

*An opportunity to explore, discover and start practising  
new ways of participation & collective action*



**RHODES, GREECE 9-18 OCTOBER 2005**

## INVITATION

*“In its essence, deep democracy is the inner experience of interconnectedness”  
Patricia A. Wilson, Deep Democracy*

### *The purpose...*

The Association for Community Colleges and its Hellenic Committee invite you to take part in the Demos Community College, a learning community around the concepts of civic engagement and participation, active citizenship and democracy. The Community College will take place on the shores of the Greek island of Rhodes between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2005.

Our core-calling questions are:

- What could European Democracy also be?
- What is real democracy and how can it be practiced in my community locally, in Europe and globally?

We aim at creating a vibrant learning community, which will live and learn together within the principles of the European Community Colleges non-formal educational format combined by highly participatory group process such as Open Space Technology, Appreciative Inquiry and the World café. Joining forces with our friends and colleagues Hara from the U.K., Facile & Interchange from Denmark, we will co-create a learning space for the Art of Hosting meaningful conversations that enhance involvement, responsibility and authentic leadership and foster personal and collective change. We feel that this 10-day European Community College will be a contribution to the development of a European public sphere, by offering a highly participatory

opportunity for younger and older European citizens to meet each other and engage in conversations of common interest.

Some of the key-objectives of this gathering are:

- Offer the opportunity to young people to share visions, strengths and talents in relation to active citizenship, participation and democracy through their own spheres of influence, projects, involvement, interests, passions etc.
- Familiarise young Europeans with hosting meaningful conversations and co-creating learning spaces
- Empower (personal and shared) leadership and participation skills
- Enable young Europeans to focus on issues of crucial importance in a context of common European life
- Foster optimism and appreciative inquiry practices in youth work
- Raise awareness and underline the importance of awareness and participation
- Offer space for European citizens to meet each other, identify their local and broader needs for shifting from apathy and promoting action, connect and network for the common good
- Offer insights and knowledge and foster learning on key areas of European institutional life and development
- Explore alternative, innovative ways of working together
- Create a networked learning community which will disseminate, sustain and strengthen learning beyond the gathering.

### *The concept & place...*

*«Δῆμος»/“Demos” is defined as a group of people gathered around a purpose; conscious, active citizens, members of the city, “politeia” in ancient Greece. Therefore the prospective of a European Community College exploring and offering a forum, a learning space to explore, practice and move forward this very notion of “Demos”, being hosted within the geographical area in which it was born is an exciting one. In that sense the local environment is utilised as a source of historical value, inspiration and a tool of significant reference both to the history of Demo-cracy and its future.*

*“...We should keep in mind that the dialogue is not only directed at solving the ills of society, although we do have to solve those ills. But that’s only the beginning. When we have a very high energy of coherence, we might get beyond just being a group that could solve social problems. ...The Christians had a Greek word “koinonia”, the root of which means “to participate” -the idea of taking part in it; not merely the whole group, but the whole. This is what I mean by “dialogue”. I suggest that through dialogue there is the possibility for a transformation of the nature of consciousness, both individually and collectively.”  
David Bohm, For Truth Try Dialogue*

### *Underlying philosophy and methodologies... YOUR role...*

Demos Community College will draw on everyone’s contribution, experience, insights, strategies, hopes and willingness in order to come into reality.

This event will be a fully co-creative learning platform for action and reflection both on personal and collective level. In such a context each one of us can be both a teacher and a learner. The processes we will use help create time and space for people to engage deeply and creatively around issues that matter to them. The questions we will explore and deal with are around active local and European citizenship, shaping democracy now and tomorrow, connecting practices on re-energising participation and taking responsibility.

All of us will be the protagonists, employing our skills, talents and needs for growth into the purpose of

this learning community. Genuine interest, care, willingness to share and openness are very important for the community to thrive. In a self-organising mode and through processes that enable real dialogue and authentic involvement each one will learn with each other and from each other in a variety of ways, though artful creation, in nature...embracing everyone's contribution and gifts. So bring along your whole selves, your passion and responsibility, your tools of work, projects, questions, images for the future and foremost your desire to share and learn... A personal journal will be used for the recording and reflections on your personal learnings everyday within the community.

*“Renewing democracy through public participation increases our collective capacity to tackle major problems facing society such as pensions shortfall and climate change. Many of these problems can be addressed only by changing the way we live our daily lives.” Tom Bentley, Demos Think Tank*

### The hosting team

The hosting team of the Demos Community College comprises of individuals and partnerships responsible for the organisational aspects of the Community College as well as the process design and leadership. Parts of the programme will also be carried through with the involvement of local groups and sponsors.

\*Association for Community Colleges - Hellenic Committee

\*Hara

\*Interchange

\*Facile

\*Municipality of Rhodes

### Participants

Participants of this Community College can be young Europeans who are between 18 and 30 years old. 30% of the total number can be individuals over the age of 30. The invitation however is also extended to adults that feel called to take part, have the desire to share wisdom and make a difference.

Selection will take into consideration gender, geographical, ethnic/linguistic background ensuring balance and diversity. It will also be based on a first come/first served in case number of candidate participants exceeds 50 (max. limit).

**Selection procedure:** Selected participants will be notified by the 31<sup>th</sup> of August 2005 and a pack with further details on Demos Community College will be sent by the 5<sup>th</sup> of September.

### Language

English will be the working language for this Community College and ability for good verbal and written communication is required.

### PRACTICALITIES

**Accommodation:** The Demos Community College will be hosted at the Sunbeach Resort Complex on the western coast of the island of Rhodes. The Community will share the indoors and outdoors spaces of a good part of the resort and will create a small learning village within the premises of the resort.

**Cost:** The participation fee for young people under the age of 30 is 150 Euros. Scholarships from organisations and companies where the learnings of this learning community will be transferred and disseminated are welcome and encouraged.

Accommodation is fully covered and travel expenses will be reimbursed up to 70%. Our approach to the whole economy of this learning community is to make every effort in order for all those who really want to come to be part of the European Community College. We practice the *principle* “*Contribute as much as you can and a little bit more*” so that those who can afford more can help those who can afford less. Please feel free to contact us to discuss.

....Come if:

- \*You feel inspired by the call for this European Community College
- \*You feel you want to be part of a collective inquiry of “what is democracy and how it can be practiced in your local community, Europe and globally”
- \*You want to discover new ways of authentic participation
- \*You feel you can contribute and benefit from a wealth of sharing practices, ideas and inspiration in highly participatory learning space

To take part in Demos Community College please fill in the following registration Form and return it by the **28<sup>th</sup> of August 2005.**

Or sign in on-line at <http://www.acc.eu.org/SEEEMS/2260.asp>

For any further information, please contact Maria Bakari at: [maria@acc.eu.org](mailto:maria@acc.eu.org),

tel.: +30 22410 31525/ +30 6937107 443(mobile) or visit our website:

<http://www.acc.eu.org/SEEEMS/2063.asp>.

## Registration for



9-18 October 2005, Rhodes, Greece

|  |   |
|--|---|
| First Name                                   |   |
| Surname                                      |   |
| Nationality                                  |   |
| Gender                                       | Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Date of Birth                                |   |
| Address                                      |   |
| Post code                                    |   |
| City   |   |
| State  |   |
| Phone numbers                                |   |
| Email address                                |   |
| Any dietary, mobility or other special needs |   |

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|--|--|
| <b>Do you need to apply for Visa?</b>  |  |
| <b>Member of ACC?</b>  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Are you a member of a Non Governmental or voluntary or any other organization (for or non-for-profit)? If yes, please briefly describe the mission and aims of your organization as well as your involvement/ role in it.</i> |  |
| <i>Write a short paragraph about yourself (refer to who you are, studies, work, travels, international seminars etc.). Also tell us 3 things you would like other participants to know about you.</i>                            |  |
| <i>Why do you choose to join the Demos Community College? -Please describe in details: What do you hope to learn and what do you hope you can offer to the programme?</i>  |  |
| <i>In which project/context will you use what you learn?</i>   |  |

Please return to [dcc@acc.eu.org](mailto:dcc@acc.eu.org) by Sunday 28th of August 2005.