



Resilience & Dialogue

First Meeting of the Resilience Laboratory

Bucharest – April 18-20 2018

Organizers: ARC & ECFI

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Context



- 17 community foundation practitioners from France, Belgium, Ukraine, Slovakia, Germany, Romania, Serbia, Hungary, 2 social scientists, a journalist in residence, and 15 representatives of local organizations (grantees of Bucharest CF and partners)
- 2 days - the open space methodology brought a lot of meaning for each of the participants and made a dynamic and inspiring work flow
- Co-creation of a blue-print for CFs on how to work with the community resilience
- Conversation with a community group in Bucharest to test ideas emerging from the conversation

Resilience is a very blurry concept that is very hard to tackle, but also very thought provoking.

Working definition for resilience:

Resilience is the ability of a community to prevent, cope and adapt to harsh situations.

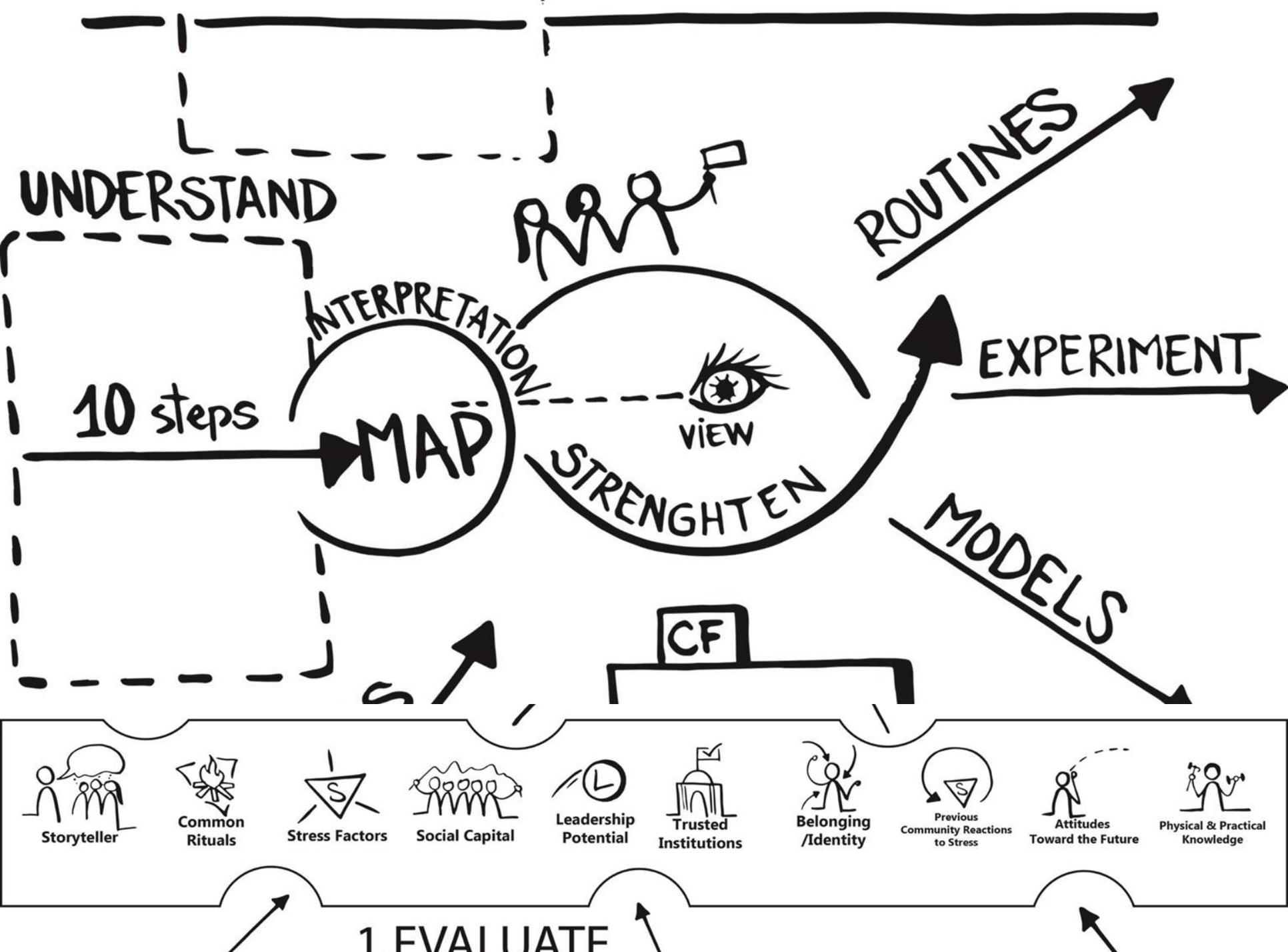
- Major challenge: getting out of “our NGO minds”
- Major AHAs:
 - ✓ Each community has specific stress or risk factors
 - ✓ The more a community understands itself (history & present) the more resilient it is – ***CFs can play an active role in helping communities to better understand themselves.***
 - ✓ Stories are among the best tools for increasing resilience - creating/improving awareness on the topic has effects at the community level
 - ✓ Education on the topic and practical activities (drills, first aid workshops) increase resilience
 - ✓ Long term vs. short term resilience
 - ✓ The connection between resilience & emotions

Other roles community foundations can play in increasing resilience:

- 1) Focus the community discourse on what we have instead of what we lack
- 2) Unearth stories of resilience
- 3) Build awareness of support networks
- 4) Fund experiments in near future
- 5) Work on the feeling of belonging and showcasing practices of care & compassion
- 6) Strengthen the diversity and intensity of relationships
- 7) Support everyday practices, simulate crisis
- 8) Create safe spaces to express fears, risks and difficult stories

Outputs

- A draft blue print for evaluating and increasing the resilience of a community that could grow into a toolkit after being tested by participants.
- A blog to be set up and become a working instrument for the group between the meetings
<https://theresiliencelab.wordpress.com>



Next steps

- Set up a working group
- Test the blue print and write some stories / case studies in various communities
- Create a library with resources on resilience (especially in the context of community foundation work)
- A series of webinars on the topic
- 2nd meeting in Timișoara
- Other possibilities: organize local meetings on resilience

Motivation of participants

- To get a better understanding of how CF's look at the concept of Resilience and different ways of how to deal with it.
- To look for collaboration opportunities, to create joint understanding of the concept
- Connect to European minds :)
- Understand what resilience may look like at community level and how it could be nourished from within; particularly in the context of urban transition and from a citizen participation perspective (how does a regular inhabitant support / build / contribute to urban resilience, without making it an extra effort?)

Feedback from participants

- I was impressed by the approach to the workshop (the method) which instigated meaningful conversations without pressure and strictly predefined agenda. People were very devoted and open.
- I liked the visit to Vacaresti Park as a very good metaphor of both nature and resilience of a group of dedicated leaders.
- In order to know better the missions and stakes of each participants and benefit from the experience of each, we could write a memo before the trip (for example with one question / one advice asked to other participants) and have a moment of exchange for that during the meetings.
- To improve the overall understanding what we have to do, it might be good to explain the structure beforehand a bit more "from scratch".
- Resilience is a muscle we have to train. We should encourage experimentation and failure. We should give space for our grantees.
- I found the idea interesting that resilience means that the next misfortune will come. We are prepared. We'll become stronger. There is cohesion and mutual support (solidarity).
- The topic is quite large, it is important to clarify the role of CFs can play - more focus on what the participants bring as specific experience would be helpful.

TO KEEP

- Spaces that inspire participants
- Meet with grantees
- Give more space for free conversation and time for self reflection
- Bring in the conversation of other people interested in the community and/or resilience

TO SKIP

- Try to fit too much information/processing in a short time – exhausting the participants
- Too long & hard / elaborate reading materials, sent too late
- Start the conversation at a theoretical level – more case studies

Questions & New Ideas

- How big the question of community resilience is and how limited resources a CF might have to invest in this area? This question relates to the CF community leadership role.
- How participants see resilience applied to the framework that they are in and their role?
- Start the next meeting with a presentation from an expert on resilience.
- Increase the theoretical knowledge of the group between meetings.
- Bring in as many case studies as possible.
- A series of webinars / online meetings for the work group.