The FUTURE TOGETHER Project promotes citizen and community participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives, and in doing so, helps to create the conditions for a more inclusive reconciliation process. The initiative was inspired by the success of a bi-communal restoration project in the village of Kontea/Türkmenköy, where a grassroots movement of current and former residents became “keepers of each other’s heritage” through a participatory and consultative process. In a first stage, Future Together extracted lessons from already established participatory development models, such as the Kontea project, followed by a dialogue on similar models inside and outside of Cyprus, leading to the development and delivery of a Best Practices Guide and Training Manual for practitioners on the island and in the region.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

• Phase I (2010-2011): Mapping of current participatory development efforts and gap analysis
• Phase II (2011-2012): Capacity-building of local stakeholders to integrate participatory principles into their work and share their knowledge with others
• Phase III (2012-2013): Participatory Development best practices demonstrated in the context of a real development project, namely the Library/Museum in the mixed village of Potamia

It was found that local communities’ support for various strategies, plans or projects very much depends on their sense of ownership, which in turn is built through a more inclusive, participatory approach. Participatory approaches have become the norm in the EU and in many other countries. In Cyprus, such approaches have been attempted to varying degrees of success. However, these efforts have often remained ad hoc and isolated, and there is a need to share the lessons learned from such projects more widely. Future Together did so by organizing training for practitioners, but it was also felt that it is important to demonstrate these practices on the ground. This is being undertaken in Potamia, one of the last mixed villages on the island, where Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot residents, as well as former residents, are being engaged through community consultations to manage a common project: the creation of a Library/Museum which will capture the rich traditions and history of its inhabitants.

The inspiration: Kontea/Türkmenkoy Peace Park

It is hoped these efforts will serve as a model for communities all over the island and beyond.

Partners: Current and Former residents of Potamia, Potamia community council
Budget: €688,490