


# Public Libraries: Silence or Noise, Reading or Creation, Individuality or Community?

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Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη ΕΒΕ της Ελλάδος
National NLG Library of Greece

**Athens, 1-2 December 2025**

# Workshop: Engaging Communities: Co-Creating Library Services with and for Citizens

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Libraries-Synergasia

“Designing Belonging: Libraries as Inclusive and Open Public Spaces”

Athens December, 2, 2025

# KNOWING OUR COMMUNITY




## 2-HOUR WORKSHOP

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|---|---|
| INTRODUCTIONS | 10 min |
| ICEBREAKERS | 15 min |
| WORKSHOP SESSION | 80 min |
| WRAP-UP | 15 min |

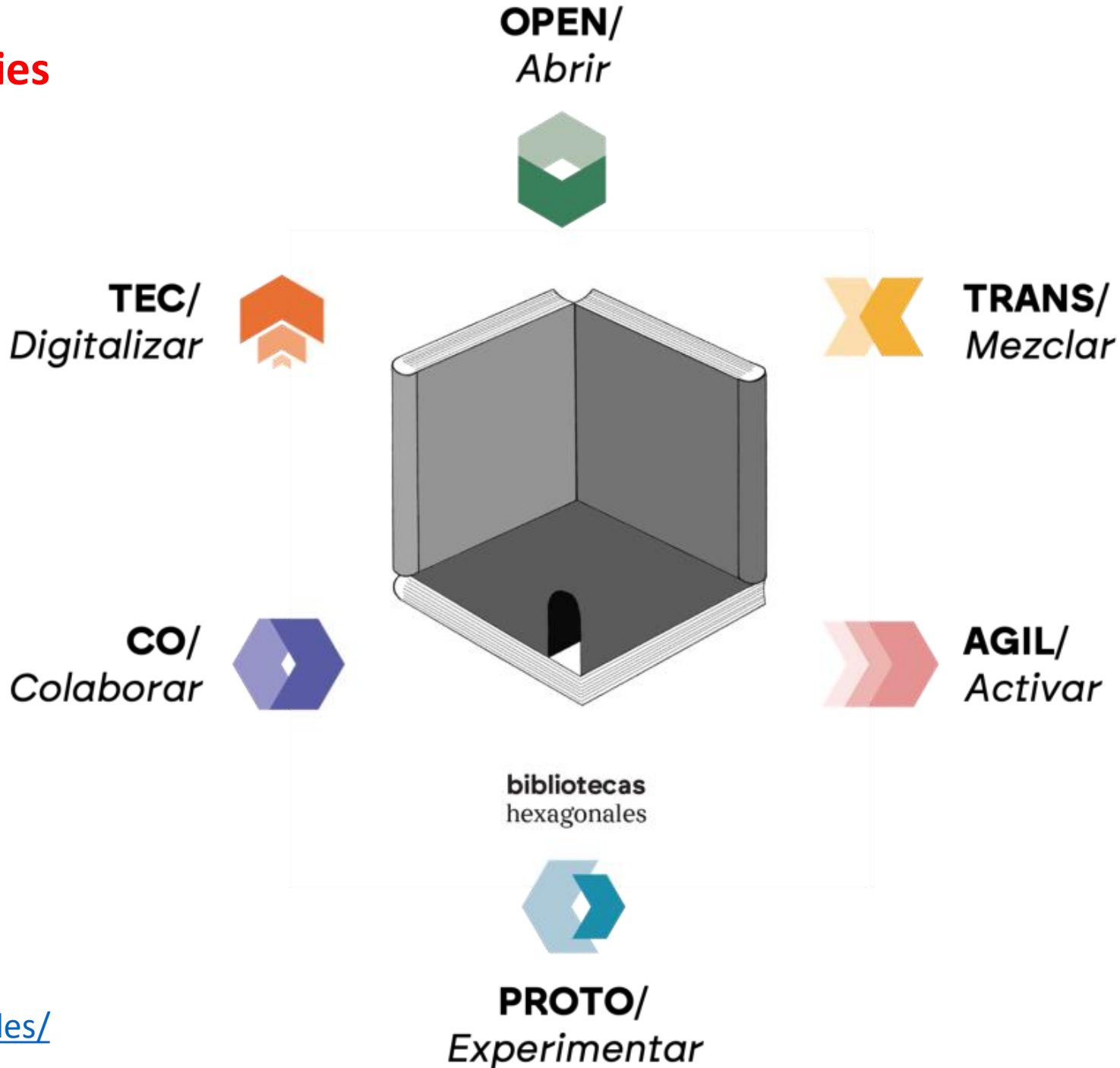
- Public libraries today are more than places for books—they are platforms for community connection, learning, and participation.
- This workshop is designed to help librarians develop services and activities that are not only aimed at the public but are created with the public.
- Participants, in groups, will explore principles of co-creation, participatory design, and community engagement.

- Through practical tools, group exercises, and inspiring case studies from other libraries, attendees will learn how to:
  - Identify community needs and priorities using inclusive and participatory methods.
  - Build partnerships with local organizations, groups, and individuals.
  - Design services or activities that reflect the diversity, interests, and voices of the community.
  - Foster a sense of ownership and shared responsibility among citizens.
  - Create low-cost, high-impact programs that strengthen trust and social cohesion.

- The workshop emphasizes equity, dialogue, and collaboration, aiming to position the library as a civic space that evolves with—and through—its community.

# The HIP Model and Hexagonal Libraries

Raúl Oliván Cortés
Yolanda Puchades Asensi




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https://labsbibliotecarios.es/bibliotecas-hexagonales/

# The HIP Model and Hexagonal Libraries

- Hexagonal Libraries are an adaptation of the Public Innovation Hexagon HIP model to library environments. The six vectors applied to libraries are defined as follows:

- **OPEN:** The library's ability to generate conversation and communicate with its territory.
- **TRANS / mix:** The extent to which the library integrates diverse knowledge and experiences present in its community.
- **CO / collaborate:** The library's ability to connect different types of knowledge and experiences, contributing to theexperiences, contributing to the strengthening of its communities.
- **FAST / agil:** The library's ability to streamline its mangement and facilitate people's lives.
- **PROTO / experiment:** The extent to which the library serves as a space that fosters experimentation.
- **TEC / digitize:** The extent to which the library works with digital environments to enhance communication or simplify processes.

- https://labsbibliotecarios.es/bibliotecas-hexagonales/

# Problems or solutions??

- Do you have any problems in your library that you would like to try to solve?
- Do you want to improve some of your services, or connect more and better with your community?
- Perhaps in this workshop we can start working on all of that.
- If not, here are some prototype or ideas that you can take back to your library…
- Come on!!

# Prototype: “Living Library” (Vectors TRANS + CO)

- **1. Challenge detected**: The library is still strongly associated with the words book, silence, study. We need to expand this perception toward a dynamic space of culture and community.
- **2. Vector applied TRANS** (mix): hybridize knowledge, formats, and communities.CO (collaborate): weave networks with local groups.
- **3. Central idea:**
  - Launch a monthly program called “Living Library”, where the library becomes an open cultural laboratory: Each session combines a traditional format (reading, archive, exhibition) with an innovative format (podcast, creative workshop, performance, cultural hackathon).
  - Local groups (associations, students, artists, neighbors) are invited to co-design the activity.
- **4. Key actions:**
  - Community mapping: identify nearby cultural groups and agents.
  - Co-design: hold a short meeting with them to define the activity.
  - Rapid prototype: run the activity in the library as a pilot.
  - Digital documentation: record or capture the experience to share online.
- **5. Expected impact:**
  - Broaden the perception of the library as a space for creativity and encounter.
  - Generate new narratives beyond “book, silence, study.
  - ”Strengthen ties with the university and the wider community.
  - Build a repository of experiences that can be replicated in other libraries.

# Prototype : “Digital Cultural Platform” (Vector TEC)

- **Challenge**: The library is still perceived as an analog space.
- **Idea**: Build a digital platform that amplifies the library’s cultural life.
- **Actions**:
  - Record podcasts with local stories and citizen debates.
  - Offer online workshops on writing, future design, or digital activism.
  - Create a multimedia repository (videos, comics, fanzines, podcasts).
- **Expected Impact**: The library evolves into a digital cultural portal, accessible from anywhere, connecting the physical with the virtual.

# Prototype : “Citizen Lab” (Vector PROTO)

- **Challenge**: The library is still associated only with passive study.
- **Idea**: Transform the library into a space for citizen experimentation.
- **Actions**:
  - Organize cultural hackathons or creative marathons.
  - Prototype solutions to local challenges (e.g., fake news, sustainability, inclusion).
  - Document projects and share them in an open repository.
- **Expected Impact**: The library becomes a living laboratory, where the community creates, tests, and learns collectively

# Prototype : “Library Without Walls” (Vector OPEN)

- **Challenge**: The library is perceived as a closed, elitist space.
- **Idea**: Take the library outdoors: set up small reading points and cultural activities in plazas, markets, and parks.
- **Actions**:
  - Create “mini mobile libraries” with books and tablets.
  - Organize public readings and workshops in open spaces. Reading parties
  - Use multilingual and accessible signage.
- **Expected Impact**:
  - Break physical and mental barriers, attract new audiences, and show the library as an open, inclusive space.

# Ideas for **Cultural and Educational Activities**

- **Themed reading clubs** (feminist literature, science fiction, local history).
- **Creative writing or storytelling workshops.**
- **Talks with local authors** and book presentations.
- **Film forums** with movies related to social or cultural topics.
- **Reimagining the Future**
- **Recovering Local Memory** (Hackathon)

# Social Innovation and Community

- **Seed library:** exchange of local varieties and urban gardening workshops.
- **Local memory hackathon:** collect stories, photos, and testimonies from neighbors to create a digital archive.
- **Citizen labs:** spaces to experiment with social innovation projects.
- **Human library:** people share their experiences as “living books.”

# Creativity and Art

- **Community art workshops:** murals, graffiti, collective collages.
- **Exhibitions of local artists** inside the library.
- **Community music or theater clubs** with open rehearsals.
- **Maker space:** area for crafts, 3D printing, or DIY projects.

# Inclusion and Participation

- **Open days** to showcase services and attract new audiences.
- **Intergenerational activities:** young people teach technology to seniors, while seniors share traditional knowledge.
- **Volunteer programs:** neighbors support cultural or tech activities.
- **Citizen debate spaces:** meetings on sustainability, equality, or social innovation.

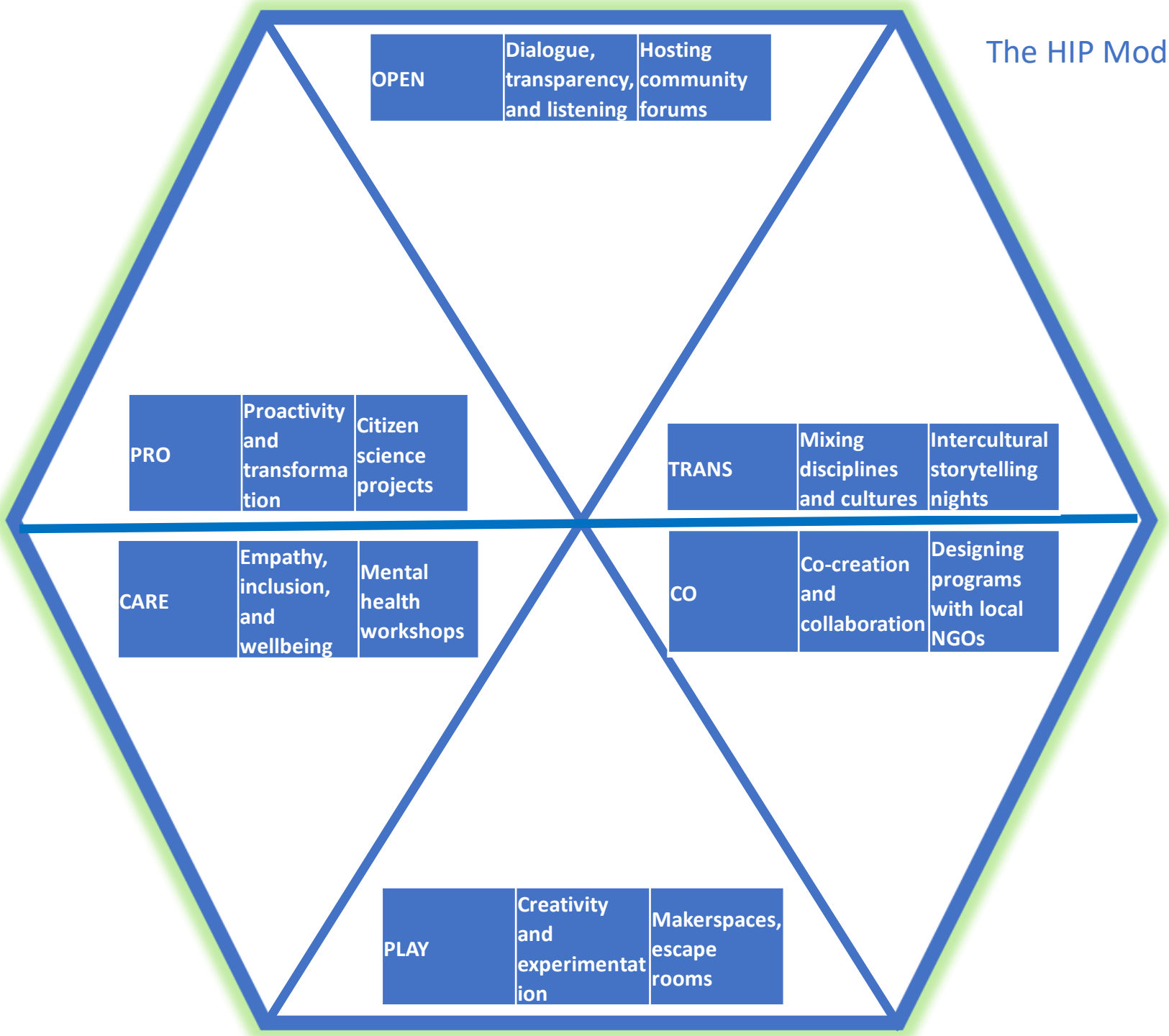
# Digital Dimension

- **Community podcast:** record neighborhood stories or interviews with locals.
- **Digital literacy workshops:** teach how to use the internet, social media, or collaborative tools.
- **Digital cultural platform:** share content created in the library (fanzines, videos, comics).

# Expected Impact

- **Strengthen social ties** and combat isolation.
- **Revalue local memory** and cultural heritage.
- **Transform the library into a living lab** of innovation and creativity.
- **Attract new audiences** and reposition the library as an open, inclusive, and dynamic space.

# The HIP Model and Hexagonal Libraries



**Each team fills in**:

**Name of Initiative:**

**Which vectors are involved? (circle):**
**OPEN/TRANS/CO/PLAY/CARE/PRO**

**Who is the community, and what it need?** Improve digital skills, reduce isolation, foster cultural exchange, civic dialogue, etc. Examples: co-design sessions, pop-up libraries, repair cafés, intergenerational games

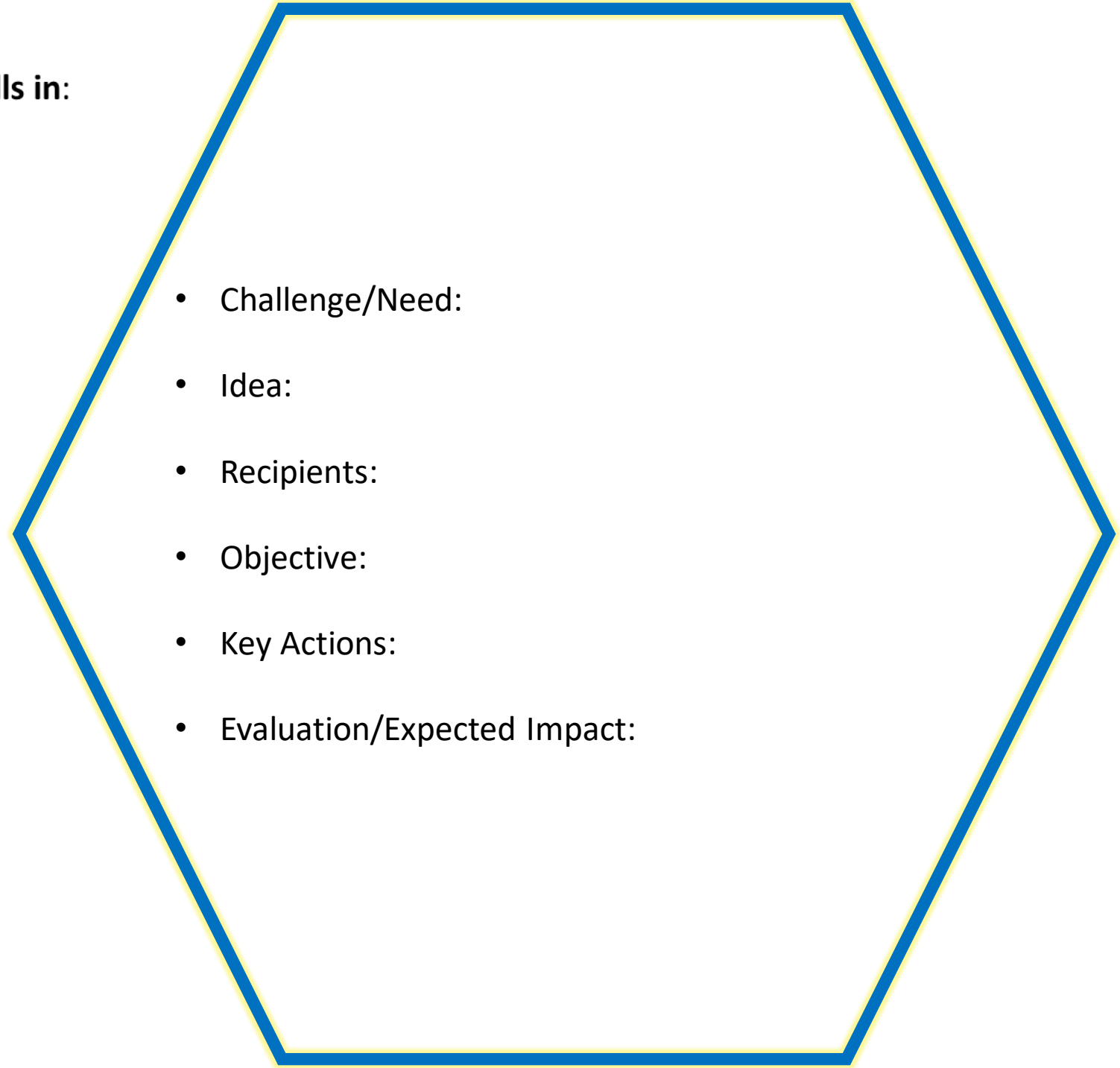
**Who will participate?** (community map = recipients: Children, seniors, migrants, artists, unemployed, remote workers)

**Activities**: storytelling, local history, climate action, crafts, tech labs, job-seeking help, etc

**What resources are needed?** (time, space, competences, budget, proffesionals…)

**How will success be measured?**

**Each team fills in:**



- Challenge/Need:
- Idea:
- Recipients:
- Objective:
- Key Actions:
- Evaluation/Expected Impact:


LET'S GO!

# Final open question

- Share one useful idea you’re taking with you from this session…


THANK YOU