Issue	Specific Example	Vote
<b>Politics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 votes relating to the theme</li> <li>• 15 votes in total</li> </ul>	Is single issue politics becoming stronger		1
	European Politicians elected by the European		
	Politicians with longer term perspectives and goals		3
	More civil dialogue before decisions are made		5
	Encouraging younger politicians and women to step into leadership		1
	Elimination of bureaucracy		2
	Politicians need to become more aware of a European Political Sphere		1
<b>Social Cohesion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 votes in total</li> </ul>	Getting greater focus on social goals verses economical goals		6
<b>Media</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 votes relating to the theme</li> <li>• 10 votes in total</li> </ul>	Having Citizen Journals as a way of creating European Sphere	Blogs	1
	In local media – need more info on European decision-making		2
	More contextual /background for journalists		1
<b>Civil Society</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 votes relating to the theme</li> </ul>	How can we create fora where citizens can have meaningful conversations with those who run the institutions?		7

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26 votes in total</li> </ul>			
	What are the rights and responsibilities of a European Citizen in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century?		12
	The creation of a legally accepted European associations		
	Basic skills and knowledge about the institutions		1
<b>Democracy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 vote relating to the theme</li> <li>• 8 votes in total</li> </ul>	Giving more power to the European Parliament		6
	Introduction of an elected European President		
	Need to reframe the word	Especially for the UK in the UK	1
<b>Health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 votes relating to the theme</li> <li>• 2 votes in total</li> </ul>	Create a health service for all European peoples		
<b>Minorities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 vote relating to the theme</li> <li>• 3 votes in total</li> </ul>	Re-definition of the term		2
	Need for co-operation		
	Refugees: not a problem but a challenge/opportunities + strategies		
<b>Global Responsibility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 vote relating to the theme</li> <li>• 12 in total</li> </ul>	More sensitivity as we identify ourselves as Europeans		3
	Removal of subsidies, fair, not free trade		3
	How can Europe respond to Imperialism and prevent becoming one itself?		3
	States that do not function		1
	The digital divide		
<b>Administrative cohesion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 in total</li> </ul>	Elimination of bureaucracy		1
	Creating a common language between all aspects of public life		4
<b>Economics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 votes relating to the theme</li> <li>• 5 in total</li> </ul>	Introducing common currency for as many countries as possible		
	Current economics does not allow focus on the social issues		2
<b>Wicked questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 in total</li> </ul>	Within capitalism, how do you tell a poor child from Moldova that she/he has the same rights as a British child?		
	Can multi-national companies help in the promotion of 'active citizenship' and how?		
	What would it take to awaken people large scale to the kind of democracy that we really need?		9
	Are large welfare institutions inherently		2

	selfish?		
	How do we empower people to move from apathy?		6
<b>Education</b> • 14 votes relating to the theme • 27 votes in total	Making the public more aware of European democracy		2
	How to involve those not currently active? (young)		2
	Promoting inter-cultural / trans-cultural dialogue		4
	Need for young age classes that are common across regions about being European	Need for exchange classes	
<b>Politics linked with economics</b>	Free movement of people (no more visas)		2

After creating the Mind Map together, we voted on those issues that we considered as individuals to be 'levers' that if focused on would create the biggest shift and therefore make the greatest difference to European Democracy.

## Exploring our European Democracy Issues/Questions Further

Toke invited us to further explore the issues/questions we had identified on Mind Map through the question, 'What are the questions and issues that I care to explore in order to make a difference as a European citizen?' We entered into this exploration through a process called Open Space Technology, which allows people to create their own agenda/group discussions around a meaningful question. Open Space Technology operates on the four principles and one law:

- Whoever comes are the right people
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
- When it starts it starts
- When its over it is over
- The Law of two feet – if you are not learning or contributing then use your two feet to take you somewhere where you will be offering or learning

The four ways in which people can participate are:

- To post a session and host it
- To attend a session and participate
- To be a bumble bee, i.e. move from one session to another sharing similar ideas and cross pollinating
- To be a butterfly – to take time out to reflect and allow others who are also 'butterflying' to meet up informally and create a new conversation

The sessions that were posted included:

- How can we educate people to become European citizens?

- How do we move from apathy to dialogue to action?
- Will it ever be possible to talk about us as Europeans instead of Danish, Romanians etc?
- I want to fight the cynicism concerning Europe in my country
- What is it that we all share?
- Am I afraid of Turkey, Russia, Israel entering the EU? If yes, why?
- Europe versus the world, the new empire?
- Why is it necessary, if at all, to deal with these issues on a European level?

After working in self organized groups, we came together to share the **‘most important question/paradox/statement that came out our discussions’**

What is it that we all share? /What connects Europe?

Historically Europe came together initially to create a:

- Harmonious Europe after World War II
- Free market system

What is the next big job for Europe?

Europe versus the world, the new empire?

What is unique?

What is the gift Europe could give the world?

How do we move from apathy to dialogue to action?

We operate in the system of making money and consuming – this traps us!  
No real time for reflection.

How can we educate people to become European citizens?

Classes of concepts of democracy with a manual, e.g. games for children

Paradox: Old people cannot be educated and young people are educated by old people  
- hence is it impossible to be educated!

Am I afraid of Turkey, Russia, Israel entering the EU? If yes, why?

We are not afraid of Turkey joining the EU

We are afraid of Russia joining because it is so diverse and also of Israel because of the problems with Palestine and they are just too US orientated

Could we have a united states of Europe? Impossible!

# Day Two

## Welcome

Maria welcomed us to the day, reading an excerpt from a newly released book called Storycatcher by Christina Baldwin:

Maria went on to share the focus of the day as **Being a Host of European Democracy** and the programme of the day:

Check in  
Facing my fear and Being a Host  
Creating symbols of Being Host  
Perspective – Chaos/Order/Control  
Inquiring into our most important questions  
Check out

Lastly, Maria challenged us with taking a different perspective to Demos and European Democracy by saying:

*Day 1 showed us that we are capable of successfully building our community - we shared our dreams and principles. Then in the afternoon we saw the complexity of subjects and opinions. There is a need to now focus on the art of hosting as a way of creating democracy among people – to start looking at yourself as a host/leader of bringing in a new expression of European Democracy – instead of only analyzing what others want to teach us. How do we host and what are the elements of being host?*

## Check in

Sven Ole invited us to check in using silent movement with the 'rope exercise', which required us to work in teams of 6 to 8 and using ropes to weave together and create a structure in the middle. After doing this once we were asked to untie our structure – again in silence. We were offered the opportunity to do the exercise once more but this time to music. (See front cover for photo)

## Facing my Fears and Being a Host

Maria introduced the next session, explaining the method that was being used, Appreciative Inquiry as:

- In every community something works
- What we focus on becomes our reality
- Asking questions acts as a catalyst for change

- People move into the future with confidence if they take what works with them
- Envisioning “What might be” on what works now

She invited people to work in pairs, and like yesterday, share an experience of when we had to face our fear/chaos and went through it to become a Leader/Host. The following are examples of the experiences shared:

**Share an experience of when you have had to face fear/chaos, moved through it and as a result stepped more into being a leader?**

A political conference that I took part in where the Prime Minister of the political party was responding to questions and where I managed to ask a question.

**What in particular was the leadership you discovered about yourself?**

Overcoming the situation, nervousness and fear – finding the power to overcome this and to go further.

**If I was to translate this into inviting others to co-create a new level of European demos/democracy that serves the world, what do I dream possible for myself being a host?**

Creating the proper framework and environment to help people express themselves so that their ideas spread

**Share an experience of when you have had to face fear/chaos, moved through it and as a result stepped more into being a leader?**

When making a presentation in front of the other students (having to focus on what I had to say) and to overcome the fear of the audience.

**What in particular was the leadership you discovered about yourself?**

I can do things even though I am afraid – to be accurate and to focus on helping classmates to be brave.

**If I was to translate this into inviting others to co-create a new level of European demos/democracy that serves the world, what do I dream possible for myself being a host?**

Be brave, take chances, rely on my powers to do things better – focus on what I want to do and take initiative.

**Share an experience of when you have had to face fear/chaos, moved through it and as a result stepped more into being a leader?**

Being part of a learning centre in Canada and attending an Open Space facilitated event for three days that had no agenda, just key themes for each day. On the last day, I co-hosted opening the space. I was enthusiastic, but really scared, as I had to get the right ‘energetic tone’.

**What in particular was the leadership you discovered about yourself?**

I am not a public speaker – but it felt good and intense. By walking the circle I entered myself – I became focused and it just happened. I have never felt like that before in my

life – so confident. The host invited me in and guided me so I was not alone.

**If I was to translate this into inviting others to co-create a new level of European demos/democracy that serves the world, what do I dream possible for myself being a host?**

Empowering people, creating learning spaces, facilitating programmes, offering special methods not traditional teaching and connect people.

## Creating Symbols of Being a Host

When we came back after our paired work, we were invited to capture an image or symbol of what it means to us personally being a leader/host – a symbol that would make us feel confident in ourselves to be hosts of European Democracy. (See front cover for photo)

## Perspective on the Chaordic Path

Toke shared a perspective on an underlying pattern that exists to becoming a Host – to creating and calling forth newness – Chaos/Order/Control. He explained that if we are to create a European public sphere than we all have to become leaders of calling this – in our own countries and through our own projects.

*When anyone begins something new, we enter into **Chaos** and that most of us, in our wish to avoid the discomfort of not knowing, quickly move to **Control** and in most cases this becomes controlling others. We hope that by controlling others we will control our own discomfort and therefore create equilibrium within ourselves and with others. By doing this, however, we usually end up creating more of the same and therefore miss the opportunity for true newness. Too much control and we end up with either Apathy or Revolution, depending on how people respond to being controlled, but either way we do not bring people with us. Of course, there is a side of Chaos, which in Greek is called **Chamos**. This is the side of chaos, which leads us to being lost or unable to navigate and most people perceive being in chaos as only this.*

*We have found, through our own experience and practice, listening to others stories, as well as using Nature as our teacher, that there is a place between Chaos and Control called **Order**. When we look at Nature, there is a natural order in which things are created with very little control. Specifically, the place we have been most curious and is the place on the edge of Chaos and Order, which is called the **Chaordic**, (by borrowing the first letters of the two words and creating one). This is where creativity resides. However, before meeting the newness of creativity, there are several challenges that have to be met. Firstly, we have to face our own fears, then we have to hold others' fears, especially if they are looking to us to lead them, and then we have to have the courage of going through our collective confusion of not knowing – if we can travel these layers, we meet creativity and discover the new together. We have come to know this journey as walking the **Chaordic Path** and what we have found is that the fruits of this path is learning, innovation and newness. Central to journeying this path is being part of a team of fellow*

*travellers, (a community of practitioners) that together create a field of courage and strength to seek what wants to emerge, the newness that will lead us to a new level.*

A short discussion followed and it was apparent that an awareness was emerging within the group that Demos Community College was unfolding in a different way – one where the participants entering into their own inquiries of meaningfully hosting a European Demos and Democracy and practicing this now is the focus – instead of hearing lectures on theory led by leaders of the training. It was evident by the atmosphere in the room that this different approach was both intriguing and also sufficiently different and therefore challenging.

To practice the art of hosting each other now – participants were invited to volunteer to open the space after lunch, i.e. lead the afternoon.

## **Inquiry into our Most Important Questions**

The afternoon was hosted by one of the participants, Nora Kasanicka who opened the space, using the same method as modelled the previous day where the participants posted sessions on the question, '**What is my most important question now?**' Nora invited people to post and participate in sessions around their important questions of being a host of European Democracy.

Sessions were posted and we worked in small groups through the afternoon, exploring our most important questions. We came back together to share key insights and essences of our discussions:

- I feel in the middle between two different ways of learning – the traditional where someone teaches me and this one where I learn through myself - which could be useful?
- The courage to take leadership for my own passion
- The quality of the intervention takes the colour from the intervener
- Being a host from the heart can create a new democracy

## **Day Three**

### **Welcome**

Maria Bakari welcomed us to Day Three sharing the focus of the day as '**What is Democracy and what could Democracy also be?**' She offered the programme of the day as:

Check in  
Reflection  
Sharing our Successes  
Café conversation on Democracy  
Check out

## Check in

Sven Ole invited us to check in with playing 'Billy Billy Bob' – a fun game where we stood in a circle and one person was in the middle. To get out of the middle you had to 'outrwit' someone in the circle with a variety of methods. This exercise brought us the awareness that being a host requires being able to hold one's own ground, deal with increasing complexity and be able to use humour as a doorway to creativity.

## Reflection

Toke invited us into taking some time for reflection. He offered reflection as a core leadership competence of being able to take in information and also connect to one's own 'inner field' in order to make sense of what one is learning. We participated in a 'gallery walk', which involved looking at all the material we had produced together on day one and two and which was now posted up on the walls of the room.

## Sharing our Successes/Passions

Continuing to use the theme of passion/responsibility, John opened the next session inviting us to share a story of when we had achieved success based on something we were passionate about. Using a 'talking piece', we each spoke our story, whilst Ulrik and Maria drew and wrote up a large landscape image and essences of what was shared.



## Conversation Café

For the afternoon of Day Three, we changed venue and went to the Marc de Montalebert Foundation in the Old City of Rhodes, where we were hosted by Marc Rene and Manuela Montalebert. Marc Rene shared the purpose of the foundation and invited us to make ourselves at home.

Using the garden as our café space, Sarah shared the principles of World Cafe, explaining that the co-creators of this method saw this as a way of bringing together conversations that are happening simultaneously in different parts of the world so that they meet and become greater:

- Set the context

- Create hospitable space
- Explore questions that matter
- Encourage everyone's contribution
- Connect diverse perspectives
- Listen together for insights
- Share collective discoveries

Asia Polawska, another participant, hosted the Conversation Café, inviting people to work in small groups of up to 5 people. She offered the question of **'What is democracy to me'** and invited people to have conversation for 20 minutes using the flipchart paper provided as a 'table cloth' to capture insights and essences. After twenty minutes, Asia invited one person to stay as being the host of that group and the others to move to other groups so that new constellations of people emerged. She invited people to have another 20-minute conversation on the same question, with the host of each group taking the first 5 minutes to share the key insights from the previous conversation and then to continue weaving together perspectives on what is democracy. For the third round, Asia invited people to stay in their same groups, but this time to shift to the question, **'What could European Democracy also be?'** After working on this for 20 minutes, Asia invited people to create a 'creative presentation of their key insights to share with the group. Each group presented their creative presentations.



We checked out of the day with one word – and we said goodbye to Toke and Sven Ole who were leaving the Demos Community College early the next day.

## Day Four

### Welcome and Planting our Seeds

Maria Bakari welcomed us to the day and spoke of how the focus of the day was to begin planting the seeds of our ideas of creating the European Democracy we want. She spoke of how we would be working within Open Space all day long. Maria spoke of how over the past three days we had identified issues of European Democracy through creating a Mind Map together, then we had explored leading by being hosts and connecting to our passions with responsibility and yesterday afternoon exploring the European Democracy we want, so today we are going to bring all of those things together and begin sharing our ideas that we want to plant back in our communities, organisations, etc. With that she opened the space, again speaking the four principles and ways of participating and offered the questions of:

If these are the issues...

If these are our passions...

And the European democracy we want...

**WHAT ARE THE IDEAS, PROJECTS AND ACTIONS I WANT TO PLANT?**

The following sessions were posted:

- Open space everywhere
- How to explore ideas through creative images
- Why are the British so inward looking?
- Creating new European Community Colleges
- Creating a European Competency Matrix
- Youth Baristos
- Listening Ear – if you are still not sure what you want to plant
- Flow Game – exploring a question more deeply

After working in sessions all day, the following points were harvested at the end of the day:



Open space everywhere

from 5 to 5000 people

[www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)

The Open Space Handbook by Harrison Owen

[www.openspaceworldmap.org](http://www.openspaceworldmap.org)

ww.pioneersofchange.net

Amanda Bliwett- Ethiopia

[www.kufunda.org](http://www.kufunda.org)

Marianne Knuth – Zimbabwe

How to explore your ideas through creative images (the Tarot)

An introduction to Europe’s ageless wisdom that in its modern form can be used to clarify choices and help plan strategies.

European Competence Matrix

	Europe United	Europe’s parts	The European citizen
What is?	EU history European law EU identity EU market Philosophy	Case stories Geography National diversity History of cultures and mentalities	Treaties

		Foreign languages	
What should?	Professors Experts Social workers citizens	Professors Experts Social workers citizens	Co-learning experince Political competence Communicative competence Analytical skills Participatory skills
Who does?	Politics Environment Trade and commerce	Politics	

Youth Baristos 2006  
Helsinki March 2006

An event connected to the Finnish championships of Barista. The core is to invite two young users from 15 European countries for sharing their thoughts and experiences. It's not about only technique, but also the passion for the coffee and how to connect with customers and the people you are working with.

Organisations involved: PAM, Barista league (?) maybe producers like Illy, Fair Trade NGOs, European Union

Estimated budget

Equipment: from the companies

The space: from PAM

The reimbursement: EU, national worker's unions (through UNI) participation fee? travel estimates: 18.000 €, accommodation free

Creating New European Community Colleges

- Communication – need to communicate the idea
- Reality – need to be realistic in what it takes to organize and host community colleges
- Small tasks to keep it going – we need a task group and a list of tasks with targets and deadlines and people willing to commit to this
- Traveling community college – create a community college that links 4 committees in 4 different countries and that uses Inter Rail
- Fundraising will be crucial as we will probably need to support one person to organize this
- Mailing list
- PEOPLE – need to invite people
- Choosing locations, hosting places
- Finding partners and time, e.g. AEGE AISEC or local organizations/ local governments
- Next year: 3 weeks July + 1 week August
- Invitation in good time – through newspapers, universities
- Fee a month before
- Booklet in the end

## Day Five



This was a cultural day out with opportunities for those who wished to join in to participate in a tour of Rhodes and within the Old City. We were hosted by the House of Europe with a guided tour and also lunch at their premises in the Old City.



## Day Six The Glocal Game

Jakob Erle from Denmark joined the Demos Community College to share both his perspective on Democracy and to invite us into playing the Glocal Game, which is a process that looks at issues from four levels:

- Local
- National
- Regional
- Global

Working in homogeneous groups of the Balkans, Men, Women and one diverse group – the Demos Community College played the game the entire day and finished with a reflection circle on what had been learned both as content and process.



## Day Seven Articulating Commitment to Action

The intention of the day was to focus on individual and collective commitment on bringing the learning of this project to our spheres of influence, refine and strengthen project ideas, articulate our willingness to become change-agents and make a difference in fostering participation and active citizenship.

*Community in circle, close to sunset time...*



After a quick check-in hosted by Filiz Telek, Silvia Pereira invited us to Open Space around the core-question: **“How do I put my Passion into Action Now?”** Several sessions emerged and previous ideas were revisited;  
-Creating a journalist website on citizenship across Europe –Building on previous session

- Putting together a creative press-piece focusing on Demos CC and other projects
- Bringing an experience like this in my own community
- Video-report on European Identity
- A joy of life – How to make your passion a reality

Harvesting of all sessions were hosted by Tuomo Jarvella through the form of a carousel game following a short presentation that took place for each session. In the carousel, the external circle of session hosts informed the internal circle on each session with more details. At the hear of the bells people moved positions according to the order of the host.

The day closed with a check-out using the talking piece. Participants shared their most significant moments of the day giving one by one their answers to the question “From a highly active day, what do I keep with me from today?”

In the evening, the group enjoyed playing the Bumball Game outdoors and joined a juggling session hosted by the “master”, Will Kay.



## Day Eight Harvesting & Closing

The final day of the Demos Community College started with a physical exercise of stand-up group massage that helped us ground ourselves.

The moment to appreciate our time together and our key-learnings for the past 7 days has come. After a short check-in to the day through a “weather report” by each, Maria Bakari hosted the harvesting session on our key-learnings.

A magic carpet was laid on the floor divided into 4 sections: **Essences**/"Pure Gold"/**Wisdom – Passions – Demos Actions – Questions/Needs**.

Then participants were asked to take sometime and reflect on the whole learning experience, day by day, session by session speak & post their key answers to the above headlines of harvest while the rest of the group listened.



A colourful carpet of post-its was created reflecting the richness of the experience. After the coffee-break, a final commitment that would hold all the determination and vision created in Demos Community College was still to be made. Nora Kasanicka hosted the session “A letter to myself” in which everyone wrote a letter of commitment to the goals set individually and collectively, a strong statement that would contain the focus, passion and empowerment that we gained from this learning experience which would guide our next actions. All letters were given to Maria Bakari who is going to send them back to their authors/recipients 6 months later...

***The final circle...***

The check-out to the whole 8-day learning community... One by one Demos participants took the talking piece and talked of what has this experience meant for them, the highlights, the laughs, the turning-points, the “aha moments”, the boundaries they saw, met crossed...Before passing the word each one would also appreciate the presence of the person sitting on his/her right...as sitting in an appreciation council of active citizens, content young Europeans...



## Quotes

*“One of the most amazing weeks of my life...”*

*“What started with a little adventure as we arrived here, ended up with a waterfall of ideas, thoughts, emotions and great friendships...”*

*“I’m grateful for all the people, all of you who have been my teachers for these days...”*

*“All is good about politics, but what about the power that one carries within?... How do we transform our communities using this power?...”*

*“I want to know more and work more on what Europe is ...”*

*“Only now I realise I only went for swimming for 20 minutes... This Community College has been an overwhelming experience...”*

*“Friends who understand the need for change and are willing to fight for it—that’s what I mostly gained here and now feel more confident to fight apathy & cynicism in my country...”*

*“The passion to help people discover their passions – I saw it making miracles here... Behind every mental breakthrough we reached, hosting is the key!...”*

*“My most important mission would be now to bring an experience like this to my own local community...”*

*“Europe faces some serious challenges... which, unless we learn to discuss as we did here, it would be too difficult to overcome... We need new conversation tools and group processes that can help us work through complexity and find collective solutions...”*

*“I have never before worked so creatively!...”*

*“PAction”...Passion for Action is the name of the game!...”*