

Călărași FvL's Methodology

Authors: Catalin Berescu & Alexandra Lulache

The Tower of Bottom-up Power

The general purpose of the methods is to provide tools for a disadvantaged local community that are tailored to their specific situation as a marginalized, subaltern minority that is generally reluctant to express their opinions and less aware of the general legal and administrative conundrums.

In this regard the first stages keep the focus at the community level until the activity reaches a level that allows them to express consolidated and well-informed points of view using a well structured argumentation and to follow their interests in confidence when confronted with more powerful actors. Since it is to be expected that the second stage of dialogue will be more difficult since it has to involve a larger selection of actors, some of them institutional, this is a preparatory stage that follows the lines of community organizational practices.

It is a bottom-up process that identifies emerging community communicators, it consolidates cooperation and solidarity across marginalized neighbourhoods, and it defines common priorities that can become developmental goals and reasons to enact public pressure.

Five communities will end up working on at least three common issues and on how to promote them to the next level: Obor, Livada, 2 Moldoveni, 5 Călărași, Măgureni.

The first stage of consultations will be using **Method 1: Open Courtyards**. These will be neighbourhood-based meetings that open up the opportunity for dialogue to diverse groups. The meetings will be facilitated (in terms of timing, duration, invitations) as to have diversity in terms of gender, age, and previous experience in dealing with authority figures (as to go beyond established local leaders).

The second stage of consultations will be using **Method 2: Cross Deliberation**. This stage creates awareness of shared or differentiated struggles across neighbourhoods and distills the issues to key topics of action that have the backing of the five communities.

In the process, key speakers will be identified among the group, who can develop their competencies to interact with public authorities. A diversity of stakeholders will have a better picture of internal community needs and negotiation of interests to reach common goals, which will make it harder for them to be undermined or manipulated in the future.

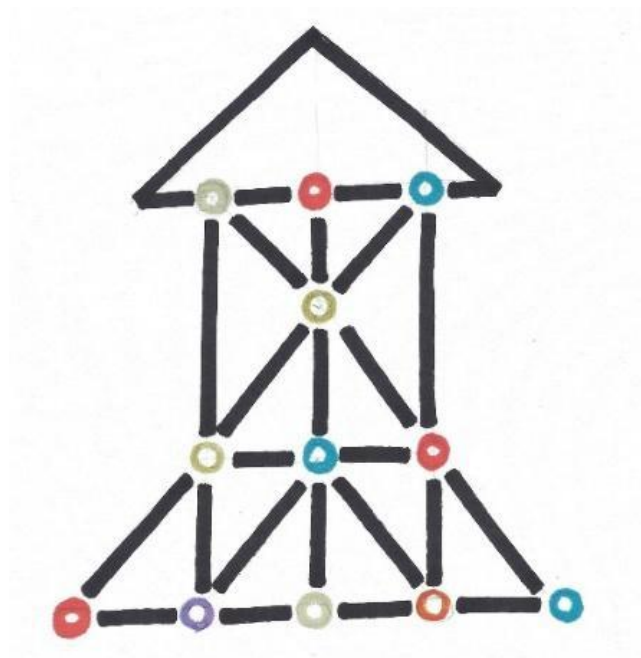


Figure 3: The Tower of Bottom-Up Power, Source: Calarasi FvL