International Coalition of
SITES *of* CONSCIENCE

memory to action

A DIALOGUE TOOLKIT

TIPS AND TECHNIQUES FROM THE DIALOGUES FOR SPAÇ PROJECT

Cultural Heritage without Borders-Albania

THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE is a worldwide network of "Sites of Conscience" – historic sites, museums and memory initiatives – that activate the power of places of memory to engage the public with a deeper understanding of the past and inspire action to shape a just future. The Coalition supports its members in many ways, including providing direct funding for civic engagement programs; introducing members to a global network of similarly minded sites, helping them establish best practices and new partnerships; organizing leadership and program development opportunities; offering dialogue training; and conducting strategic advocacy for individual members and the Sites of Conscience movement as a whole. Learn more at www.sitesofconscience.org.

THE PROJECT SUPPORT FUND ii a grant program supported by the Coalition that provides members with a capacity-building grant of up to $10,000 paired with one-on-one consultations with the Coalition's staff and other members to support the design and implementation of innovative new programs and initiatives that use the lessons of history to spark action on contemporary issues.In the past, members have used the grant to create human rights education programs, public dialogues on new issues, and projects that aim to create or use new tools that evaluate the impact of Sites of Conscience programming. At the end of the grant, some awardees are asked to submit toolkits on their project to share with other members of the Coalition.

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PREFACE

The Spaç Dialogues Toolkit eloquently explains that Albania's "concrete heritage" – from "remote prison camps to Socialist cityscapes" – holds the traumatic memory of the communist dictatorship, and that this history, un-witnessed, continues to effect social and political relations today. Scholars describe this continuing effect of the past on the present as "postmemory" (Hirsch 2008) – an indirect form of knowledge about massive cultural trauma that is passed from those who lived through the trauma to the next generation. While today's youth did not directly experience the events through which their parents and grandparents lived, the trauma of the past continues to structure social relations, shaping the beliefs and behaviors of the next generation. In some families, wounds of the past bleed with stories of pain and suffering that are told, over and over again. In others, the wound is a black hole of silence, repression, and denial.

In both cases, there is a traumatic rupture between individual and collective memory. Under normal circumstances, the experiences of one generation are communicated through a culture's texts (literature, film, music) and social spaces (schools, churches, public institutions). When individuals and families can recognize themselves within the texts and spaces of their time and when these texts and spaces allow for the transmission of a culture's story to the next generation, then there is a continuity between individual, collective, and cultural memory. In the case of traumatic rupture, however, these lines of transmission are broken. When there is widespread cultural violence, the truth of events can be either actively repressed or manipulated and exploited by political power.

In the two decades since the fall of the communist regime and the closing of Spaç Prison, there has been no coordinated search for truth, no process of lustration or vindication, and no dialogue of national reconciliation. Without being able to tell the full story of events, each family lives its individual reality, either ignorant of or denying the reality of other experiences.

In Albania today, where half of the population is under 30 years old, we find a young generation shaped by competing histories: those whose families continue to deny the violences of the former regime because they were complicit in it; those whose families were persecuted and so pass on the wounds of this violence; and many others who simply do not even know that prisons like Spaç existed. The transition generation has thus inherited a fragmented and distorted past that remains essentially un-knowable to them even as this past shapes their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs.

For fifty years of dictatorship, the collective memory of the nation was distorted by a systematic strategy of secrecy and denial. In the past quarter century of transition, stories from sites such as Spaç have remained un-hearable. The question before us, then, is how to reconnect and restore the intergenerational fabric of memory that has been severed by the violences of dictatorship? This is the question that the Spaç Dialogues Toolkit seeks to answer. To tell the story of Spaç is to bring the people who lived that time together with those who have inherited its legacy of cultural violence. To reconnect these generations is to restore the threads connecting one family to another, one set of stories to another – it is to reestablish the lines of transmission through which the experiences of a people become the collective memory of a culture. Ultimately, the Spaç Dialogues Toolkit gives us a model for bearing witness – for hearing, finally, the stories that sites such as Spaç have to tell.

Prof. Dr. Lori Amy
Tirana, 23 May 2016

INTRODUCTION

DIALOGUE AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE MEMORIALIZATION PROCESS

Nearly fifty years of Communist rule in Albania left lasting marks on the Albanian landscape—from remote prison camps to Socialist cityscapes to fields of mushrooming bunkers. This much is clear to the eye, even after two decades of free market capitalism and manic construction. Even so, this concrete heritage bears witness to the deeply traumatic memory and continuing social effects of the era it represents.

Since the fall of Communism, Albania is struggling to come to terms with this difficult period of its recent history. Issues of Communist history and memory have been addressed on the public stage largely as part of political power plays and mutual accusations of wrongdoing, rather than as a healthy dialogue to try to understand and face the past.

In recent years, a number of scholars have suggested that heritage which reflects the memory of a traumatic past could become a means of overcoming such trauma – a heritage of reconciliation. By addressing the personal and collective Communist-era histories through such a powerful site of memory as Spaç Prison, this project seeks to take important first steps toward demystifying the Communist past, disempowering the empty political rhetoric surrounding that history and providing people with a personal, tangible platform for a healthy historical dialogue. There are many good people and good ideas floating around Albania, but often they don't know about or reach out to each other. This project will help to facilitate shared information, coordination of activities and, finally, a shared plan of action.

One major theme of this project would be that there is not one way to read the experience of Communism in Albania—the experiences and perspectives are as varied as the people who have suffered, survived and went about their lives in many different ways. The key to reconciliation is providing a space for these voices to tell their story. Through groups of people from different backgrounds coming together and engaging in dialogue about the past and the future of Spaç, this project will foster an exchange of perspectives, which is intended to carry over into the public discourse on Spaç and Communist heritage generally in Albania.

GOALS

The project "Sharing Stories, Shaping the Future: Dialogues for Spaç" was conceived as a necessary instrument for tackling the lack of constructive dialogue between stakeholders. It was developed from 2014 to 2015 as a series of workshops and activities with some of Spaç Prison's main stakeholder groups.

The overall goal for this project was to encourage the formerly persecuted persons, state and local institutions, the local community and Albanian society to see the former prison of Spaç as a resource for both collective healing and local economic growth. This is in order to lay the foundations for a healthy, constructive dialogue in Albania about the Communist past.

The Dialogues for Spaç project worked as a platform where all the different interest groups could sit together for the first time, consider a multi-perspective understanding of the issue and take the role of an active working group towards the memorialization of Spaç.

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

Considering the dimensions of the system of persecution in Albania during Communism, the number of people and interest groups with a stake in the issue would be very big. For this reason, it was important to adopt an identification strategy for those who would participate in the Dialogues for Spaç. This led to the careful selection of one or two representatives from the three main stakeholder groups:

1. Direct witnesses of the site during the regime: former persecuted people

2. Central and local institutions responsible for saving and memorializing Spaç

3. Representatives from other interested parties: those who didn't have the direct experience of imprisonment under the Communist regime but can contribute and benefit directly from the dialogues, e.g. universities, journalists, artists, etc.

The total number of participants involved in the Dialogues for Spaç was 29.

PROJECT DURATION

The project implementation started in April 2014 and was finalized in March 2015. The three dialogue workshops were held several months apart, with intermediate contact with the participants happening in between.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This Dialogues Toolkit was created to provide basic information on the methodology behind dialogue processes that aim to focus on difficult heritage.

You can use this Toolkit to help with:

- Thinking and planning dialogue-based activities

- Crafting sessions and activities aimed at sharing diverse experiences

- Using dialogue, facilitation and visioning techniques to explore this diversity of experiences and build upon it

This Toolkit provides many practical and concrete suggestions for a variety of dialogue sessions and experiences. You can also supplement the information in this toolkit, by visiting our project blog at spacdialog.org.

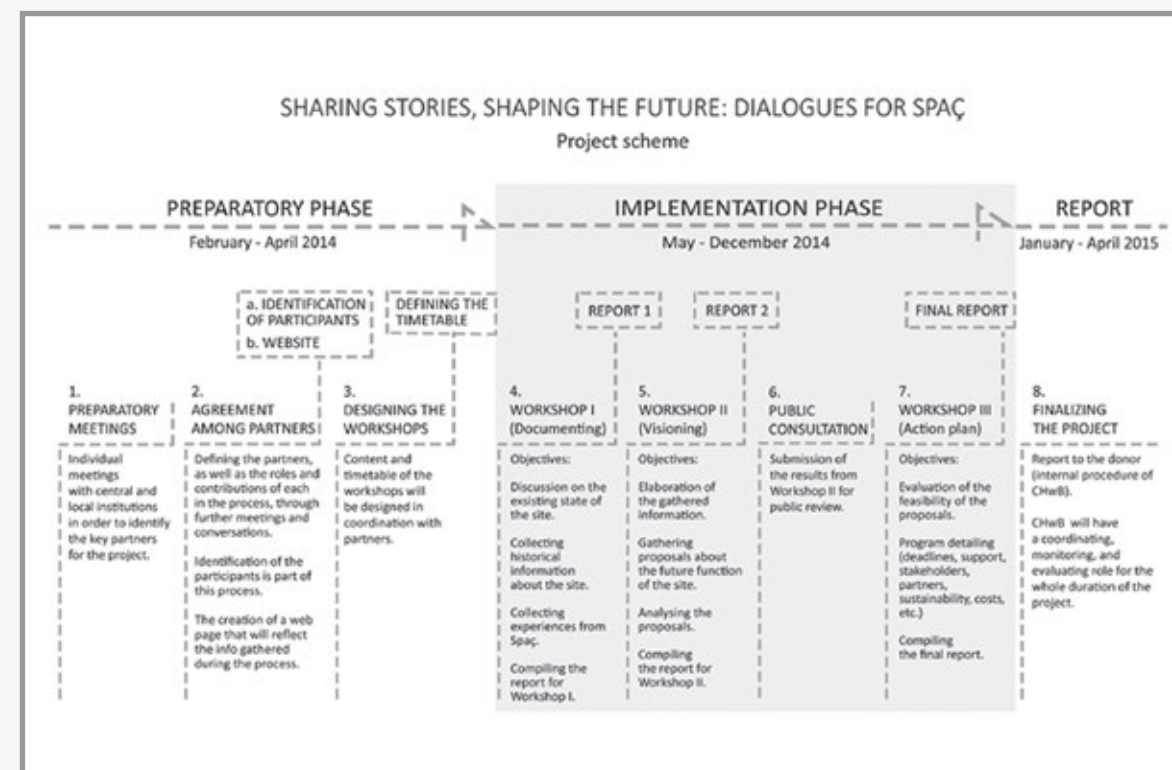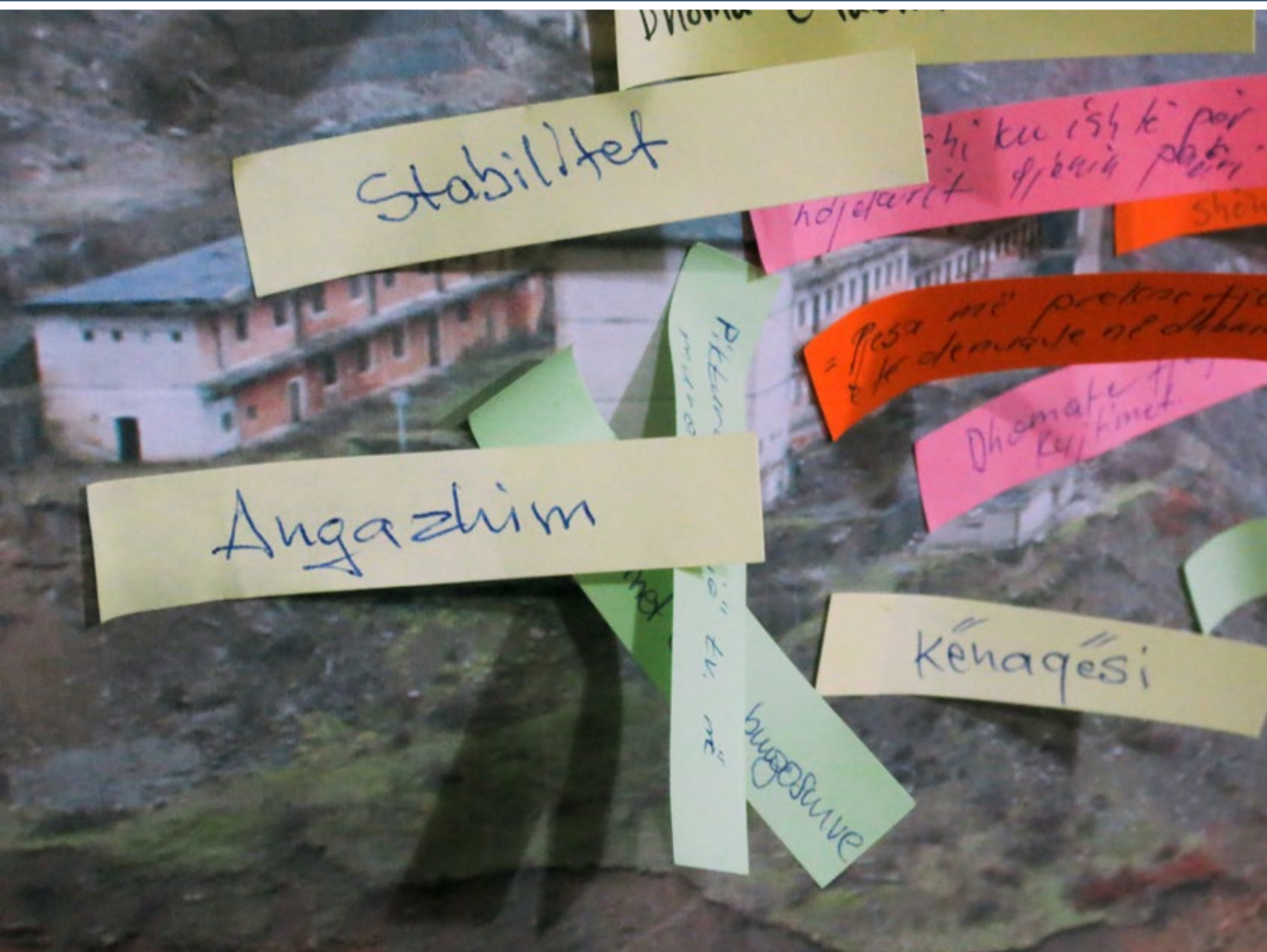In either case, please contact us at albania@chwb.org to share your success stories.

FIGURE 1:
The Spaç Dialogues Project scheme

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SITE BACKGROUND

CHWB ALBANIA

The foundation Cultural Heritage without Borders – Albania (CHwB - Albania) is an independent non-governmental organization, situated in Albania, dedicated to rescuing and preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage affected by conflict, neglect or natural disasters. CHwB is neutral when it comes to conflicting parties because everyone has the right to enjoy cultural heritage. We consider heritage to be a testimony of our humanity, history and cultural identity – now and for the future.

In 2014, Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) began the project called Sharing Stories, Shaping the Future: Dialogues for Spaç, supported by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. This project entailed a series of visioning workshops predicated on the understanding that there is not one way to read the experience of Communism in Albania—the perspectives are as varied as the people who suffered, survived and went about their lives in many different ways. The key to interpreting and confronting that past is providing a space for these voices to tell their story.

SPAÇ PRISON GENERAL INFORMATION

Spaç is located in the mountainous region of Mirdita, north-central Albania. Previously accessed only by a very long and dangerous mountain track, it now lies just 7 kilometers from Albania's most modern highway, which connects the country to Kosovo.

FIGURE 2:
A general view of Spaç Prison, March 2013.

Once Communists came to power in Albania in 1945, they proceeded to industrialize the country, which included the expansion of the copper and pyrite mine in Spaç. Given its remoteness, the regime also saw Spaç as a 'natural prison,' supplementing the mine complex with a prison/labor camp in 1968. Spaç was one small cog in the larger machine of oppression, but the inhuman conditions of the mine and the high profile of some of the camp's political prisoners gave it great symbolic weight.

Historical timeline of the site

1930s – 1960s The site is an active copper and pyrite mine

1968 – 1990 Spaç opens as 'Re-Education Facility 303' – combining prison with forced labor in the mines

1995 – 2012 Following its closure, the prison is gradually destroyed and continuously dismantled for scrap

2007 – 2016 Institutional efforts to protect the site begin, followed by various initiatives from civil society to transform it into a site of memory and symbol of the difficult Communist past.

FIGURE 3:
Spaç Prison in the 1970s or 1980s. Photo: Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND ON THE METHODOLOGY

Over the past two decades, a lack of constructive dialogue about Albania's recent past has served to ingrain and repress the traumatic social memory surrounding that history.

In the specific context of Spaç Prison, the challenges identified were:

1. The lack of information about Spaç Prison, at the time when the project started,

2. The absence of communication among a large array of stakeholders, and

3. A cycle of degradation/oblivion that needed to be stopped.

The methodology and the goals also needed to address the need for an appropriate model of confronting and understanding a difficult heritage site and the need to build trust and long-lasting relationships between the stakeholders. In this way, the project would facilitate the emergence of a solid active platform of stakeholders, knowledge and ideas to serve as a foundation for the next phases of the site's preservation and future memorialization process.

OUTCOME GOALS & PROCESS GOALS

Outcome goals don't tell you how to move forward, they just tell you where you're going. Most people only set outcome goals, which they then never meet. To turn the outcome into action, you need process goals. Process goals tell you what you should be doing each day or each week to reach your outcome goals. Process goals are especially crucial when exploring new terrain or trying to reach an outcome that relies heavily on the particular process used to get there.

PREPARATION

Setting your goals

There are usually two types of goals to be set at the beginning of similar projects: process goals and outcome goals. The working culture of our organization and the specificities of our local context — where important projects are often done with a total lack of inclusivity and transparency — made us put the focus on prioritizing process goals over outcome goals.

For example, an outcome goal of the Dialogues for Spaç project was to encourage the local community to see Spaç Prison as a resource for both collective healing and local economic growth. This was an ideal outcome, which we hoped to reach (or get close to) by the end of the project. However, in order to get there, we knew that we needed to develop a healthy process based on dialogue. Therefore, we focused on several process goals, which would guide both how and when we could reach our outcome goal. These process goals included steps, such as identifying the different 'communities' affected by the prison at Spaç and designing a set of visioning workshops to incorporate a broad spectrum of representatives from each of these communities.

In order to achieve the process goals on the way to our desired outcome, we paid special attention to creating a good environment for dialogue, an environment based on the following principles:

Make it an inclusive group: People of different ages, gender, backgrounds and cultures often have different perspectives. Ensure that a full spectrum of stakeholders is involved in the dialogues process.

Have different types of expertise around the table: Everyone has an expertise and no one should be afraid of experienced 'consultants' and 'professionals.' The latter can be asked to help in creating the right atmosphere for exchange so that the process is 'owned' by all, especially by the local stakeholders.

FIGURE 4:
Snapshots of the composition of the Dialogues for Spaç workshop participants.

Former political prisoners in Spaç

Students (University of Tirana)

From local level institutions

Civil Society Representatives

Spaç Dialogues

From central/ national institutions

2 former political prisoners in Spaç

6 from local level (local govt., resident, local museum)

8 civil society representatives (CHwB, other organiztions, active individuals)

11 from central/ national institutions (ministries, institutes)

2 students from University of Tirana

Make it a facilitated learning group: The process should be all about helping people to explore, learn and change.

Nurture and strengthen the group's knowledge and understanding of a site/ topic: In order to ensure an active learning environment for all, engage with participants in multiple ways, e.g., practically, emotionally, and intellectually. Include a variety of activities as part of your methodology, such as discussion among the participants, punctuated by short presentations, small group-work sessions, presentations from the participants themselves and site visits.

Choosing the right format for your interactive dialogue sessions

To address the specific challenges about Spaç, we combined two main methodologies: dialogue and visioning.

WHAT IS DIALOGUE?
(Source: Beyond Bollywood, a Facilitated Dialogue Toolkit)

Dialogue stems from the Greek words "dia" and "logos," or "through words." It is a mode of communication which invites people with varied experiences and often differing perspectives to engage in an open-ended conversation toward the express goal of personal and collective learning.

It requires participants to move beyond surface assumptions that inform their beliefs and actions and keep an open mind, suspending their judgment of the opinions of others.

Dialogue acknowledges that there are different "ways of knowing" about any given subject. It grants equal value to the insights drawn from personal experience and the knowledge gained from study. Dialogue assumes that it is possible for two markedly different perspectives to coexist at the same time.

The process of dialogue requires participants to establish and nurture a culture of mutual trust and openness. Facilitated dialogue refers to a process "led" by a neutral facilitator. Facilitators use a combination of questions, techniques, activities and ground rules to ensure that all participants can communicate with safety and integrity.

Because dialogue is a non-hierarchical mode of communication, facilitators also uphold equality among all participants.

DIALOGUE VS. OTHER MODES OF COMMUNICATION
(Source: Beyond Bollywood, a Facilitated Dialogue Toolkit)

Conversation: Sharing information and ideas in order to express one's views without any intended impact on the listener.

Discussion: Sharing information and ideas in order to accomplish a specific task

Debate: Sharing information and ideas in an effort to bring others into agreement or alignment with one's position or belief

Dialogue: Sharing ideas, information, experiences, and assumptions for the purposes of personal and collective learning.

Visioning techniques were used alongside dialogue-related components. The aim was to inspire and mobilize all stakeholders to contribute actively toward the creation of a desired future for Spaç, which would move the memorialization process forward.

Tips for a healthy and constructive discussion

A healthy discussion environment is vital to an effective dialogues process, and it heavily relies on facilitation skills. As long as one is enthusiastic, friendly, a good listener and able to think on his/her feet, there is no need for specific training or experience in group discussion facilitation. The other key element is to be able to create a friendly atmosphere of cooperation and trust where everyone is comfortable sharing opinions and ideas. Given the difficult topics that were addressed during the Dialogues for Spaç, this atmosphere of mutual trust was essential in order for participants to freely share their thoughts and opinions.

As a facilitator, here are some tips to prepare and manage your sessions.

Be the best prepared person at the table: Check the process goals, be familiar with the subject of discussion and try thinking ahead of time about the directions the discussion might take, while at the same time paying full attention to group dynamics and to what the participants are saying.

Set a relaxed and open tone: A relaxed atmosphere will make participants feel at ease at expressing their feelings and ideas and hearing those of others. Humor helps, too, when used thoughtfully and inclusively, rather than singling people out.

Provide space for everyone's thoughts: Keep track of who has spoken and who hasn't spoken; everyone deserves a chance to share their thoughts. Don't let anyone dominate. Setting ground rules at the beginning of each session will make the discussion easier.

WHAT IS VISIONING?

The concept of visioning is a crucial element in inclusive planning processes. The process of visioning helps a variety of stakeholders come together and share their imagined future, in order to shape the way that a site or organization grows, develops and contributes to the community. A successful visioning process gives everyone a stake in the outcome of the project, while providing a cohesive and coherent way forward.

In the context of Spaç Prison, visioning includes more than just a concept for how the space will look in the future. The vision for a place like Spaç Prison should also express the site's role in society, its ideal institutional structure and its key interpretive themes.

Assist the group process: Guide the discussion according to the ground rules but remain neutral. Monitor how well the participants are communicating with each other. Keep the group focused on the content of the discussion.

Let the participants be the main protagonists of the discussion: A good facilitator doesn't talk after each comment or question. The participants should be enabled to respond directly to each other. Saying little means that the discussion is going well. Sometimes silence is very useful also as

SETTING THE GROUND RULES FOR DIALOGUE

(Source: "Ground Rules For Dialogue," Community Dialogue, accessed 17 May 2016 from: http://www.communitydialogue.org/content/ground-rules-dialogue)

In order to encourage healthy dialogue, it is important to set ground rules, prior to discussion. Rather than imposing them as the facilitator, take time to discuss and agree upon them as a group. This can help participants feel take more personal responsibility for upholding the rules. Some of the simple but important ground rules that we used for the first workshop were:

The spirit of the workshop should be about dialogue and common engagement for a better future for Spaç Prison.

Every opinion counts and all participants should be respected in their right to speak freely and in a civil way.

The workshop agenda needs to be respected.

Mobile phones should be kept in silent mode during the workshop.

Most importantly, work and have fun together.

people need time to think. When you have to intervene, do so, but consider that too many interruptions stifle discussion.

Shuffle or break into smaller groups: Whenever you feel that the table is stuck at one specific argument, consider having a break or splitting up into smaller groups. This will allow a change of focus and further examination of a variety of viewpoints. In a smaller group, people will talk more easily about their personal connection to the subject.

Help the group understand: The facilitator makes sure that a wide range of views is considered by the group. Asking the participants to think about the pros and cons of different ways of looking at an issue or solving a problem will help identify common ground. On the other hand, never force consensus.

End on the right note: The last 10 minutes should be used for a happy and constructive ending. Thank everyone for their contribution and acknowledge how hard it is to explore

difficult issues. Finally, leave some time for the evaluation of the group process, either through sharing aloud or through a written evaluation.

How to make it interactive / Choosing the right type of session

There are several methods and techniques that can be used to develop a dialogues process. Your choices will depend on what your outcome goals are.

Briefing sessions: The purpose of this session is for different stakeholders to share the latest information. It is a good way to make up for lack of day-to-day communication between stakeholders. It can be called different names, but its success relies on the fact that it requires face-to-face interaction, which is essential for sensitive discussions.

Plenary discussion sessions: A plenary session usually refers to a session that is open to all the participants, who may each

FIGURE 5: Participants working in a small group session during the second workshop of the Spaç Dialogues, Shkodra, Albania.

FIGURE 6:
A plenary discussion during the first Spaç Dialogues workshop, Rubik, Albania.

contribute with prepared or ad-hoc material. Important statements and resolutions are often conveyed in a plenary discussion. Plenary sessions can also be alternated with other types of sessions, especially for facilitating recap and common understanding of results from activities held in smaller groups.

Working groups and related presentations: Splitting into smaller groups can be a very effective tool for achieving set tasks and fostering communication and coordination among participants. Small groups also allow for more in-depth analysis of specific points of interest. Results from working groups can and should be presented by the group members in a plenary session in order to fuel discussions and mutual understanding among groups.

Design/Mind mapping sessions: Mind mapping exercises are useful for visualizing learning. They can be effective for concluding a series of sessions, with groups of participants representing their thoughts or observations graphically.

Review sessions: Review sessions can be held either in a plenary or in a smaller group setting. Their primary purpose is to get participants acquainted with information relevant to the topics of the dialogues. It is crucial for the participants to know that their work doesn't start from

scratch and that oftentimes others have tried to tackle similar issues.

Multimedia presentations: Nearly every smartphone today has the capability of recording video and audio. The proliferation of accessible cameras and recording equipment and the expansion of social media make it necessary and relatively easy to adopt a more multimedia approach. The different tools that are used during a workshop can have a major impact on what people expect to find and how they capture and share information.

Joint design, analysis and planning sessions: These types of sessions help the group to combine their knowledge, expectations and new learning into concrete joint analyses, proposals or ways to move forward in relation to the topics discussed. Communication and coordination of thoughts and actions with other key interested parties pave the way for the outcomes to be supported by all the stakeholders.

FIGURE 7:
Participants conduct a mind-mapping session during the first workshop for the Spaç Dialogues.

FIGURE 8:
A multimedia session with oral histories from former political prisoners at Spaç.

Site visits: Site visits are a great way for participants and facilitators to experience and discuss relevant examples. The key of a successful site visit is to make it positive and engaging. Success will also depend on picking the right time and location, paying attention to logistical details and establishing the right balance between facilitating/presenting the site and the encouraging the active participation of the participants during the visits.

Bear in mind that the tips for a healthy discussion are applicable to all of these interactive sessions.

FIGURE 9:
Site visits to Spaç Prison, Mirdita, (left) and the Place of Witness and Memory, Shkodra (right) during the first and second Spaç Dialogue workshops.

TIP: THE RIGHT DURATION FOR A DIALOGUE-BASED WORKSHOP

The time needed for a successful workshop in the style of the Spaç Dialogues can vary from a half day to a week. A two-three-day workshop (during the week or over a weekend) can be a highly effective way of generating momentum for change, by getting all parties involved in producing a sound dialogue and related support for an action. During the Dialogues for Spaç process, we held three-day workshops, which got participants away from their daily routines and focused on Spaç, without requiring too much time from their busy professional lives.

The importance of good communication practice (before, during, after)

Constant information and involvement are important elements of an effective dialogue process. Communicating the objectives of the dialogues in the right way from the very beginning will help you get commitment from key stakeholders, who will have then embraced the philosophy of the dialogues (which is also a huge achievement).

Once everybody is in, the challenge and the key to the process lie in keeping them involved—not only during the planned sessions and workshops but also and most importantly, in between them. If the sessions/workshops are the moments when information is produced and shared, the time in between will allow the facilitators to tie it all together in a way that plants the seeds for consensus. This is the "invisible"

work that will help the parties capitalize on their contributions and the results from their involvement in the process.

There are many ways to achieve this, but you can prioritize the decisions or main outcomes of the dialogues through a short written summary of the results and key discussions. This summary will support the preparation for the next session or workshop, as well as serving as a jumping off point for follow-up discussions. Ask the participants to comment and make suggests on your summary before sharing the final version with them. This will result in a deliberate, incremental process of gaining knowledge, changing mentality and reaching consensus, with the goal of moving toward achieving your objectives for the dialogues process.

When "situations" arise?

"Situations" will arise, and when they do, it is necessary to go back to the basics of your dialogues approach: the process goals and the outcome goals. But it might also come in handy to use "negotiator" techniques aimed at problem resolution:

- Fix rules that will allow you to expand the ground for agreement in order to prevent "explosions" or interruptions and to foster listening. This will help you prevent conflicts.

- Show respect: This will strengthen trust and information sharing.

- Try to keep the parties at the table focused on their interests rather than their positions.

- Ask each partner separately about their interests, priorities and alternatives within the limits that can be accepted by all parties around the table.

The facilitator should also be aware that in order to resolve a situation, he/she can rely on several different approaches—appealing to power, rights and/or motivation/interest. Of these options, a common motivation/interest is the most suitable for encouraging continued dialogue.

Power: Using status, rank, etc. to force a resolution to an issue.

Rights: Basing the solution on rules, contracts, norms and standards, e.g. "I have the right to...", "it seems fair too...", "We agreed at the beginning that..."

Motivations or interests: Trying to really understand the underlying needs, desires, and doubts of each party and using them to reconcile/bring closer diverging interests.

For the most part, participants in the Dialogues for Spaç took a very sensitive issue and addressed it without major problems. This speaks to the professionalism and character of the participants and the care that was taken in selecting them. However, there were moments where tensions rose, and the facilitator needed to be aware of the potential for escalation. One potential source of conflict was the tension between Spaç 'preservationists' and representatives of the company that had started to invest in re-opening the site for mining. While the company verbally expressed good will and a willingness to work alongside the preservation and memorialization of the site, their very presence at the site was offensive for many of those who were working to preserve Spaç Prison. When tensions rose during a meeting, the facilitator was able to redirect the conversation toward common interests and goals, rather than accusations and blame.
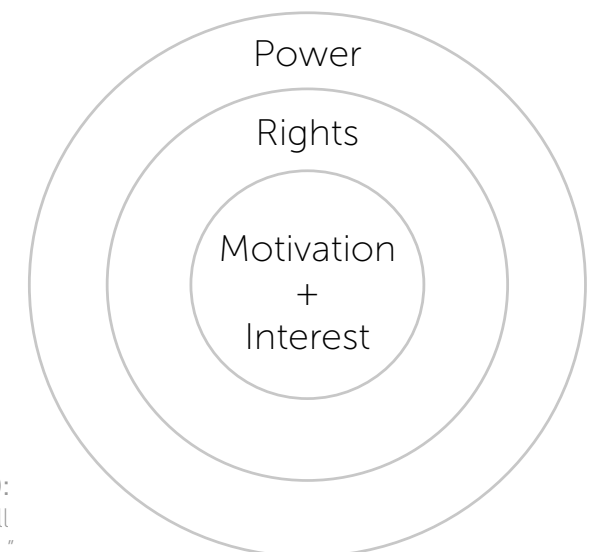
Power

Rights

Motivation + Interest

FIGURE 10:
An approach based on motivation/interest will help the facilitator "break the stalemate."

PRACTICE

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

This section will walk you through some of the practical steps in a dialogue process, providing examples from the experience of Cultural Heritage without Borders' Dialogues for Spaç project. The following techniques and examples are meant only to guide your work. This list is not exhaustive, nor is every technique appropriate in every situation. The key to the process is to move forward together to set your project in motion. Our work has shown us that there are three phases for a group to move through together, in order to reach a concrete plan of action that fulfills a common mission, set within a common understanding of the context. In brief, these phases are: documenting, visioning and planning. To cover all three systematically, CHwB held three workshops. However, the number of workshops is less important than the gradual movement through the three stages.

Most of the following activities have, within themselves, both a 'collecting' part and an 'analyzing' part. The 'collecting' part focuses on gathering information for the group to use to understand the site or their own positions, while the 'analyzing' part breaks that information down to extract and interpret the parts that are most useful for the overall dialogues process.

Phase 1: Documenting / understanding

This phase is about seeing, learning, encountering and finding common understanding as a group. The broad goal for this step is for each member of the dialogues group to have a similar level of background knowledge about the site and its history – giving them a common foundation for moving forward with the visioning stage.

Activity: Site visit and impressions
This activity involves a site visit followed by a debriefing session in which everyone shares their impressions. Even if all members of the group have visited the site previously, it is helpful for them to visit again, as a group and with the goals of the dialogues process in mind. Site visits to other locations can help to contextualize the process, by providing examples to emulate or avoid.

> ### ASSOCIATE EACH SESSION WITH TANGIBLE RESULTS
>
> To keep people focused and engaged, be sure to have tangible results (e.g. a document, map or some kind of conclusions) from each workshop session. This keeps all participants on the same page and helps to give them a sense of progress.

> ### THE RIGHT LOCATION FOR A WORKSHOP Varying the locations of workshops
> can have several benefits. By holding a workshop outside of the city where most participants live and work, it can remove them from their daily distractions and help them to focus on the task at hand. In addition, new locations can inspire new kinds of thought and offer different possibilities for relevant site visits.
>
> The Dialogues for Spaç workshops were held in three different locations. The first workshop was held in Rubik, Mirdita, the region where Spaç Prison is located, not too far from the site itself. The second and third workshops were held in Shkodra and Gjirokastra, major cities in northern and southern Albania, respectively. Holding the Spaç Dialogues workshops in three different cities helped to highlight the national importance of Spaç Prison as a site of conscience. It also provided opportunities to visit relevant sites of memory in each location, as a way to compare and contrast our work with Spaç Prison and put it into the larger national context. Finally, moving to different locations was a means of introducing the Spaç Dialogue participants to parts of Albania that some of them had never visited—slowly breaking down prejudices about different regions of the country.
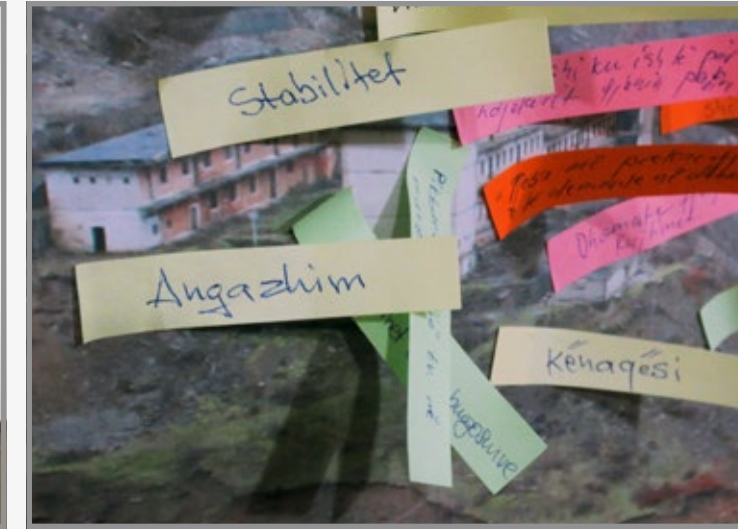
Use sticky notes to record participant impressions. Ask participants to share their most lasting impressions by writing them on sticky notes and posting them onto a map of the site or a whiteboard at the front of the room. These notes become the basis of the following discussion, as well as a visual means of recording it.

To record and analyze the most essential details from the testimonials, participants of the Spaç Dialogues were asked to think about the following specifics mentioned by the interviewees: 1) Places / constituent spaces / locations; 2) Events / stories; and, 3) Sensations / feelings evoked by the environment of the former prison. These categories helped structure the following discussion by providing points of comparison from the different interviews.

> During the Dialogues for Spaç project, the group visited Spaç Prison, as well as several other sites of oppression from the communist period, including prisons and investigation/detention centers in several other cities. These provided a broader context, as well as a mix of good and bad examples to draw on, in terms of site usage and interpretation.

Activity: Video/ multimedia sessions
Multimedia sessions are a great way to introduce another primary source into the conversation. Along with the testimonies and input from the former political prisoners who were present at the Spaç Dialogues, participants were also able to view, both as a whole and in small groups, several video testimonies from former political prisoners who had been in Spaç. The testimonies come from people who were imprisoned at Spaç at different times, which allowed participants to become acquainted with the former prison over a period from the 1960s until the early 1990s.

FIGURE 12:
A multimedia session in progress during the first workshop for the Spaç Dialogues.

Activity: Face-to-face meetings

It is important to have local individuals present during the entire course of the dialogues process. However, it will not always be possible to include all interested parties in all phases. Therefore, face-to-face meetings (or, alternately, guest presentations) with people who are outside of the group can provide a way to reach more people and incorporate their perspectives into the group conversation.

MEET EVERY PARTICIPANT
INDIVIDUALLY IN ADVANCE

Not everyone is comfortable sharing their experiences or opinions with a group. To make meetings go as smoothly as possible, be in contact well beforehand with everyone that you will meet, and be very clear about the topics to be discussed.

Activity: Mind mapping

A mind map is a graphical way to represent ideas and concepts. Supported by all of the information gathered during the site visits and testimonials, the Spaç Dialogues participants broke into small groups and compiled mind maps of Spaç Prison, highlighting the aspects that were most important to them. By layering a sheet of semi-transparent paper over a map of the site, participants can sketch their most captivating events, sensations and locations directly onto the site itself. The resulting maps are a rich, multi-layered representation of what the workshop group has learned, understood and valued about the site and its history.

Activity: SWOT Analysis

SWOT analyses are a conventional way of looking at a site's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to get an idea of the current strategic situation. The exercise often encourages passionate and productive discussion and enables the exchange of different viewpoints and experiences among the participants.

During the Dialogues for Spaç workshop, participants broke into small groups to discuss these elements. Each group then presented its conclusions to the rest. At the

end of the session, these were all compiled into a joint SWOT analysis — showing the existing situation of Spaç Prison itself, as well as the larger social context surrounding it.

FIGURE 13:
Participants at the first workshop of the Spaç Dialogues prepared their SWOT analyses in small teams before presenting them to the whole group.

During the Spaç Dialogues, a presentation on "Spaç in Popular Cultural Today" sought to review public perception of Spaç Prison in mass media and the arts, particularly literature. This presentation and the discussion that followed were useful for placing the Spaç Dialogues process within the wider context of Albanian narratives (or lack thereof) on the former prison, as well as Communist-era heritage and political persecution generally.

Phase 2: Visioning

When learning about a site, everyone sees the place and its history through their own lenses, formed by their personal experience. Having established a base of understanding, the next step in the process is to conceive of a common vision for the site. The key to a successful visioning phase is to use the group's diversity of perspectives, plus their common knowledge base, to craft a vision for the future.

Activity: Value analysis

Participants in the Spaç Dialogues broke into small groups in order to identify the values

that they associate with Spaç Prison. Then, each group shared their results with the rest.

Once the various values were collected, they were categorized in order to group together

HERITAGE VALUES

Heritage sites hold many kinds of values for us today. We may value them for their beauty (aesthetic value), their contribution to the local tourism industry (economic value) or the arts (cultural value) or the fact that some important event occurred there (historic value). Some values may be taken for granted by all. Others are linked to personal beliefs, opinions and preferences. The important thing is that a full analysis of values helps us to create a balance between the urgent needs of a site today and the preservation of its values for the future.

similar kinds. For the purposes of the Dialogues for Spaç workshop, the categories were as follows: historical/witness values, political/social values, cultural values, local/community values, rarity/uniqueness values, educational values, natural/landscape values, economic values, and scientific values.

It is important to note that these categories are not mutually exclusive, nor are they ranked according to importance. They are meant merely as a means of understanding the main values that the site holds, according to the working group.

Activity: Visioning keywords

Before writing a vision statement, keywords can help to focus the group on key concepts that should be expressed through the vision statement. For the Spaç Dialogues, each participant proposed three keywords, which they recorded on sticky notes. Facilitators and participants then mapped these keywords together to form four larger categories: memory, optimism, persecution, nation. These categories captured the spirit of Spaç Prison for the participants and constituted the axes of the vision statement.

FIGURE 14:
At the second Spaç Dialogues workshop, participants present their group's value analysis of Spaç Prison.
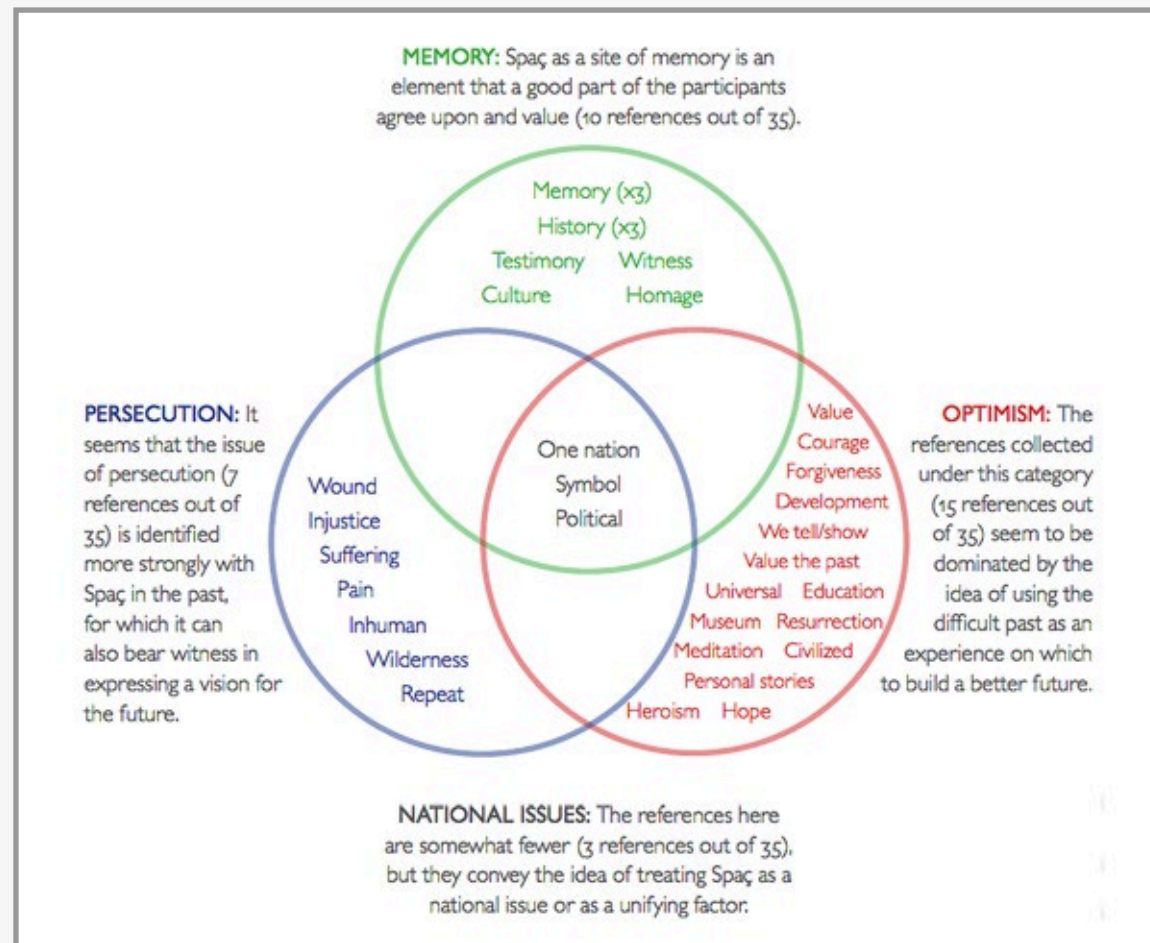
Activity: Vision statements
The goal of this session is to end up with a joint vision statement to guide the process going forward. This session should start by defining what a vision statement is and providing some good examples. Then, depending on the size of the workshop, it can be helpful to break into smaller groups to draft the first versions of a vision statement. Whether working in small groups or composing the vision statement all

together, try to give everyone a chance to share their vision and provide feedback.

By the end of the session it is important for the group to have settled on a draft of a joint vision statement.

The participants of the Spaç Dialogues created both long and short versions of their vision statements. The short versions were primarily a reflection on the past in service of the future:

1. We touch the past while building the future.

2. Let us solemnly remember so that the tragic past is not repeated.

3. We cannot understand who we are without knowing where we come from.

The longer statements reflected more deeply on themes of memory and persecution, while also highlighting the role and importance of Spaç as a model place for ideas and dialogue, which will use its collections/exhibitions to inspire people.

COMING UP WITH A VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement, seen as an "expression of desire," shows the way to achieve a long-term goal. It should be inspirational, positive, encouraging, specific, ambitious and forward-looking. Shorter is better. The final vision statement should not try to express everything important about the site. The right vision statement can inspire both workers and visitors and serve as a guiding light for the future.

Vision statements can be composed either in small groups or all together. In the first case, the discussion is easier, but in the end you have several different, possibly competing, vision statements, which can be difficult to merge. In the latter case, discussion and writing can be a bit more difficult, but in the end the views can be merged into a single statement.

FIGURE 15:
An illustration showing one way to map the visioning keywords identified with Spaç Prison.

FIGURE 16:
The calm aftermath of the visioning workshop for the Spaç Dialogues, held in Shkodra, Albania.

Activity: Setting major objectives

The final exercise of the visioning phase should be the formulation of major objectives for what could be achieved at the site. Before planning concrete activities, it is crucial to decide on the objectives to guide them.

In order to focus the objectives on a particular set of themes, participants in the Spaç Dialogues were divided into three working groups. Group 1 formulated objectives that fell within the category of "Education, interpretation and public inclusion;" group 2 focused on "Buildings and infrastructure;" and group 3 covered "Legal framework, management and strategic approaches." While these categories are not mutually exclusive, they allowed for a more focused set of objectives to be developed, while participants could work with the

group that best reflected their own skills and experience.

Working in their groups, participants set 3-5 objectives under their category of action and then shared their results with the rest. Everyone had the chance to suggest improvements or additions before the whole group agreed on the final list of objectives that would shape the work of the action plan.

HOW TO FORMULATE OBJECTIVES?

Objectives should form a symbiotic relationship with activities. Objectives tell us why we carry out the planned activities, while activities help us to achieve the change we want to see. In addition, your objectives should make use of active, forward-looking verbs, such as: improve, enable, grow, increase, develop, raise, contribute, encourage, reduce. You can use the acronym **SMART** as a guide for developing operational objectives that are:

S – Specific
M – Measurable
A – Assignable/Achievable
R – Realistic
T – Time-bound

Objectives
What do we want to change or achieve?

How do we want the change to occur?

How will we achieve the objective?

Activities
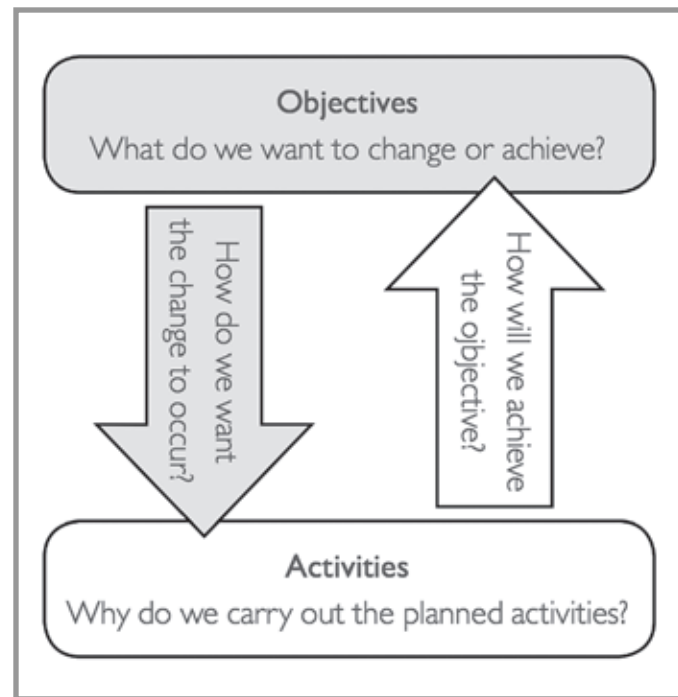Why do we carry out the planned activities?

FIGURE 17:
Illustrating the relationship between objectives and activities.

LOOKING AT SIMILAR MODELS

When thinking about the future of Spaç Prison, it was helpful to look at the experiences of similar sites, in terms of usage and scope. Drawing on examples from around the world, the group compared and evaluated various approaches to building conservation, the visitor experience, education, communication, fundraising and organizational structure, in order to get a feel for the methods that may work well for Spaç Prison.

Phase 3: Planning

You have established a shared vision and set of objectives for the future of the site. The next step is to put together a set of concrete actions that guides the process from visioning to meeting the goals that have been set. These steps can be considered chronologically or thematically, but be sure to consider actions that can be taken for each objective in the short, medium and long term. Some details may be unknown for the present, but attempt to define each step as much as is practical. Actions can be refined later, but take advantage of the diversity of minds and experience you have at the moment to try to set a clear path.

There are many ways to go about crafting an action plan. This toolkit will outline the one that was used during the Dialogues for Spaç process. The Spaç Prison Action Plan was drafted following four major steps: structuring, group brainstorming, sharing and compiling.

Structuring
What kind of information should the action plan contain? The first step is for the group to agree on a 'frame' to be filled. Everyone must

FIGURE 18:
Participants discuss elements of the Action Plan for Spaç Prison during the third workshop of the Spaç Dialogues.

SET UP THE 'FRAME' AHEAD OF TIME

In order to help the workshop group focus on content, it can be beneficial for facilitators to establish the 'frame' of the action plan (what categories need to be filled) ahead of time. This frame can be approved or adjusted quickly by the participants, giving them more time to focus on filling the frame with the content of the action plan.

agree on what details are needed and how they should be compiled. For Spaç Prison, it was decided that each action should contain six key pieces of information: 1) a description of the action itself; 2) the institution, entity, organization or person who should initiate the action; 3) the implementer; 4) the supervisor; 5) the time frame, which could be short term (1-3 years), mid term (4-6 years) or long term (>6 years); and 6) possible sources of funding for that particular action.

Brainstorming
Assign one small working group to each objective, asking them to fill in the 'frame' of the action plan. At this point, participants should try to be practical, while imagining the actions that will need to be taken in the short, medium and long term, in order to reach the set objectives. The entire action plan frame should be filled, as much as possible.

THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

For this session, it can be helpful to divide participants into working groups by expertise. Those working on the action plan for Spaç Prison split into three working groups (one for each objective), based on each person's professional or institutional profile. In this way, people were able to give according to their capacities and experience.

However, the emphasis for the moment should be on the descriptions of the actions themselves, in order for the plan to be as broad ranging as possible. Do not spend too long debating specifics that may not be knowable for the time being. Make the most of the time you have.

Sharing and discussing
After the brainstorming session, each group presents their work to the rest. Even though the groups had been working separately according to their interest/expertise, this now gives everyone a chance to discuss the proposed actions and to suggest changes or additions.

Compiling
Following the workshop, facilitators should work to compile all of the pieces from the working groups into a coherent action plan, following the agreed framework. The action plan in its final form is then sent to the working group for approval.

FIGURE 19:
An excerpt from the "Action Plan for Spaç Prison," prepared during the final Dialogues for Spaç workshop and compiled afterward by the facilitators. To see the full version of the action plan, download the Spaç Dialogues Workshop 3 report from: http://chwb.org/albania/resources/publications/

GETTING FEEDBACK ON THE PROCESS

Over the course of the dialogues, it is important to check on how the process is going, both inside and outside the group. Successful communication and public debate are needed for reaching a broader commitment on the results. One way to do this is through an open public consultation process.

Once a draft of the Spaç Prison Action Plan was finalized, a public consultation was organized. In order to reach out to the very specific needs and opinions coming from former politically persecuted persons, a questionnaire stand was placed at the Institute for the Integration of the former Politically Persecuted. This physical location was complemented by an online version of the questionnaire, as well as an email address.

FIGURE 20:
People were given several options for filling out a questionnaire on the Spaç Prison Action Plan.
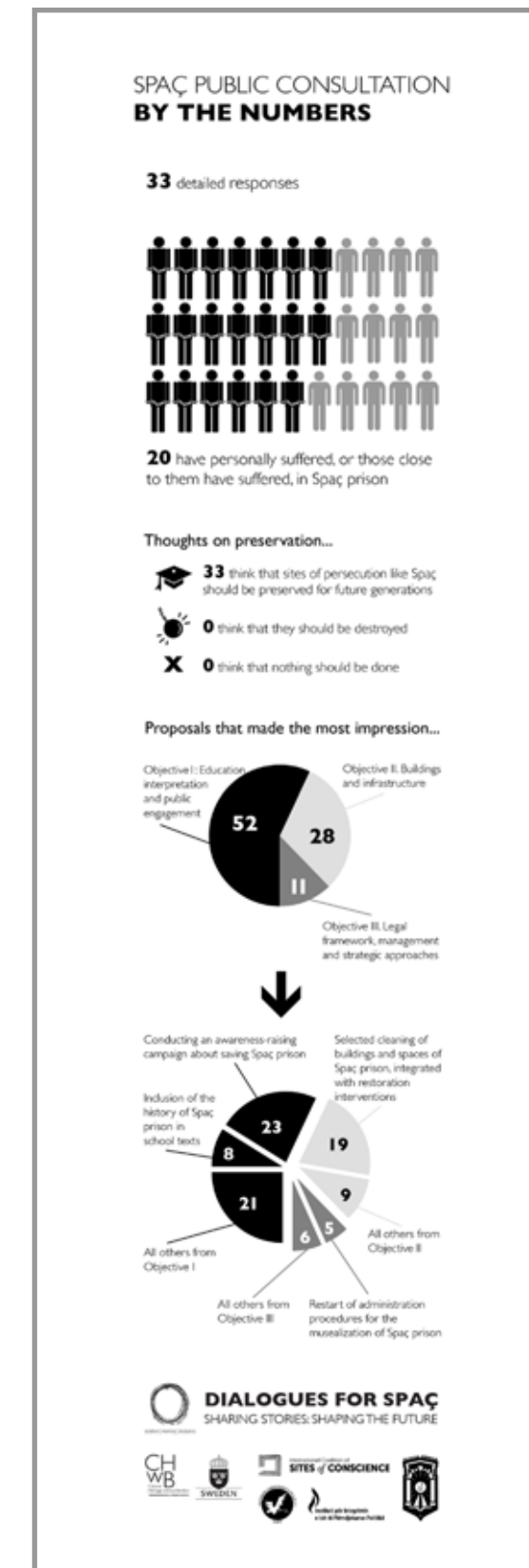

FIGURE 21:
An infographic produced from the results of the public consultation for the Spaç Prison Action Plan.

Use media and web outlets to publicize the vision widely, and keep it alive by regularly sharing/reporting achievements and progress to the public.

The Spaç Dialogues process and result were regularly posted on a project blog (spacdialog.org) created for this purpose, as well as on CHwB Albania's website and Facebook pages. These tools helped the project reach out to the general public, especially younger audiences.
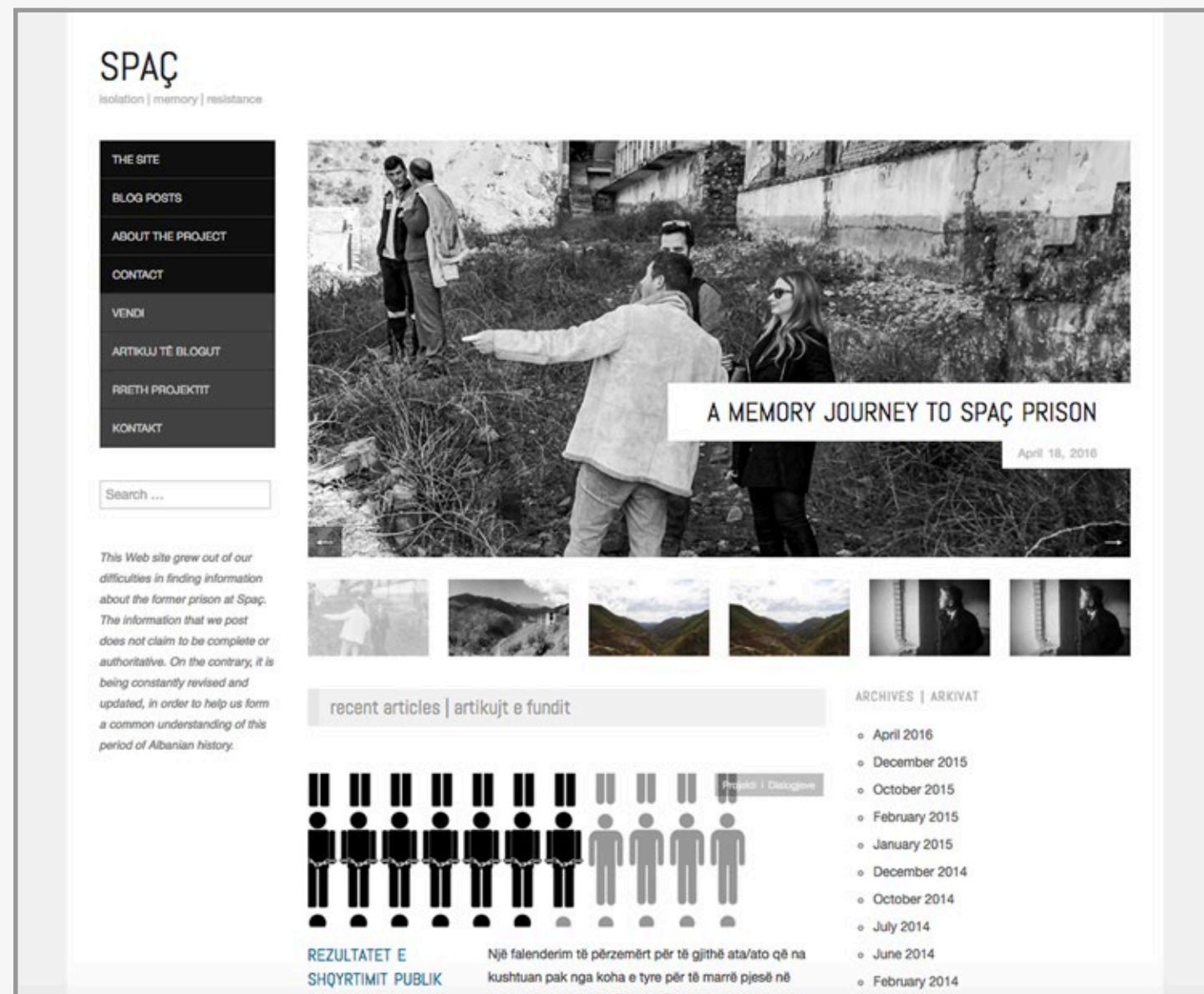

FIGURE 22:
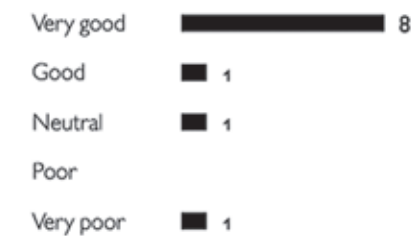A screenshot from the Spaç Dialogues project blog.

EVALUATION

In order to improve your methodology and organization, it is important to get an accurate view of participants' experience. Therefore, every workshop should end with an individual and anonymous evaluation by t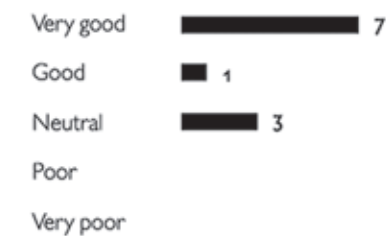he participants. When conducting a series of workshops, try to use the same evaluation methodology for each, while also allowing participants to evaluate every session. Here is an excerpt of questions and results from the first Spaç Dialogues workshop:
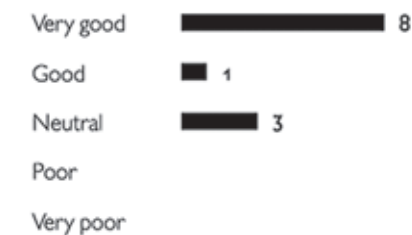
ORGANIZATION

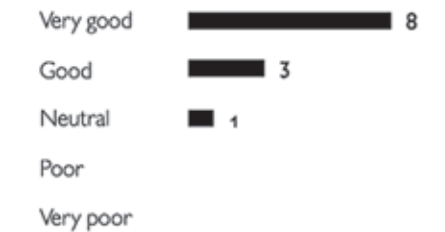1. Information provided before the workshop was:

Very good	8
Good	1
Neutral	1
Poor	
Very poor	1

2. The beginning / introduction to the workshop was:

Very good	7
Good	1
Neutral	3
Poor	
Very poor	

3. The accommodation was:

Very good	8
Good	1
Neutral	3
Poor	
Very poor	

4. The organization of meals was:

Very good	8
Good	3
Neutral	1
Poor	
Very poor	

5. The visit to Spaç prison was:

Very good	8
Good	3
Neutral	
Poor	
Very poor	

6. How well-prepared and professional were the organizers?

Very good	11
Good	
Neutral	
Poor	
Very poor	

7. The organization of the workshop in general was:

Very good	10
Good	1
Neutral	
Poor	
Very poor	

CONCLUSION

THE PROCESS OF THE PROCESS

During the visioning workshop of the Spaç Dialogues, one of the groups described Spaç as "a full library that was never read." Reflecting back on that moment, we see now that this 'library of memory' represents the stories of Spaç and places like it—stories that Lori Amy described in her preface as un-knowable and un-hearable for Albania's young generation. When we began the Spaç Dialogues, we entered into this library, an unknown world, filled with stories that have been neither spoken nor heard. We faced the challenge of who should participate, given the limited number of places around the dialogue table. How would we know which people to include? Was everyone else entering this library of memory for the first time, or were there some who could guide us through it? We wanted personalities and experiences that would add both depth and diversity to the group, along with institutions that could take responsibility for the site moving forward. But we also knew that we needed people who could calmly address the intergenerational and interfamilial ruptures in memory caused by Albania's recent past.

When the workshops began, we faced a new set of challenges: how to moderate difficult discussions about a place with strong emotional connections that we may never fully grasp. As facilitators, some of us came from outside of Albania; others were Albanian but didn't come from families who had been heavily persecuted by the regime; all of us were too young to have fully experienced the repression of the communist dictatorship. We needed to be respectful and sensitive to everyone, while at the same time trying to move forward with the process of creating a joint vision and action plan for Spaç. We also needed to help people understand that a solid, dialogue-based approach would lead to good results. Oftentimes, people expect quick, visible outcomes, but we were focused on incremental change, both mental and emotional.

HOW DIALOGUE SHAPED US

The Spaç Dialogues had a lasting effect on everyone that participated. The experience helped us to understand the limits of our own perspectives and learn how to enter mindfully into dialogue. It opened us up to former political prisoners and persecuted people as a group with diverse motivations and backgrounds, moving away from clichéd portrayals by the local media. These people showed us the diversity of experiences at Spaç, complicating a single narrative of victimization.

All of the ways that the Spaç Dialogues touched and shaped us continue to inform how we think about Spaç and present it to others. The dialogues have helped us see the Spaç process in the context of the rest of our organization's work with heritage and human rights and to link our process with the larger body of memory work surrounding Albania's communist past. As we move into the next phase of memorializing Spaç as a site of conscience, our group has expanded to include individuals and institutions that have identified themselves as stakeholders in Spaç, in addition to those that we carefully selected for the Spaç Dialogues. This phase will open up a new set of challenges: navigating the complex web of personal and political ties in Albania and addressing the various needs and desires of the group in terms of how to portray the stories of Spaç and of Albania under dictatorship.

READING THE LIBRARY

When we face the difficulty of witnessing the stories of Spaç, we are confronting the traumatic rupture between individual and collective memory detailed in the preface. We are attempting to read from the 'library of memory,' but we don't necessarily know how to interpret it, or even to locate it. How can we uncover truth when so much has been hidden and distorted? This is the importance of dialogue. Dialogue gives us the tools to discover and interpret the library of memory.

It allows us to understand the past from another perspective—to weave back together, as Amy puts it, "the intergenerational fabric of memory that has been severed by the violences of dictatorship." The Dialogues for Spaç represent a few first steps in the long journey toward intergenerational healing. They were never intended to heal the ruptures of memory alone, but our hope is that they have paved the way and established a methodology for the memory work to follow.

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