

# Workshop Collaborative City

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**Abstract:** This paper describes a workshop that will explore the social and sustainable dimensions of cities based on the concept of a Collaborative City, that is, a city with kernels of creativity, which are constituted by: social services, artistic and economic activities; a city where local authorities create opportunities for citizens participation, bottom-up creativity and collaborative services.

This collaborative city is a place where people interact and enact creating a symbiosis of activities that promote sustainable lifestyles, an active citizenship, social inclusion, cultural diversity and new economic models.

We will guide a design exercise on which participants – after an introduction on these topics and case studies description (case history) - will go through a brainstorming session, generating possible solutions in the framework of a concept identity for Chicago as a collaborative city. Afterwards, it will be developed a scenario building, defining specific frameworks to tackle over and choose, in a strategic way, the most relevant scenario(s) to be developed. This will lead us to the next phase (concept generation), making participants think about and develop a specific solution.

**Key words:** *collaborative services, social innovations, sustainable lifestyles.*

## 1. Background

The world is in a continuous and fastpaced change, whether we consider environmental, technological or economic transformations, or, even more significantly, whether we look at the social ones. The lack of policies adjusted to tackle those transformations and the need to adapt and develop systems able to structure the social, economic, and cultural fabric towards the transition to a more sustainable development model have given birth to a diffuse phenomenon of collaborative communities in which individuals collaborate between them to produce the outcomes that the traditional welfare state does not seem able to deliver.

Contemporary cities, specially big metropolises, are the arena where both the virtues and problems linked with the present model of economic development seem to be most visible. This made it all the more relevant to start the search for new possible solutions in the city; solutions intended at opening alternative pathways for social, cultural and economic innovation necessary in the transition towards sustainability. And emerging phenomena seemed to point that it was in the city that countermovements or countertrends striving to associate new social sustainable behaviours to the existing model could also be found.

Considering that design has played an instrumental role in the creation of the current system of consumption, shouldn't it be promoting its re-invention, departing from more sustainable principles? That re-invention could

be done namely through the empowerment of social innovations and the services created at grassroots level, or by the redesign of top-down initiatives that in its original form have failed to deliver the results needed.

We have been working in the field of strategies for sustainable innovation in product-service systems, managing and developing innovation projects through methodologies such as field analysis, ethnography, concept generation, scenario building and co-design, following an approach that is orientated worldwide towards social, economic and environmental sustainability.

## **2. Issues**

The workshop strategy highlights the aims and the results expected from the workshop and the tools needed to implement it. In this workshop, we adopt a “learning by doing” approach that allows the collaboration among different actors. This is to let every participant to be creative and give his/her professional, personal and active contribution to the final result, according to the workshop topics:

**Urban regeneration:** it is about how to empower people to put in practice urban regeneration through a focus on cultural, economical and social issues as a mean of generating wealth, jobs, identity and active citizenship.

**Food Networks:** it is about how to help dwellers in eating well, local and good quality food. This implies some actions to link local producers with the consumers (Meroni, 2007), to improve their food education and to help food (production and consumption) in becoming a driver for urban regeneration and social cohesion (Simeone, 2010)

**Mobility:** it is about how to move around the city in the most sustainable and effective way, improving a multimodal mobility and a smart integration between public and private means (Meroni, Sangiorgi, Simeone and Villari, 2008)

### 2.1. Workshop approach and goals

The scheme below indicates the concise work-plan of the workshop. It is divided into four phases. The outcomes of each phase concern both the approach and the involvement of the participants, and the concrete results expected from the session.

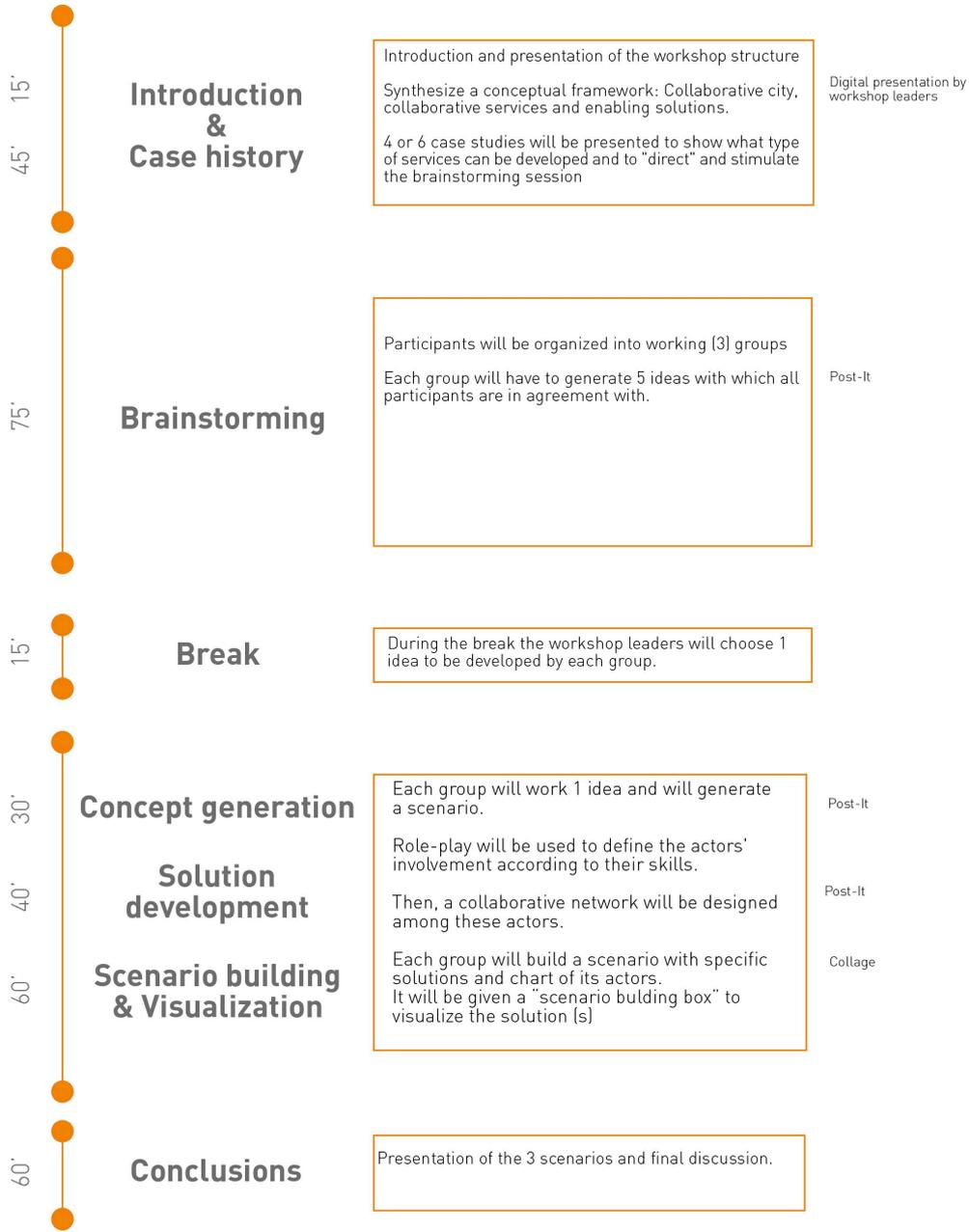


Figure.1 Workshop Approach and Time frame

### 2.2. Phase 1 – building up the conceptual framework

The three topics and the agenda of the workshop are introduced in this phase. Some case studies about the topics will be shown to decline the participants into the mood, and to point out some key concepts and values to build on the scenario. This showcase aims to:

help the audience in becoming aware of what kind of solutions can be developed;

point out some criteria and keywords, as participation/cooperation among different actors, bottom-up initiatives (promoted by private citizens) with top-down support (from the Public Authority) and vice-versa, use of local resources, etc., in order to feed the brainstorming session.

**Objectives:** understanding and synthesize information obtained from a certain number of cases presented.

**Expected outcomes:**

Synthesize a conceptual framework for comprehending the issues of the contexts, the criteria and the mood of the scenario.

Stimulate the brainstorming session

A series of criteria and guidelines which will be used during the scenario building phase

**Phase 2 – brainstorming**

Participants will be organized into 4-6 people working groups where all the members have different skills and backgrounds. Involving all members in the ideas generation process, each group has to generate about 5 ideas which all participants are in agreement with. These ideas are expected to be very simple and rough, then they will be elaborated in the next task. The use of post-it as a support to write the ideas can be very helpful to organize the ideas during the scenario building session.

**Objectives:** focalizing on a context and its issues to be pro-active in generating proposals for possible solutions.

**Expected outcomes:**

Involvement of all members in ideas generation

A series of features and stimuli which will be used during the scenario building phase

A list of rough ideas to be used in scenario building phase

**Phase 3 – Scenario Building**

The aim of this phase is to give to each group a structured concept for a scenario to be developed. This phase works out through the clusterization of all the post-it, according to the three topics: for each of these clusters, a main and more complex concept is pointed out in a phrase which puts together all the grouped ideas.

This phase links together the previous two. A matrix will be built crossing the “criteria” (values) coming from the case studies session (1) and the “solution features”, coming from brainstorming (2), in order to generate a series of possible scenarios. In this phase, the promising ideas are collectively chosen and re-elaborated according to workshop general strategy.

**Objectives:** defining specific frameworks to be tackled and choose in a strategic way the most relevant scenarios to be developed.

**Expected outcomes:**

The wide agreement among all the participant on the built scenarios

A series of scenarios: visions of possible guidelines for the concept generation

A series of solution concept to be developed in the next task.

**Phase 4 – Scenario and solution development**

This phase aims to develop a number of solutions according to the scenarios taken in consideration. For each scenario, a service (solution) idea will be developed, besides the system of actors involved, the infrastructure and all physical elements needed. Starting from the concept it is possible to contextualise the service idea, to build a system of actors (private and public) to be engaged in, and to think about the touch points and all the elements which define the service. In the solution development task each group will work one service idea moving from

the scenario building outcomes, and will generate a solution to develop and to strengthen it. The most relevant feature of this phase is that a role-play game can be used to define the actors' involvement according to their skills: these actors will be asked to design a collaborative network.

**Objectives:** thinking about a specific issue and developing a problem solving attitude.

**Expected outcomes:**

The multidisciplinary participation in the solution-finding process

One concept for each scenario taken in consideration

### **Phase 5 –Visualization**

To make the solution easy to understand a visualization is useful. To help the participants in this task, a “scenario building box” has to be given to each group, made of pre-selected pictures, elements and drawing tools, according to the general strategy of the workshop. Each group is asked to envision a scenario with specific solutions and a chart of its actors. The output expected is an evocative visualization of how the solution could be: a moodboard with its actors and its elements.

**Objectives:** envisioning a complex situation and make it to be understood by everyone

**Expected outcomes:** One moodboard for each group; Coherent and realistic proposals for the city of Chicago

### **3. Target participants**

We welcome everyone to participate in this workshop, and it will be desirable to create a diverse group of people with different backgrounds as designers, policy-makers, sociologists, artists, social entrepreneurs, civic society, and so on.

### **4. Expected impacts**

It is expected that from this workshop, participants will be able to create service ideas which include a visualisation of the general layout of the solution and its elements, a mapping of stakeholders and their relationships and responsibilities, as well as the specific tools required for its functioning.

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