



In the dialogue business...for real -Aleco Christakis

Lovers of Democracy

We are overjoyed this year with the enthusiastic support and cooperation with a variable group of **Lovers of Democracy**. These Lovers are energizing the movement for global agoras and leading us in exciting new directions.

Aleco Christakis is leading the movement to take Co-Laboratories of Democracy online. Vigdor Schreiberman has generated a wonderfully engaging Lovers of Democracy website, <http://sunsite.utk.edu/FINS/loversofdemocracy>. Peter Jones has led development of a website dedicated to our recent book, www.harnessingcollectivewisdom.com. Roy Smith has contributed his mind maps to illustrate important processes. His mind map of the book can be seen on the Harnessing Collective Wisdom website (above). Under the prodding of Laura Harris (Americans for Indian Opportunity) we have created a brochure: How Co-Laboratories of Democracy Work. There are other initiatives described below.

Co-Laboratories of Democracy Online

On July 21 (in Australia and Crete) and July 20 (in the USA) Aleco Christakis facilitated the climax of the first international Co-Laboratory of Democracy Online with a group of scholars in Australia. Aleco operated from Crete. Diane Conaway operated the software

from Philadelphia. This workshop was brokered by Janet McIntyre of Flinders University, Australia.



Participants at Flinders University

Jim, Rob, Penny, John, Mai
Denise, Kym, Geoff, Nadira

The participants were concerned with the failings of Western scientific thought and political practice. They wanted to make our thinking and practice more accountable to people and responded to the following triggering question:

“What factors will help significantly in rescuing the enlightenment from its failings?”

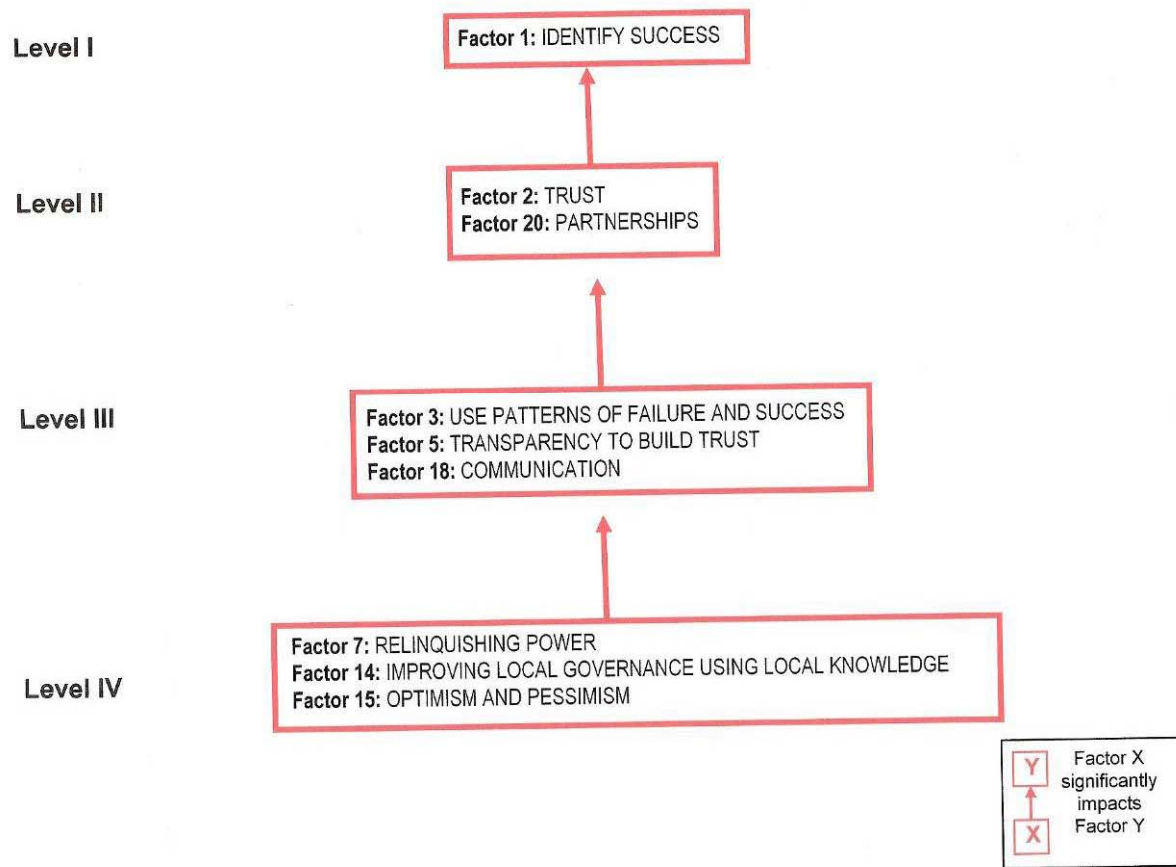
They generated and clarified 49 answers to this question, which were grouped into 9 clusters. Then they individually voted for the 5 observations (answers) that they considered most important; 14 observations received 2 or more votes. All this work was done online and at different times by participants via email during the week July 14-20. The online Webinar was conducted on the morning of July 21 (Adelaide time).

For 2½ hours, the process worked fine (with minor glitches). Participants discussed the observations in paired comparisons and voted whether achieving Observation A would significantly help in achieving Observation B, and vice-versa. Then would Observation A help in achieving Observation C, etc. They were well-past midway toward generating an influence tree that would identify those deep driving factors (leverage points) that would be keys in any enlightenment rescue effort. Then, a technology breakdown contributed to...

Disaster, embarrassment, and need to do better.

For a yet-to-be-determined reason, we all lost connection to the WebScope software. Our grand experiment was prematurely grounded after only 9 of the observations were submitted to paired comparisons. The truncated Root Cause Map is reproduced below.

Figure 2: Root Cause Map of the Factors



In this map, factors 7, 14, and 15 are found to cycle on each other; that is, accomplishing any one of them, helps to accomplish the rest of them. Together, these factors are the deep driving factors that will enable the achievement of those factors above them. A brief clarification of 7 is people in power being open to the interests, insights, and power needs of those-not-in-power. Number 14 calls for attending to local needs and knowledge. Number 15 calls for optimism in the quest of democratic reform.

This first international Co-Laboratory was a qualified success as is reflected in the comments below, but we need to have secure backup systems in the future.

Comments:

Everyone here at Flinders seemed to appreciate the value of what we were trying to do, there was much conversation after we signed off. For me the methodology seemed solid but the process clunky.

-Jon Deakin

The content generated was extremely useful and I am sure that with some tweaking we will get the synchronous discussion streamlined. This is most exciting.

-Janet McIntyre

It is incredibly exciting when I consider the potential of the WebScope Email Dialogue process. Now people from all corners of the globe will have a feasible methodology to discover the true drivers in their most

complex issues, while simultaneously clarifying their thinking and building cohesion around that issue... I cannot imagine a more practical, feasible, real world approach to tapping collective wisdom in a way that will really make a positive difference in our world!

-Marie Kane

The interaction on participative democracy was an eye-opener for me and should be applied to world affairs. Maybe one day it will be so. I would like to also add my thanks for your demonstration of what was for me a new experience. It was exciting and we must continue.

-John P. van Gigch

For a different perspective on this first experiment, please check out http://sunsite.utk.edu/FINS/FINS_World_News/Fins-FWN-06.htm

A Lovers of Democracy Website

This website covers material in this eBuzz and much, much more. It is a delightful blend of artwork, information, news, and opinion passionately dedicated to democracy.

<http://sunsite.utk.edu/FINS/loversofdemocracy/>

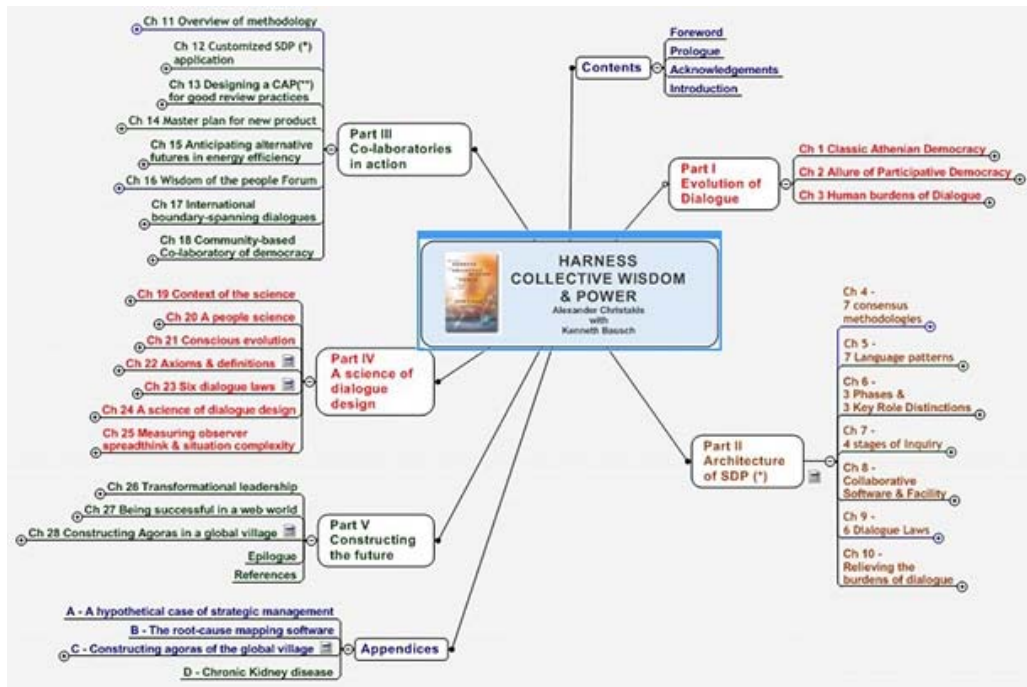
LOVERS OF DEMOCRACY

Wired for Democracy-in-action



Harnessing Collective Wisdom Website

A new website has been established for marketing the recent book by Aleco Christakis with Ken Bausch: *How People Harness their Collective Wisdom and Power to Construct the Future in Co-Laboratories of Democracy* www.harnessingcollectivewisdom.com.



Mind Map from first page of Harnessing Collective Wisdom website
 Courtesy of Roy Smith

How Co-Laboratories of Democracy Work Brochure

After years of bragging how wonderful Co-Laboratories of Democracy are, it finally dawned on us that we need a simple description of how they actually work. The brochure that does just that can be viewed at http://www.harassingcollectivewisdom.com/pdf/How_Co-Laboratories.pdf

Other News

The Americans for Indian Opportunity with cooperation from Agoras submitted a grant proposal to the U.S. Government's Administration for Native Americans (ANA) to conduct governance, economic, and societal building projects for the Eastern Shoshone, Upper Sioux, and Choctaw tribes employing Wisdom of the People Co-Laboratories. The grants are pending. We will inform you when a decision is made.

Agoras has developed a **syllabus** for an online social design course, which can be viewed at <http://www.harassingcollectivewisdom.com/syllabus.html>. This course is interactive and based upon the book. In this course, students will use the WebScope to discover the key factors townspeople face in trying to avoid economic collapse. They will also use WebScope to decide upon the key action items that will constitute the city's action plan for renewal.

The project with USDA dealing with invasive species will resume later this year. The second Co-Laboratory will take place right after Thanksgiving.

Agoras was well-represented at the recent International Society for the Systems Sciences (ISSS) conference in Sonoma, California. Books and pamphlets were distributed. Useful contacts were made. We conducted a roundtable with 20 participants representing various methodologies from Norway, Japan, Mexico, Brazil, and the United States. This band of people is dedicated to making a democratic difference. We have resolved to stay in touch.

Agoras will also have a presence next week at the conference of the National Council for Democracy and Deliberation (NCDD). We will have a table, a consignment of books, promotional material, and an opportunity to interact with 450 democratic activists.



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