

ICA-CCR Europe 2021 Conference (Paris; Online)

Workshop During Young Scholars' Day [July 7, 2021]

Consciousness-Based Systems Change: Theory U as a Method to Create Your Own Path

Goal: To introduce young cooperative scholars to the participatory, experiential approach of Theory U, its methods and tools.

Scope: Theory U is a conceptual framework based on a set of theories, methods, and tools, whose application enables individuals, organizations, or any other social system to achieve consciousness-based systems change. In simple words, Theory U helps people and their organizations move from what they do today to their desired, emerging future. Young scholars will learn the basics of how to design their research programs and set their research goals and priorities. The workshop uses experiential learning, with participants working in dyads, small groups or in the plenary session.

This introductory workshop will be organized online during the Young Scholars' Day of the ICA-CCR Europe 2021 Conference in the morning of July 7, 2021. Depending on the number of young scholars that will subscribe for the workshop, two options are available: 1) the workshop is repeated in the afternoon session of the Young Scholars' Day for scholars from countries with time zones that do not allow them to participate in the morning session (e.g., from Asia or Latin America), or 2) the workshop is addressed to the same group of young scholars, but it is extended in the afternoon session to include the facilitation of team work on practical applications of Theory U. The trainers are experienced and flexible enough to accommodate both options.

Duration: 2 hours in the morning of July 7 (10:00-12:00 French time preferably), followed by 2 hours in the afternoon of the same day. Schedule will be decided in accordance with young scholar location.

On Theory U: Theory U is implemented in five steps: **1. Co-initiating: Uncovering shared intention.** The purpose of this first step is to uncover the intention of an individual or the shared intention of a group of people. Methodological tools used during the co-initiating phase include deep listening and conversation practices, and peer coaching circles that help participants to generate new approaches for responding to a challenge by accessing the collective wisdom of a group of peers. **2. Co-sensing: Seeing reality from the edges of the system.** The essence of co-sensing is getting out of one's own bubble (virtual, institutional, and own affinity bubble). Various tools are used to help participants co-sense the collective consequences of their individual actions, including Social Presencing Theater, and Body Sculpture techniques. **3. Presencing: Connecting to the highest future potential.** "Presencing" is the blending of "sensing" and "presence". Story-telling, journaling and visualization techniques are used to help participants connect to their highest future potential and crystallise emerging insights. **4. Co-creating: Crystallizing and prototyping the new.** The aim of co-creating is to build prototypes that allow us to explore the future by doing. The prototypes evolve based on the feedback they generate. After "observing" that took place in the previous stages, now it is time to "iterate". The trainers, based on the characteristics of each different group of trainees and their experience, use several tools during this phase, including 3D mapping, benchmarking, best case presentations, serious games, etc.; all these are practices that help stakeholders select the prototypes and start materializing them. **5. Co-shaping: Scale up prototypes.** The outcomes of co-shaping include: (1) reviewing prototype initiatives, (2) sharing key learnings, (3) deciding which prototypes/ideas to advance to the pilot phase, (4) widening the focus from prototype to the larger system, (5) create infrastructures that allow a systems-wise perspective, (6) a set of bottlenecks that, if removed, allowed the new to go to scale, (7) newly formed generative partnerships and alliances for scaling the new, and (8) a new narrative that links the work that has been done so far with organizational and societal transformation and renewal.

Trainers:

Constantine (Costas) ILIOPOULOS, PhD



Constantine's mission is to co-create with people, cooperatives and communities, innovative, effective and sustainable solutions to pressing organizational challenges and social dilemmas through action research, writing, effective facilitation, experiential training, systems-wise team building, and team coaching/mentoring. He accomplishes this by combining his: 1) 25+ years of experience in leading and participating in top-quality research projects in numerous countries; 2) passion since childhood and deep knowledge of agricultural cooperatives and team dynamics that stems from his 25 years of collaboration with the Graduate Institute of Cooperative Leadership (GICL) of the University of Missouri, USA; and 3) training in systems thinking and system dynamics at AKMA, one of the most recognized systemic training and therapy centers in Europe. He holds a PhD from the University of Missouri, USA, and is widely published in international academic journals and books, while he is regularly invited as a speaker on cooperative governance and organization in numerous countries. Currently, he serves as director of the Agricultural Economics Research Institute (AGRERI), and professor, MBA in Agribusiness Program, Agricultural University of Athens, Greece. He is co-founder of the Co-opAbility Institute (www.coopability.org).

Irini Theodorakopoulou, PhD



Dr. Irini Theodorakopoulou is an expert on rural innovation management and supply chain economics and organization. She applies systems thinking methods and tools in groups, organizations and rural communities in order to co-create with them economically, socially, environmentally sustainable solutions to their problems, and help them identify a common vision and mission. Her research interests are directed towards bringing together core competencies of policy development, research, extension, strategic appraisal and business planning, socio-economic and environmental impact analysis to create an integrated framework that can be used by rural stakeholders. When working with groups she uses a rigorous set of experiential learning tools and exercises that help people make progress on stuck challenges by bridging differences and creating paths to systemic transformations. Social labs, platforms, dialogue and in-depth interviews, story-telling, solution focus workshops, to mention a few, are the methods used to bring together people from across a system and help them work on solutions to their problems. Dr Theodorakopoulou received her BA and MS in Agricultural Economics from the Agricultural University of Athens, Greece (1994), and her Ph.D. in Agribusiness Economics from the University of Missouri at Columbia, USA (1999). Since 2015 she has been training at the Athenian Institute of Anthropos on the principles and applications of the Systemic - Dialectic Epistemology. Her education comprises a series of experiential workshops that include stimulus presentations by the trainers on themes of: the human being as a biopsychosocial living system, individual behavior/symptoms as an outcome of interacting systems, dynamics of human relationships, relations in groups and broader systems, change in the social context and its impact on living systems.

Preliminary Schedule

- 1) Introduction (topic and get to know each other)
- 2) Experiential Exercise #1: Journaling
- 3) Experiential Exercise #2: Small group work
- 4) Some theory on Theory U
- 5) Experiential Exercise #3: Listening Task + Journaling
- 6) Debriefing for Exercise #3
- 7) Experiential Exercise #4: Social Presencing Theater: Stuck Exercise
- 8) Debriefing for Exercise #4
- 9) Examples/Cases of Transformation using Theory U (videos, etc.)
- 10) Closing the Workshop