

About this document.

A group of twenty specialists have generously provided input to serve a collaborative process for the World Bank's MENA Region to become an enabler of youth capacity. This report acknowledges cross DGs participants' efforts and aims to be a shared resource which can be built upon in the near future.

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Participants areas of expertise: global management, governance, public-private partnerships, policy expertise, open data, transport and ICT, knowledge management, community engagement, communication strategy, journalism media, financial inclusion, multi-donor trust fund assistance, social urban and rural resilience. Many participants stated a strong interest in novel methodological approaches which can be learned and adopted in one's professional activities in different sectors.

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Image Credits (in order of the slides): Mohammed Abed, Caroline Paulick-Thiel, Irina Breniuc, Christiaan Triebert, Antoniu Pop, Edgeryders. Graphic credits: Caroline Paulick-Thiel

“There are times in history that have been called great awakenings: short periods of collective consciousness with a lot of experimentation, discourse, art, writing, new ideas, new norms, where deep relationships can form among people who are part of movements. The real communities are not a marketing term, not a distributed or crowd-sourced customer service desk, but real bonding even when a great deal of the communicating is not face to face. Hand in hand with user-centered design is user-centered social behavior and a focus on interaction norms. From John we learned that the platform where a community meets should sustain the relationships, and not the other way around: Once the habits and mores of the community are set - they’re almost impossible to change”

*-The collective brain: growing a healthy community
(John Coate)*

“Edgeryders is an online community that lives on it’s own open source platform. We’re hackers, lawyers, engineers, doctors, policy makers, scientists, artists. Some people are high school dropouts. Others are professors at leading universities. What we have in common is that we are all experimenting with creative responses to systemic crises. Social, ecological, economic or political. On the platform members share their first-hand experiences from trying to do things: from mapping transportation in megacities like Cairo, to bidding collectively for a 100 million dollar fund to solve systemic health and social care. These movements are characterized by emergence in a world dominated by crises, distrust and alienation.

We nurture deep collaboration by making use of social networks and self-selection on the Internet, and a solid social contract that respects every individual engaging with the platform, online and offline, and setting healthy examples through our own actions.”

*- The Edgeryders methodology: collective intelligence as a tool to tackle societal problems
(Nadia El-Imam)*

“Edgeryders encourages truth-seeking, result-oriented conversation as a knowledge engine. Nobody is smarter than everybody, and the smarts is in the interaction – the conversation. But this raises a problem: conversations don’t scale well. A hundred people cannot have a conversation, in the sense that they all keep a reasonably similar outlook on what is being discussed and what conclusions are being reached. They have to splinter into smaller groups. A great community convener can get a great many interesting people involved in discussing a problem. A lot of insights are generated and validated; but they are validated locally. How to generalise? How can we tell which insights are solid, and which are the product of a branch of the conversation that simply misfired?

At Edgeryders, we do it in three moves: (a) online ethnography, (b) social network analysis, © semantic analysis. These methods offer several advantages: they allow us to contextualize individual experiences in the interaction realm, identify community subgroups, or hidden experts in the conversation.”

*-Conversations as data: harvesting collective intelligence
(Alberto Cottica)*

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Done right, sustained online dialogue with the networked youth has far-reaching (and not always obvious) consequences on internal processes, power dynamics, management of the funding cycle and other deep features of the development sector's landscape. The MENA regional youth platform will not exist in a vacuum, nor will it be drawn on a blank slate. It will be a small piece of a large ecosystem with the World Bank at its centre. The cultural differences between the culture of any large organization and the networked youth makes it inevitable to navigate tradeoffs, reach compromises, and incorporate constraints.

If such a platform is to succeed it is important to understand that real communities are not a marketing term, not a distributed or crowd-sourced customer service desk, but real bonding. Even when a great deal of the communicating is not face to face. Hand in hand with user-centered design is user-centered social behavior and a focus on interaction norms. We have had the privilege to learn from John Coate, who's experiences of building and managing online platforms predates the internet.

The purpose of this Edgeryders workshop format is to help participants reach a shared understanding of these in the case at hand, so that the new initiative can be radical and innovative, while not clashing with its parent organization.

This report acknowledges DGs participants' efforts and aims to co-create a shared resource which can be built upon in the near future.

PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP

- Requirements gathering - Defining a shared vision of the objective, priorities and key challenges that the new platform should meet.
- Defining operational constraints - Collecting input from WB staff and from across GPs with relevant experiences..
- Co-Creating value added propositions - Leveraging the experience of participants in identifying what value the WB could offer youth in the MENA region in the new platform.
- Mapping processes for successful execution - Crafting pragmatic, actionable,

plans for navigating priorities/concerns of all stakeholders

“A platform for, by and with youth” in the MENA region

Requirements - The shared vision of the objective, priorities and key challenges that the new platform should meet.

In the opening sections we heard from Olivier Lavinal that youth radicalization and youth unemployment are the WB's priorities in the region, and how now is the time to innovate and that building a platform is not the same as building roads, and engaging youth, who tend to be skeptical of donor initiatives, is not straightforward. The thinking process behind building a new regional platform requires time to listen and adjust. “In order to scale, we need the online. In order to be close to youth, we need the offline”. In the World Bank thinking and tradition, a successful platform is self-sufficient and independent, it has its own sources of funding; is one where youth have voice and agency. Showcasing positive and outstanding projects from the region can provide peer recognition, which is more powerful than any recognition we (WB) could give ourselves.

Problem mapping

Youth are **radicalising**, 95% of Daesh recruits are between 15 and 25. More educated people are more likely to be recruits; **unemployed** people are also more likely to be recruits. In Tunisia for example, as it transitions to democracy, we have 31% unemployment of university educated youth. The highest rate of youth join radical groups in the region, or become illegal immigrants in the region.

Can we quantify failures vs successes?

“We have an existing framework, and trying to understand relationally success and failure rates is a way of trying to understand risk” (Fawah). Edgeryders team has challenged participants to think in **evolutionary terms**: failure is normal and species stand to learn from such cases. Also, openness and transparency help build clean track records which help monitoring failures in healthy ways.

Are we prepared to receive criticism?

Building an online platform is frowned upon by colleagues (Ashaf). In order to make a strong argument we need such platform to support and **reflect the offline trust building** activities. “Are we empowering youth to also be able to criticise the World Bank at some point if we let them do and use the platform as they want?” (Omezzine).

Can we build consistent engagement?

Ayat Suleiman underlined that every GP has an engagement strategy, but there is no regional common strategy. In addition to this, the inflexible project cycle makes it difficult to design for the long haul.

The questions from participants allowed for cross-cultural check ups and made it even clearer that the differences between the culture of any large organization and the networked youth need us to learn to **navigate tradeoffs, reach compromises, and incorporate constraints**.

In conclusion: we need to make sure this platform (a) is owned by the youth it is intended to serve and (b) is sustainable. It won't be sustainable if it isn't useful to its protagonists.

Design Parameters

Defining operational constraints - Input from WB staff and from across GPs with relevant experiences

KEY INSIGHTS

LOOK TO THE MARGINS FOR SOLUTIONS

- **Traditional consultation exercises and platforms are failing to provide solutions for youth.** There was agreement in the room that new platforms risk being frowned upon unless they are demonstrably coupled with realities and activities on the ground.
- **Empowering alternatives can come from social innovation at the margins.** DIY tactics, cheap technologies, ability to organise informally, resource and data sharing are typical of this generation and can become social and economic enablers.

COMMUNITY NEEDS CONSISTENCY

- **An online platform is not a technological artifact, but a community with values and rules of interaction.** Each participant is invited to contribute towards knowledge sharing, innovation and peer support, and is part of a living organism.
- **Effective youth engagement requires that all offline activities reflect the culture and values fostered in the online environment.** While online interactions are managed into real relationships, real life events can accelerate collective learning and reinforce the community spirit.
- **Consistency is needed in order to rebuild trust between youth and established organisations.** One of the key challenges which participants

reflected on is breaking out of the funding cycle (limited) mode.

During the workshop we came to understand that a key factor for designing a successful platform is to understand what it is. Not technology. Not Design. Not utility. It is more than the sum of those parts. A thriving, generative platform is a place where a community meets and sustains the relationships of which it is composed. And where participants are enabled and supported to contribute towards tackling the issues that they care about, how and when they choose to do so.

The Edgeryders methodology is effective at surfacing and supporting bottom up, novel solutions to entrenched problems. In the workshop we presented four examples of what young people, participating in platforms built (and are currently maintained) by Edgeryders, are doing to solve problems in their communities.

We chose these examples in particular because they show the broad spectrum of what bottom up, youth initiated solutions can look like. And therefore serve as good case studies for discussing what the new platform could offer participants, which internal and external challenges would have to be tackled, as well as proposals for how to realise these objectives.

SPOTLIGHT STORIES FROM EDGERYDERS - BUILT PLATFORMS

Taking into account the problem space mapping in the previous sessions, we relied on existing community stories from Edgeryders work in order to look in depth at how similarly diverse initiatives in the region could be supported by the new platform and the participating team(s) at the World Bank.

BOTTOM UP LARGE SCALE INTERVENTIONS IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

The citizens of Al-Mu'tamidya settlement built four ramps to access the ring road from their neighborhood. Formally illegal, they were built to government specifications at 25% of the usual costs. The post-revolution government, caught in the midst of Mubarak's ousting, accepted them as a citizen-funded improvement and built a police station nearby. Insight: **quality service provision can spring from bottom-up large scale urban interventions.**

Working on the case of citizens who tried to have their own access to a ring road in Egypt, the group provided a context for how to deal with external threats when trying to support citizen led innovation:

- Mapping the rise of initiatives both for WB and for citizens engaged in proposal
- We came up with idea for an incubator for people doing this kind of work
- A safe space where they can be absorbed by state but indirectly
- Doing horizontal integration between these different initiatives
- Bringing together local allies like reformer in local government, or architects who are invested in urban agendas

- mitigation tricks e.g. give them technical support to assess risk etc, make their projects more resilient/ credible/ less risky

MAPPING PATCHED SOLUTIONS INTO COHERENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

40% of Cairo's transportation is covered by informally organised mini-buses where no information exists at all. Hegazy and his team are collecting all available data and are mapping the informal routes, stops and schedules to increase anyone's ability to use public transportation. Insight: **Urban development aided by cheap technologies, networks and open data can be a new entrepreneurship ecosystem in the making.**

Drawing points from Transport for Cairo mapping project, another group has identified several inherent aspects of how youth programmes are funded and supported in the World Bank:

- Budget cycles end each July
- Any initiative or activity in the country most likely needs government clearance
- Very high transaction costs
- Sustainability is limited because of budget cycles and staff turnover; It's hard to promise people that they will be around for the next 5 years
- Mandate limitations: It's hard to promise people that we will be around for years to support them

OPEN SOURCE MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES

A group of over 200 people in France, Asia, Africa, and the Americas have developed a device prototype for ultrasound scanning that would cost 15 times less than similar devices. This enables faster diagnosis and can be used as a prevention tool for people needing emergency care. Insight: **What can we achieve if technologists, manufacturers and health regulators join humanitarians in less developed or rural areas?**

In the case of echOPEN, scaling is needed to increase access to it, visibility and demand, and reach rural areas:

- Success: that the platform is able to foster ideas and actions to make them happen
- Challenges: slow uptake
- Offline events to slowly build up the online platform
- Assigning roles based on attributes
- Keeping an eye to make sure that dominant groups don't skew the inclusiveness of the platform
- Milestones: how many projects would have leveled up at a point in time
- Mission check-ins from time to time because of emerging feedback - whatever was defined as success shows up at the end of the journey

BOTTOM UP DISASTER RESPONSE AND RELIEF

Internet groups led by experienced community leaders started to coordinate disaster response before local authorities could organise. They reached 20000 volunteer members in only a few days, helped with cleanup and temporary housing for families. Insight: **disaster relief can be done more effectively by collective intelligent organising with no command structure**

How can the platform support a project like the cleanup led by Guerrilla Gardeners in Tbilisi? What we need to champion in order to build generative relationships both online and offline is, in participants' own words: an "environment to act", a space for "sharing personal stories", "ensure neutrality", celebrate diversity, and "humility as a basis of trust" and acknowledge mistakes in the open. Lastly, a nurturing space is able to "protect members".

"Interacting only with youth will not help: we need to bring in all the key stakeholders to be part of the process" (Silvia)

Conclusions:

- build a foundation of the human interactions
- create ownership and setting good grounds for sustainability
- build meaningful engagement
- mobilise resources
- take risks

KEY CHALLENGES THAT A NEW PLATFORM COULD HELP ADDRESS

- **How to offer relevant, diversified, support for promising initiatives?**
- **How to overcome internal constraints?**
- **How to deal with external threats?**
- **How to build trust?**

FOUR CONCEPTS, FOUR POSSIBLE USPS FOR THE PLATFORM

Co-creating value added propositions - Leveraging the experience of participants in identifying what value the WB could offer youth in the MENA region in the new platform.

1. "An online incubator that would empower youth and give them hope that the issue they care about can be solved"

What could the new platform offer?

- Ensure neutrality and protect people
- Positive reinforcement of action
- Celebrate Diversity
- Listen to others

- Making sure there is humility
- Owning up to any mistakes, openness

Who would we need to involve?

- Private sector representatives
- Community leaders and diverse groups
- Decision makers, high level gov't

2. “ An online space where services and and tools built by communities are intensively marketed to increase awareness and demand for them”

What could the new platform offer?

- Increase access to affordable alternatives
- Market it virally to increase awareness and demand for services and tools built by communities

Who would we need to involve?

- Health practitioners, barefoot doctors
- Expectant families
- Regulators, Policymakers
- Development practitioners
- Underfunded rural clinics

3. “ A platform where actions are discovered, acknowledged and positively reinforced- a space where diversity is celebrated”

What could the new platform offer?

- Ensure neutrality and protect people
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4. “A safe space for vertical and horizontal integration of citizen-led

initiatives, giving them technical support to make them more credible and resilient”

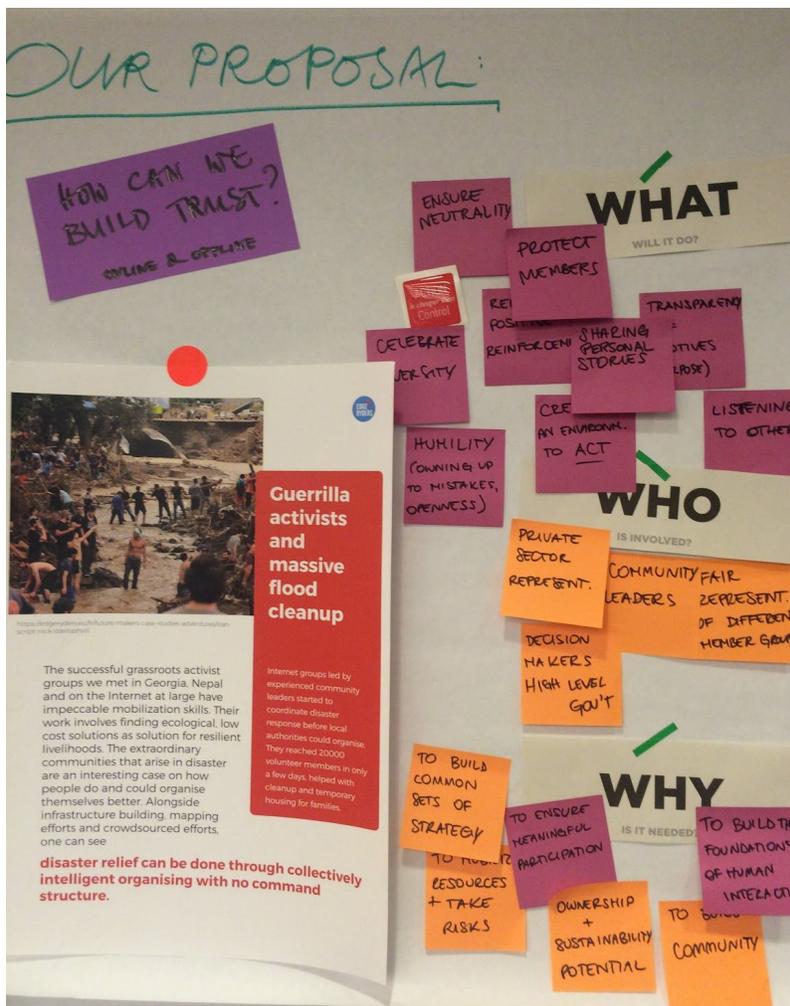
What could the new platform offer?

- it's an incubator for groups doing similar work
- it's safe space that is compatible with requirements
- it provides horizontal and vertical integration
- gives technical support to citizen-led initiatives and make them more credible, resilient

Who would we need to involve?

- CMUs, Country officers WBG
- Local officers and reformers (early phase)

ADDED VALUE FOR WORLD BANK



Breaking the cycle of doing business as usual and regaining trust on the ground

Creating a positive impact that can remind the institution of the good it can do

Reinvent its perception among youth who are the future

Deepen and strengthen engagement

More understanding of the challenges ahead to better serve all stakeholders

Creating an opportunity to feel connected and part of a community and solve real challenges

Getting to work together



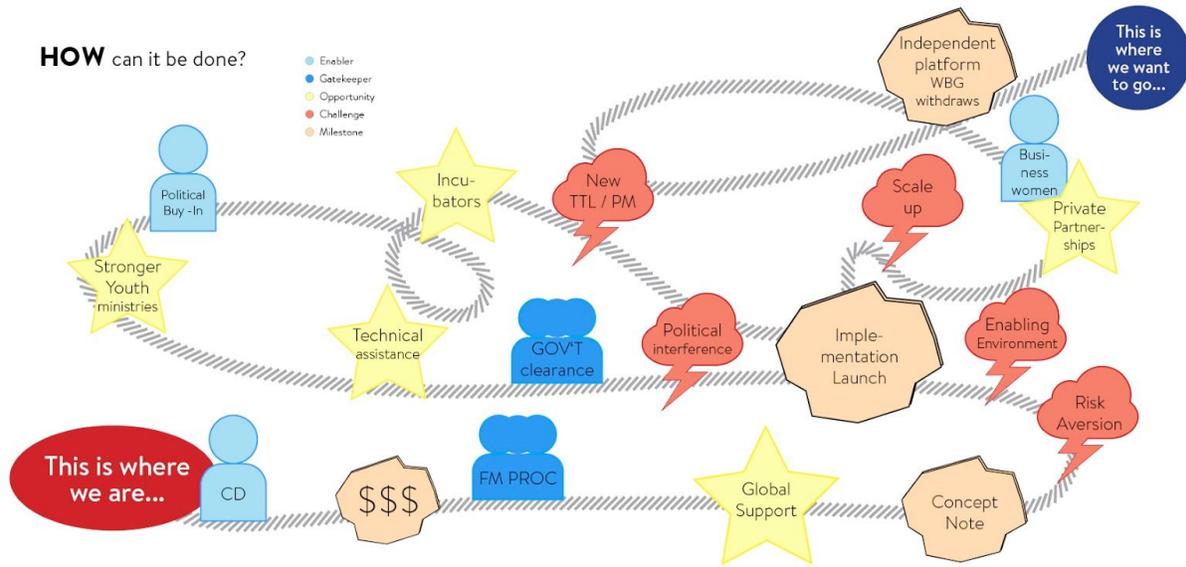
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An example of high level platform design with focus on value add

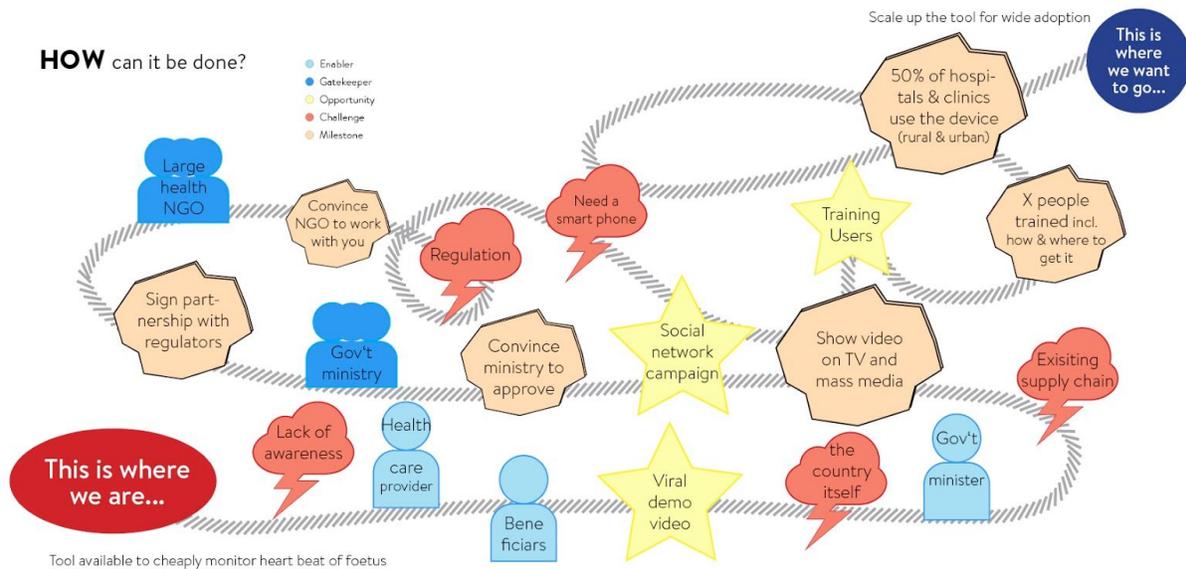
HOW TO MAKE IT EACH POTENTIAL USP HAPPEN

Mapping processes for successful execution - Crafting pragmatic, actionable, plans for navigating priorities/concerns of all stakeholders

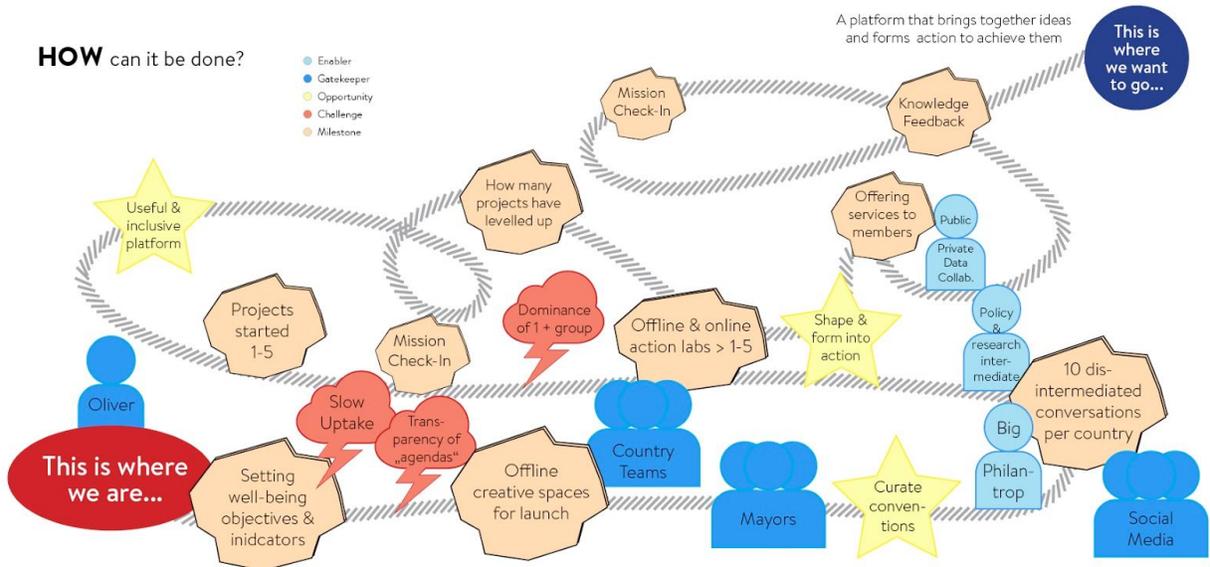
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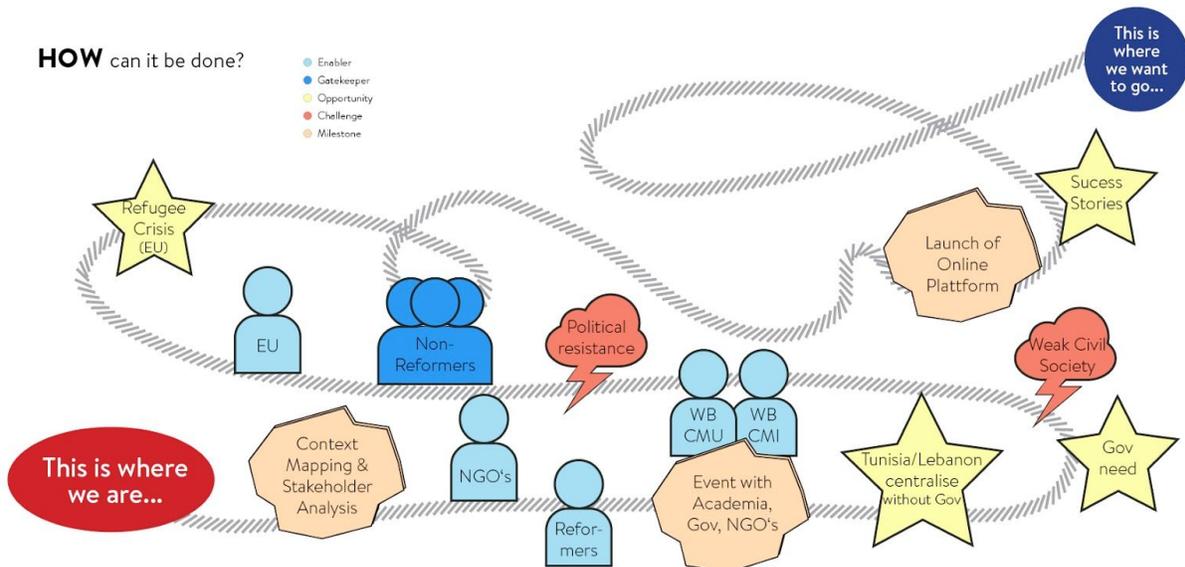
2. "An online space where services and tools built by communities are intensively marketed to increase awareness and demand for them"



3. “ A platform where actions are discovered, acknowledged and positively reinforced- a space where diversity is celebrated”



4. “A safe space for vertical and horizontal integration of citizen-led initiatives, giving them technical support to make them more credible and resilient”



RECOMMENDATIONS

DESIGN FOR COMMUNITY

- **The platform should support the relationships, not the other way around:** Focus on creativity, peer to peer learning, acknowledgement of efforts.
- **Inclusivity is rendered by self-selection.** Don't chase users, you can't reach everyone anyway. Maintaining a fair degree of openness and consistent communication practices coupled with **offline events** will help ever new groups to join.
- **Expert community management and a fair, credible, explicit social contract** are key to establishing healthy engagement. They also protect vulnerable groups from attacks.

SCALE FOR SIGNIFICANCE

- Nobody is smarter than everybody, and the smarts is in the interaction.
- **Platform monitoring through collective intelligence** methodologies and tools aid generalizations, allow to contextualize experiences, or identify hidden experts in the conversation.
- Outcomes? Solid arguments for interfacing with regional stakeholders, building new policy, advocating for support, assist fundraising etc.

MANAGE RISKS

- **Run cross-cultural check ups:** "We need to incorporate feedback from youth" (Olivier). In addition, consistently re-assess what constitutes failure and success.
- **Keep it fairly open.** "Once the challenges and mores of the community are set - they're almost impossible to change" (John). Incremental strategies to go from closed to open are an option, but need careful planning.
- **Honesty meets honesty:** "Are we prepared to face criticism?" (Omezzine). Legitimacy of the existing structures might be challenged, but can be neutralized by praising constructive action instead



ABOUT EDGERYDERS

“People are attracted to people, not websites”

Edgeryders is a global community where members are experimenting with creative responses to systemic crises. Edgeryders is also a company with a mission to support and grow self-sustaining projects that contribute to the common good. We use collective intelligence methodologies and software to support better decision making about allocation of resources in service of achieving social impact.

The Edgeryders vision is a world in which every human can live up to her potential as a creative, responsible being. We believe in full participation by everyone in the life of her community and that of the planet.

Our mission is creating self-sustaining projects for people to contribute to the common good. A self-sustaining project stands on a fair social contract. It creates enough value, financial and non-financial, to compensate people contributing to it.

To achieve our mission, we:

- **Foster maximal diversity to attack systemic problems.** We now know [diversity trumps ability](#).
- **Improve ability to analyse and interpret information.** Produce and use data. Have a [data strategy](#).
- **Increase knowledge about existing initiatives, organisations, people, places and networks.** Acknowledge their good work and build on it. Do not duplicate them or compete with them

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