

# **Participatory Development: Methods, Skills and Processes**

A design framed action research thesis

by

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## **Declaration**

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's rules, requirements, procedures and policy relating to my higher degree research award and to my thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University (as they may be from time to time).

Signed:

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## **ENDORSEMENT**

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## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Abstract**

The research question that forms the body of this thesis is: ‘What methods, skills and processes does the participatory development practitioner require for effective practice?’

The intention behind this research topic has been to identify how to create socially relevant spaces within today's contemporary conditions of society. This is a reflection of an understanding of myself as someone within the ‘idealist’ stream of endeavour as defined by Charles Jencks in ‘Modern Movements in Architecture.’

As I have a design background, I chose a design methodology to undertake the study. The methodology is documented by Donald Schön in the book ‘The Reflective Practitioner’ and is, in a general sense, also the methodology David Kolb documented in ‘Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development’. An element of this learning approach is for a designer to create a useful artefact that can be considered and evaluated, thus the thesis also comprises the DVD: ‘Outside the Gates, Development Processes for the Real World’.

In writing the thesis I became aware that this learning process has been, and still is, central to development itself within our culture of generative change. I first arrived at this intuitively while building the DVD, but it became more explicit during the DVD evaluation. The thesis thus commences with a description and rationale for the methodology.

After describing the methodology I devote three chapters to providing the background to both the form and content of the DVD. This draws almost exclusively from personal experience, though

with references to architectural history, theory and practice. This includes observations on the theme of technological development, generative change and one of the real needs for our physical and psychological well being - shelter. Thus the DVD sits at a mid point in the thesis. Following the creation of the DVD, I have in accordance with the methodology evaluated its content. To do this I used a literature review generally based on Grounded Theory practice. There are four sections in the DVD, with a chapter dedicated to each of these sections.

The thesis concludes with a chapter that fits in the final part of Kolb's learning cycle, abstract conceptualisation, that considers the meaning of the findings. Ultimately there is an epilogue that outlines the next 'concrete output', a recently completed project based on the learnings from the thesis. This is a community engagement training course for project managers.

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## **Introduction**

The beginning of this thesis can be traced back to six years practice as a government architect in the Ministry of Works, Swaziland. During that period, I had many conversations with a wide variety of professionals on the topic of development. The fundamental questions that arose in these conversations time and again were: “What is development? What is the relationship between development and governance? Does democracy mean good governance? How does alternative technology fit with economic development?” The immediate issues of under development, together with the obvious deficiencies in most development programs, ensured that these and similar questions were debated in many different situations.

My interest in the topic of participatory development stemmed from the completion of a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning while working in Swaziland. The Masters thesis examined the appropriate provision of police facilities in a World Bank-funded urban upgrading area. The work identified that stakeholders’ goals would be best achieved through having those stakeholders engaged in the decision-making process. The question that remained was “How to do it?”

I felt it necessary that a development professional should do more than just theorise about participation, but should be proficient in implementing appropriate processes. This pragmatic question was tackled after returning to Australia. The thesis focuses on the area of ‘participatory development’, and in particular, an identification and analysis of the methods, skills and processes required of a development practitioner wishing to operate in this emerging field.

As I wanted to be a practitioner, I decided to undertake any and every opportunity to get involved in participatory decision-making situations, especially those that concerned traditionally disempow-

ered members of the community. This occurred predominantly over the period between 1997 and 2003, and is ongoing. The context for these experiences included, though was not limited to (Appendix 2 and Chapter 3):

- Living on a property that required 42 households to collectively develop, manage and self-govern 13ha of common land.
- Working with public servants and residents of public housing estates in community-renewal projects. This was with the Department of Housing in Northern NSW.
- Developing a community planning approach to coordinate social, economic and environmental investment across 4 Shires in South West Queensland.

This practical experience continues with employment at the Department of Sustainability and Environment (Victoria) in the Community Engagement Project.

The second action was to create a product to express what I had learned from these experiences. Creating the DVD was a designer's methodology to clarify and give order to the experiences of this wide variety of events and experiential research. It provides a benchmark of personal understanding in the field. This product is an original piece of creative work expressed as the DVD - 'Outside the Gates: Development Processes for the Real World'. It was substantially created in 2004 (Attachment).

The third part was to carry out a literature based reflection on the DVD. The thesis itself comprises both the content and ideas expressed in the DVD and the literature based reflection. The reflection is a literature based 'conversation' with each segment of the DVD. By conversation, what is meant is that it explores similar themes to that expressed in the more visually based DVD, not necessarily literally, but with the intention of providing a triangulation of meaning between the two.



The thesis Chapters and their relationship to the DVD are as follows:

- Chapter 1: The research methodology.
- Chapter 2: A description of my personal philosophy and how I developed it.
- Chapter 3: A brief description of the learning process that generated the raw material for the content of the DVD.
- Chapter 4: A brief rationale for the form of the DVD, and the DVD itself.
- Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8: The literature derived reflection on the DVD. Each chapter relates to one of the four sections in the DVD.
- Chapter 9: Abstract conceptualisation. A consideration of the wider implications of the theory based on the knowledge gained.
- Chapter 10: Conclusions.
- Epilogue: A brief description of the next output, using the knowledge gained in the process of completing this thesis.

I start the thesis with a description of the methodology as the methodology itself is a central part of the thesis. It is both research method and topic.

The findings from this complete work are:

- It is the process of generative change in creating and evaluating tangible products and services that provides meaning for many.
- Participatory development provides a framework for others to communicate with each other to develop more effective products and programs.
- The practice of participatory development crosses over all development centred disciplines and has its own role and specific body of knowledge.
- The practice of a participatory development specialist is based on a tangible but evolving knowledge-rich practice, and the execution of that body of knowledge is dependent on the experience of the practitioner and context of the work required.

A minor, though significant, problem was finding an appropriate term to describe a participatory development practitioner, or specialist. Referring to a 'participatory development practitioner' throughout was tedious and if shortened to 'PDP' seemed too much like jargon. Completely different terms such as 'Community Planner', 'Participatory Developer', 'Participatory Designer' or even 'Design Facilitator' were considered. At the time of producing the DVD such a person was referred to as a 'Planning Facilitator'. Whilst both terms 'Planning' or 'Planner' and 'Facilitator' or 'Facilitation' are used extensively with a wide variety of interpretations, I thought the combination of the two provided a sufficiently descriptive term. Considering it combines the two primary disciplines that have emerged from this work, it seems appropriate. In the written document, the terms 'planning facilitator', 'participatory development specialist' and 'participatory development practitioner' are used and are interchangeable.

### The Thesis as an iterative product

As well as the DVD, the thesis itself was developed generatively with many iterations along the way. An iteration of note was between the first and second submission for examination. The examiners of the first submission provided valuable feedback and advice, to which I responded in a variety of ways. One of the examiners has requested that this document become part of the introduction, and I outline the principal concerns of each of the examiners, and detail how I have included their comments in this revised submission.

On reflecting on the examiners comments, I realised that I had omitted a major component of the work and that this omission had made assessment difficult for all the examiners. This omission was my underpinning values and philosophy that drove the design concept of the DVD, and ultimately the thesis itself. Without this element, I can see how the thesis in it's original form could be confusing, or simply not demonstrate sufficient understanding and complexity for it's purpose. In this re-

vised submission I include additional chapters that draw on my architectural background to provide further insight to the various different streams or traditions of expression, and how my approach to the thesis derives from one particular stream of creative approach. This then provides the background and context for creating the DVD as well as the thesis as a whole.

As a strong action learner, and also because of the content of the work itself, I wanted the thesis to 'walk the talk'. That is, I wanted it to embody the 'design framed' action learning process. Donald Schön (1995) identified that designers use both formal and informally acquired research or knowledge to create products, but that through reflection they also learn from the process. I wanted to remain centered and focussed on being true to myself as an action learner in creating this piece of work.

All the examiners acknowledged the appropriateness of action learning as a methodology for this topic. Retaining this methodology not only made sense at a personal level, but also because the thesis itself is concerned with how action learning, or learning from experience, is central within the context of contemporary development and our culture of generative change. The thesis is that the emerging development paradigm of today is one that acknowledges that an individual's (or group's) own story is valid for them, and that the role of today's development professional is to enable the process of learning from experience. This process of generative change is dependent on both expressing personal values, and evidence based practice. In other words, the role of a contemporary development professional is to promote evidence based practice, but accept or acknowledge the legitimacy of other people's own evidence and informally acquired knowledge that will, for them, form the basis for decisions and action. My own knowledge has been acquired through a wide variety of media, both formally and informally, as well as through experience. In this revised submis-

sion I more clearly articulate my own ‘story’ and values that formed the DVD about participatory development and the thesis itself.

I am aware that not only am I an action learner, but that I also operate within the Idealist/Intuitive streams as described by the architectural critic, Charles Jencks (1973). Because I approached this thesis within the frame of this design stream, the methodology is not one of the more commonly used for an Action Research or Action Learning thesis. I am aware from experiences in my architectural training that it is sometimes difficult for others to accept a proposal that does not clearly conform with customary thought. However the intention with this iteration of the thesis is to address the examiners concerns about my capacity to conduct independent research and learn accordingly, even though expressed in an unorthodox manner.

Table A illustrates the major revisions undertaken between the original submission and this submission.

Original submission				Context to the 3 sections	Methodology	1	2	3		Conclusion	
This submission	Methodology	Context to the DVD	Research process	Rationale of DVD media	Context to the 3 sections	1	2	3	Abstract conceptualisation	Conclusion	Epilogue

**Table A Chapter layouts of initial and subsequent submission**

A number of the examiner’s comments have been addressed by this additional work rather than as a specific response to a comment or request. The three examiners were Alan Davies, Mark Williams and Gerry Roberts and I address their concerns in this order.

## Alan Davies

Alan provided feedback on each of the assessment criteria. The first was around the literature review; how this was carried out and what it was used for. Alan's concerns included that I did not "explicitly review the literature in the form of a chapter dedicated to the purpose" and that it "... is not used to seek 'disconfirming evidence'."

My response has two threads. The first is that the nature of the thesis is that it is a 'data driven' thesis not a 'theory based' thesis as described by Bob Dick (2002) in his article 'Postgraduate programs using action research'. Accessing the literature when it is relevant is an accepted part of action research methodology. The second is that the literature identified is itself used as a 'disconfirming' process. The DVD is a synthesis and expression of formal and informally gained knowledge. In this process, the literature review identified a number of areas where I had 'got it wrong' or had not understood a concept as deeply as deserved. These items are documented throughout the work, though principally in paragraphs at the end of each of Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8. In this thesis a number of the books and articles were identified during the process of working with groups in workshop situations. It was after creating the DVD that additional literature was purposefully sought as an evaluation process.

Alan makes a point that a simple Google search of 'Participative Design' renders many avenues and lines of thought. Whilst the title is 'Participatory Development', the thesis did not set out to be specifically and exclusively an analysis and reflection on participatory development. The focus was always to identify what might be an appropriate approach for a development professional to take in contemporary society. Mastery of the skills and processes to enable groups to interact and work together in developing programs and projects is the emergent understanding. It might have been something completely different. It has been in the past, and probably will be in the future. It is in-

tended that the additional early chapters outlining the context of the study now more fully demonstrate this aspect of the thesis.

Concerning the use and justification of appropriate methodologies, techniques and processes, Alan seeks to know if I triangulated through convergent interviewing the events studied. In this thesis, the workshops referred to were not so much 'studied', as used as personal learning experiences that was later synthesised, as a design exercise, into the DVD. This process is explained in the new early chapters to more clearly demonstrate the role of the workshops in the development of the thesis.

Alan felt that the work is not particularly original. Again, I believe that I should have been clearer about the context of the DVD, and it's role in the learning process. That the DVD is not controversial is actually relevant to the thesis.

With regard to demonstrating a capacity for independent research/scholarship, Alan believes that I had demonstrated this though he would have liked greater triangulation of the outcomes. It is the intention of the new chapters, and especially the conclusion (Chapter 10) to address this concern.

Other comments made by Alan include:

- None of the examiners were listed in the bibliography. The premise of this concern was that either the University had not understood the thesis, or my literature review was sub-standard. However Bob Dick outlines in his paper that whilst Action Research has generated it's own set of 'canons', it can be a valid piece of work without an extensive or precursory Literature Review. He states: "Each of the (Action Research) methodologies ...offers its own flavour and style for conducting research. As mentioned earlier, there are valid reasons to avoid the literature related to your research theme if your approach is data driven."

- The comments around the sequence of the chapters was especially useful, and in response I have moved what was Chapter Two to be Chapter One. This was a useful suggestion, and provided the impetus for what I believe has now become a far better document.
- Alan suggested a name change, perhaps involving the word ‘systems’ or ‘stakeholder’. I have considered a variety of different names, but have decided that the title best describes the content and intention of the thesis.
- In a vein similar to the concern expressed previously about the extent of the literature review, Alan is surprised that I had not mentioned the work of the Tavistock Institute. I have now included a reference to this work in Chapter five p.48 (new), in which I acknowledge their ground breaking work in the area.
- Concerning the grammar, I have ironed out the more convoluted sentences in this iteration.
- In this rewrite I have been generally more circumspect in the claims made in the thesis. Responding to Alan’s specific notes I have made a change on p.58 (old p.20), included a missing reference on p.12 (old p.45) and changed the word ‘justification’ (which it wasn’t) to ‘experience’ on p.125 (old p.101). With regard to the last, I acknowledge in the thesis that I found no supporting evidence in the literature as to why those tools are relevant in the context I used them.
- Alan was not alone in commenting on how I stopped collecting literature sources ‘when I had a sense of sourcing sufficient references’ (p.13 current document). I have left this as it stands. In instances where I could not find sufficient evidence to confirm or disconfirm a point made in the DVD, I did pursue further evidence. However, the primary purpose of the literature review was to confirm or disconfirm the intuitively created DVD. Where the literature did disconfirm the DVD, this has been documented.
- Alan noted an arithmetical error in what is now Table 4. He was concerned that it might have a bearing on the findings. Ironically after amending the error, the data demonstrated more conclusively that my intuitively developed ‘creative cycle’ was reasonable. The error made it appear that there was not as strong a need for a ‘vision-

ing' part of the process than I believed should be the case. This resulted in some minor adjustment to the text.

- I have re-written p.115 (old p.92)

As with all the examiner's comments, I found Alan's useful in making this next iteration a more meaningful piece of work to the last.

### Mark Williams

Mark had a number of significant concerns, and made a variety of suggestions. Altogether he was looking for a 'richer picture' and that I should 'find my voice'. He suggested that there should be a 'prelude' and an 'epilogue'. He also felt that I made a number of unsubstantiated claims in the conclusions and altogether was seeking a 'richer picture'.

It was these suggestions, together with the concerns made by Gerry Roberts that lead me to changing the writing style, adding more experience based detail to the three evaluation chapters, making greater linkages between the text and vignettes, and adding four more chapters.

In his 'General Comments' Mark writes:

It opens with a stunning full-page coloured reproduction of Gino Severini's 1912 picture entitled Bicycle labeled with Martin's brief comments on the future of art and humanity in the context of technological development and politics. However these themes are not developed or much mentioned again, even heuristically, and thus Martin misses a valuable opportunity to give added philosophical or cultural depth and scholarly worth to the work. In the revision which I think is necessary for this thesis, Martin could place the picture at the beginning of a prologue section in which he could explain in rich detail the importance of these themes. This



section could be informed by some strand of literature and theory such as empowerment themes in action research, existentialism, design studies, critical theory, or indeed any approach in which Martin is conversant.

To answer these points I have written two additional chapters, what are now Chapters two, and nine. In these chapters I explain my architecturally based philosophy that underpins the work carried out in the thesis, including specific references to the Futurist work and its relationship to the thesis. As a visual person, I have provided 29 photographs and drawings to illustrate the concepts and provide further meaning to the thesis.

Mark continues:

In line with these concerns, I do like Martin's autobiographical beginning on pages 1 and 2 of the Introduction, written evocatively in an active first person direct writing style. I detect a quantum leap in his authorial style as he speaks authoritatively from his own lived experience thereby beginning to forge his own living theory..... Unfortunately, to my mind, he then too quickly slips into a bland third person passive writing style as he increasingly tends to somewhat superficially describe his research rather than actively engage in deep and rich description, analysis, or reflection on what he has done and what has happened in the course of his investigation. Could not Martin, in his revisions, add sections to his existing material employing his evocative active First person writing style This would be particularly appropriate in describing his own experience and reflective practitioner development as a researcher and participatory development facilitator and consultant.

In response to these suggestions, I have carried out the following modifications to the thesis.

- Changed the writing style to the first person throughout the work.

- Added in a further additional chapter (Chapter three, Research Process) illustrated with copious photographs, that describes the research process that culminated in designing and producing the DVD.

The following paragraph in Mark's assessment describes an option that he did not recommend and I did not take up. He did though require that what ever option chosen, "he needs to grapple with literature, theory, and his research data more deeply, thoughtfully, and philosophically." I have added the three additional chapters to provide this additional conceptual and philosophical context to the research project.

In the next paragraph Mark writes:

Chapter One, entitled "Context and Relevance of the Study", begins with a model of modernism as being "a constant process of change... graphically illustrated as a Rolling (not crashing) wave". I find this to be a nice concept ripe for development in the thesis. Martin does relate this model to various historical developments in the second half of the twentieth century of ideas such as sustainability, stakeholder development, participatory development facilitation, community development, systems complexity, and empowerment. He then gives a graphical representation of a new wave of "participatory development" and "consultation" overcoming the traditional "top down" approaches to development. Could not Martin add new material explaining how he came to develop these models and especially how he came to expand on the original idea of the wave concept?

As explained in the thesis, this model of generative change is something that we use in the Department of Sustainability and Environment. I have been unable to identify where it actually came from, but have found it to be a useful model of reality. Thus while I have not explained further how the

model was developed, in this revised thesis I have expanded it's use to describe three major waves of architectural expression and corresponding social construct over the last 1000 years. This concern of Mark's then lead onto the following comment:

All the diagrams in the thesis are poorly labeled and poorly referenced. I have found it useful for all labels to be given a descriptive heading and at least 2 sentences giving a brief description. All diagrams should be comprehensively described, analyzed and reflected upon, showing the relationship with the literature and some aspects of the research in a scholarly manner, in the main body of the text. As this has not generally been done, a revised thesis could be deeper, richer, more evocative and interesting, especially if Martin could weave in the themes implicit and explicit in the bicycle picture.

In this revised thesis I have re-labeled all diagrams as suggested, and also referred to them all at appropriate places in the main body of the text. As well as Chapters two and nine making explicit reference to the Futurist painting of a bicycle, Chapter four describes the rationale for the DVD in the light of the thought behind the painting. In the next paragraph Mark requests further work around the vignettes and the research experience.

On my count there are over 25 vignettes in this thesis, marked out in text boxes, and some participant personal comments, which could form the foundations for much valuable PhD level discussion, analysis, reflection, findings, and conclusions. However Martin does not sufficiently discuss or analyse or synthesize or build on this potentially valuable empirical data. I also read in vain for sufficient engagement with literature, theory, concepts, or other empirical data such as quotes from participants or his own reflective practitioner comments or reflections. In the revision I suggest that Martin introduces such new empirical qualitative data, especially his own reflective practitioner memoirs, and gives extended

and rich descriptions, analysis, and warranted conclusions or assertions based on this new and the existing data.

I have addressed this request in two ways:

- The new Chapter three describes the research experience in detail, something that was missing from the original submission (with the exception of references through the 'vignettes').
- In this submission, as well as adding Chapter three, in the chapters that include the vignettes I have specifically linked the findings in the literature to the experience described in each of the vignettes.

This includes the four vignettes in the Chapters 'The Creative Cycle' and 'Engaging Others'. In the following paragraph Mark comments on the manner in which while the DVD is 'useful', it is not a scholarly piece of work. Within the context of the thesis, the DVD was an expression of practice. It was not intended to be an academic piece but part of the 'learning cycle' described by Kolb (1984). In this revised submission I have included the new Chapter four to demonstrate more clearly the relevance of the DVD in the thesis as an academic work. Mark then expands on this concern:

In the "Learning and Conclusions" chapter Martin makes a beginning on reflecting upon his research to bring out major intended and unintended learnings and conclusions to key areas. In my opinion a lot more work is needed to bring the work to a satisfactory level of scholarship. Martin needs to make a convincing case, including very detailed rich descriptions of his learning experiences, that he has actually learnt what he says he has.

The intention is that the additional chapters allay this concern. However in particular it is intended that the references to my own architectural work (Chapter two), and my reflection on that work which subsequently lead to exploring a new direction as a development professional, that is now explicit. I believe it is a desire to see evidence of generative change that lead Mark to further comment:

In a revision of the thesis, I think it might be both opportune and appropriate to add an epilogue reviewing or innovatively stating what Martin thought about the major thrust of his research retrospectively. Perhaps an epilogue could point forward to a way in which Martin might enlighten his journey of becoming a community development facilitator, consultant and perhaps as a researcher, through engagement with multiple inquiry perspectives, participants, theories, literature, and other researchers. Additionally, by interweaving such processes, Martin might write about how he could develop a capacity to be continually transformed through continuing reflective practitioner action research.

I have responded to this request and suggestion in two forms.

- In the new Chapter Nine, Abstract Conceptualisation, I make the observation that there are linkages between theories in the built environment and facilitation. These built environment theories are also concerned with creating 'frameworks' in which others can express their own ideas and concepts, just as with the art of facilitation.
- The addition of an Epilogue, in which I provide an overview of the next significant 'concrete experience' that I have been responsible for creating. This builds on both what I have learnt through the research process into facilitation, but also integrates my experience and understanding of experiential learning.

Again, my intention is that these additions sufficiently demonstrate my understanding of experiential learning, and the extent that I have learned in the process of creating this work. From here, Mark makes a number of comments around style and technique, such as:

- “There are some typographical errors scattered throughout such as on .....” .

Both Bob and Shankar have provided detailed checks, and I have also proof-read the document in a variety of ways.

- ”I assume (pers.com.) means "personal comment" but I think this is an idiosyncratic usage of the abbreviation - check the referencing manual and do use it consistently.”

I have changed this.

- “The APA referencing manual states that you should use italics (rather than apostrophes) when introducing technical terms for example "nodes" and "linkages" on page 31.”

In this regard, I have not complied with the APA manual, but used a format that a number of others (including Shankar) have suggested. This is to use ‘single quotes’ when placing emphasis on a term or word, and “double quotes” when quoting from somebody. I felt *italics* a bit *old fashioned*.

Finally, Mark commented on my conclusions.

Assertions such as "real participatory development is yet to occur" (p. 34 Figure 5) need to be backed up by literature, logic, theory, empirical data (either quantitative or qualitative), or the authority of lived experience made credible by rich description and supporting evidence. It is best to understate even major assertions. I would advise against make opinionated minor assertions, no matter how reasonable they seem, unless appealing to taken-for-granted wisdom or common general knowledge.

I have re-written the conclusions to all chapters, and the concluding Chapter 10, to address this issue.

## Gerry Roberts

Of all the examiners, Gerry Roberts was the least happy with the work presented. While feeling that there was potential in the work, he wrote that “currently the items presented lack significant demonstration of any research that has taken place and as such fail to demonstrate a capacity for independent research.”

Gerry felt that it is “... possible to confuse learning from experience, which we all do, with the process of experiential learning which Kolb described.” As an Action Learner, I believe that learning from action came before Kolb. Just as Newton observed gravity, David Kolb describes a process that occurs, not a prescription for an administrative procedure. Whilst useful observations, both are models rather than reality itself. Between Gerry’s and Mark’s comments, I realised I had made a mistake to only illustrate a small portion of what was in fact a larger picture. I had repeated the mistake made earlier in my career by not providing the broader context for the work. I had not sufficiently described the ‘world view’ or ‘frame’ from which design decisions had been made, thus only allowing assessment to be made from within the examiners own reference. Thus I decided to build on Mark’s suggestions to provide more detail around the context, rather than adopting one of Gerry’s two suggestions for improvement.

The information I provided in the first submission was a cycle restricted to the information on the DVD. It did not describe where it had come from or why it was there at a personal, philosophical level. Thus the major modification has been to add three chapters at the beginning of the thesis. The first of the new chapters (Chapter two) describes the conceptual background and previous ‘concrete output’ that I had carried out. This sets the context for the DVD as a product in it’s own right and describes the essence of my philosophy. The new Chapter three describes the series of events that formed the research process for the content of the three practical elements of the DVD. Chapter four

is a short chapter that provides a rationale for choosing the DVD as a media within the context of my theoretical background.

It was after considering Marks suggestion of an epilogue that I identified the need for a chapter that describes the 'abstract conceptualisation' section of Kolb's learning cycle. This new Chapter nine now provides the completion to the broader thesis for fostering and enabling creativity in our culture of generative change. I have also added a short epilogue, which briefly describes the subsequent concrete output I have carried out which builds on the learnings of this work.

Gerry made three further points around the presentation.

- The first was to add sub-headings within each chapter, which I have provided to the extent of creating sub headings for the conclusions and reflections on the DVD.
- The second is to address the grammatical errors in the work. I have adopted all his suggestions made in the marked up copy he provided, and spent more time proof reading this second document.
- The third concerns the claims made within the document. As mentioned previously, I have considerably re-worked the conclusions drawn throughout the work, and also re-written the whole of Chapter 10 - Conclusions.

I feel that the work has been considerably improved by the comments and suggestions made by the examiners, and trust that I have adequately addressed their concerns and effectively incorporated their suggestions.



### Reviewing method

A recommended reviewing technique for the thesis is to first read the background to making the DVD, that is the philosophy and practical work behind it (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4). On completion, to view the DVD in its entirety (approximately 24 minutes viewing time). I then suggest viewing each section again prior to reading the corresponding written component. These are:

- DVD Introduction – Chapter 5, Context to the study.
- DVD Working with Groups – Chapter 6.
- DVD The Creative Cycle – Chapter 7.
- DVD Developing Linkages – Chapter 8.

Finally, it is recommended the reviewer read Chapters 9, 10 and the Epilogue of the written component, providing the conclusions from the study.

Alternatively, the reviewer can use their own approach to accessing the DVD and written material.

# Chapter 1

## Methodology

The methodology used for this thesis draws heavily on the work of Donald Schön (1995) - *The Reflective Practitioner* and, in a general sense, the work of David Kolb (1984) - *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Appendix 1). The study comprises three distinct phases. In the first phase I participated in and experienced a wide variety of participatory development events. These were both as an observer and, as time went by, increasingly that of organiser and facilitator. It was a form of self-appointed apprenticeship. The second phase was to create an original piece of design work based on the case study experiences, with the aim to answering the focus question of the research. The approach taken was from the worldview, or 'frame' of a designer seeking to create a useful product based on personal experience and expertise. The function of a designer is to assemble sufficient information regarding problems, goals and requirements to create an artefact (Sato 2004). In this case, the artefact is a synthesis and a logical expression of what I learnt through the 'apprenticeship' or the case study process. The final phase was a literature based check on the validity of the DVD content, written as a 'reflective practitioner', as defined by Schön (1995), and within a broad interpretation of Kolb's (1984) learning cycle.

Prior to commencing this project, I studied and practiced architecture. In this time I found the work of Charles Jencks (1973) helpful in many ways. Specifically he provided an explanation of how the built environment in the past has been created by designers with different philosophies. Using his explanations I was better able to understand my own philosophy and approach. Jencks describes six approaches to creating the built environment as different streams (or cultures) operating through recent history.

These are:

- Logical.
- Idealist.
- Self conscious (academic).
- Intuitive.
- Activist.
- Unselfconscious (80% of the built environment).

Each of these streams has a polar relationship with another, Logical/Activist, Idealist/Intuitive, Self conscious/Unselfconscious.

I am aware that not only am I a ‘reflective practitioner’ or action learner, but that I also operate within the Idealist/Intuitive streams as defined by Jencks (1973). The idealist stream has been most associated with wanting to create effective change within contemporary society. It was through looking at the work of the intuitive stream that I learnt to understand my own need for self-expression. This is described more fully in Chapter 2. What has fuelled this work has been the reconciliation between my own need for self expression and the idealist view that defends others right to self-expression as an action learner.

As a reflective practitioner (or action learner), the logical (for me) first phase of this new study was to experience a series of case studies, learning situations and participatory development workshops carried out to explicitly and conjecturally explore the ‘how’ of participatory development (Chapter 3 and Appendix 2). Each experience provided a greater insight, or an added dimension and further learning around the topic. In essence, a series of concrete events or components, each component being an integral part of the design process, and described by Kolb (1984) as ‘concrete experience’

followed by ‘reflection’ on that experience. This is followed by the derivation of general rules describing the experience, or the application of known theories to it (abstract conceptualisation), and hence to the construction of ways of modifying the next occurrence of the experience (active experimentation), leading in turn to the next ‘concrete experience’. This may happen in a short time span, i.e. in a flash, or over days, weeks or months, depending on the nature of the particular subtopic, together with a ‘wheels within wheels’ process at the same time. The design and creation of the DVD (an original artefact) is a synthesis of this experience. However, the DVD serves two functions in the study. It was the creative process of making the DVD that enabled the general rules applicable to participatory development to emerge at a personal level. It also provides a concrete experience on which to reflect within the thesis.

The third phase of the total work is a triangulation of the concepts and ideas developed and expressed in the second phase, but now assessed from a more traditional literature based review. This is a formal completion of the learning cycle as defined by Kolb, and seen as an essential element of design by Schön and part of a continuing learning process. The creation of the product is the synthesis of many smaller ‘learning cycles’. This reflection and literature review is a triangulation of the learnings and the completion of a larger ‘learning cycle’. As a process, it has similarities to grounded theory (Locke 2000). Grounded theory is a more common research process used to extract meaning from disparate sources through identifying underlying themes. That there is new information gained from the literature review at this later stage in the enquiry process has precedents in studies using this methodology (Glaser 1998).

In describing the methodology for the second part (the creation of the DVD), the design process itself is considered a methodology that has an intellectual rigour as part of the total process. This

process of ‘learning by doing’ (sometimes known as praxis) is also the closest there is to an accepted design research methodology in the process of creating artefacts (Hayward 2002).

‘Design’ is the process of making purposeful change. It is also a complex subject (Luka & Lister 2000). The idea of there being a design research methodology is questionable, as design itself is not like other areas of endeavour, such as science or engineering (Sato 2004). The idea of a design research methodology should not be confused with the manner in which research is often carried out within design, where formal clinical type research is carried out as part of the design process, or ‘design research’ that is an historical, critical or literal study carried out on designed artefacts by others. What defines and constitutes design is the creation of a meaningful product that satisfies some form of brief or otherwise articulated requirement (Sato 2004). In this instance, the desired product was the development of a comprehensive, visual and rational ‘tool box’ that a professional development specialist could use in participatory development. A ‘how to’ of participatory development. There is no question that the design of most products occurs without a lot of intellectual rigour (Chayutsahakij 2002) for the cultural parameters of the design frame itself do not place a large weight on formal research (Sato 2004). Culture, fashion and an expression of value judgements are as much part of successful design as decisions made from formal research processes. However, good design requires care and thoughtfulness, especially on the needs of the user (Norman 1998) even if not achieved through a formal research paradigm. There is in fact a parallel with action research (as a research methodology) in that good design undertakes two functions at once. It adds to the development of knowledge through the expression of ideas, as well as answer a practitioner’s quest for creating a useful solution to a problem (Locke 2000). Thus, the visual presentation (the DVD) comprises rational thought, deduction and argument, both in its form and in content. There is also perceived to be a need for ‘basic research’ to discover and communicate broad, gener-

alised design principles (Chayutsahakij 2002) and given the contemporary cultural conditions regarding participatory development, this work is perceived to be of this type.

While there have been many attempts to define a ‘pure’ design process, it is probably because of its inherently chaotic and value laden character that there is no design process that will ensure guaranteed acceptance by others of the product or decision (Chen, Gillenson & Sherrell 2004). Because the creation of an artefact has a cultural dimension, and is not totally objective, there is always the potential of somebody simply not liking the completed product or parts of it. However Norman (1998) identifies that the major criteria for assessing quality of design for everyday utilitarian products such as coffee pots to buildings should be the provision of a demonstratively simple conceptual model, and making operational controls visible (Norman 1998). In this case, the desire has been to create a simple to use and accessible artefact that can convey what my research has lead me to believe are the core methods, skills and processes required to be understood and implemented by the design professional for successful participatory development.

Thus despite many artefacts being created with minimal intellectual rigour there is such a thing as a design process that has an intellectual and research based component effectively built in. Essentially, the basis of ‘design’ is doing something using knowledge, skills and experience and then reflecting on the results (Chayutsahakij 2002). It is a process of mini cycles of action and reflection, from the large to the small, all happening simultaneously, gradually becoming a complete unit as the designer aims to generate a coherent, meaningful whole (Schön 1995). From the position of each new problematic situation, the designer/inquirer follows the implications of where that might lead. All the while though, refining and reflecting on the process in an effort to establish a conformity or provide meaning or utility (Schön 1995).

The total process has comprised many small design, implementation and reflection situations. Even during the early stages of the study, there was a constant process of planning, implementation and reflection. This was ‘concretised’ in two ways. The first in preparing a running sheet for each work-

**Vignette 1:** When working on the DVD, it was something of a eureka moment to realise that the documented process of ‘think/pair/share’ was effectively the same as the traditional facilitation process of breaking groups up and having them ‘report back’ to the plenum. The only difference being one of scale and formally providing time for the individual to think. This realisation then contributing to better designed workshops in the future.

shop request, such as facilitating a workshop for the Department of Primary Industries (Appendix 4). The second part was to maintain a weekly log of events that included reflections on workshops and learning experiences, such as after holding an Open Space<sup>1</sup> process for the Outback Service Delivery Network (Appendix 5). Just as with Grounded Theory (Locke

2000), iteration is a feature of the approach. The DVD is a synthesis of all the learnings made through these mini learning experiences but it is also a record of primary data (photographs) and reflective journal. Throughout the written ‘reflection’ document, ‘vignettes’ (Vignette 1) refer back to incidents that occurred in the primary phase. These provide additional non-photographic illustration to the concepts discussed at this stage of the process. Providing this ‘rich picture’ will assist the reader gain further meaning, though ultimately meaning will depend on the interaction between the information presented and the experiences of the reader.

Whilst it is common for designers to produce a logical rationale or justification for their completed design, Schön (1995) describes this as repertoire-building research and a form of revisionism. The evolved process laid out in a coherent logical manner at the end does not necessarily describe the actual process taken. It is useful for the reader, for it provides a logical rationale defined around context and actions taken based on the initial framing of the problem, but it does not demonstrate the reality of the problem solving process. For the designer then, praxis is the continual cyclic process of problem solving and reflection, ad infinitum, albeit with greater or lesser cycles of doing and

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<sup>1</sup> See page 33

subsequent reflection. Thus whilst this first part of the work has been carried out within a design based framework, it is not a presentation of a design for review within an epistemology of education, multimedia or art or any other 'design' discipline. It is simply an artefact regarding participatory development, from which I have gained meaning through the creative process.

Whilst the designed artefact is an integral part of this work, just as it is not a piece of education, art or multimedia neither is it a stand alone academic piece. It is merely a point in the journey of a designer coming to reframe the skill set and knowledge base within the new frame or context of enabling participation and promoting empowerment within the development process (Cowan & Beck 1996). The designed piece is a reflection of a new body of knowledge gained through the cyclic process in which conceptual knowledge and understanding has informed procedural knowledge in problem solving. While laid out sequentially, the learning in fact happened (and is continuing to happen) in a cyclic manner with the act of solving a problem also occurring at the same time as adjusting and modifying conceptual understanding of the problem (Tennyson & Cocchiarella 1986). The time scale for the action/critical reflection cycle is not a given, for it can be momentary or over an extended period, in each instance depending on what is appropriate for the situation (Schön 1995). In this instance, the product is merely a 'freeze frame' in the production of this thesis.

Most literature in professional journals concerns itself with a defence of the frame, or value judgements, used by the professional in defining their solution (Schön 1995), for the journal is usually the context in which the artefact will be peer assessed. In this instance Chapters 3 and 4 describe the context for the DVD format and a rationale appropriate for this enquiry.

In considering the appropriateness of the methodology, the major justification is the congruence of the methodology with the content of the study. The content is about design and problem solving,



and the contemporary cultural context in which this occurs. Increasingly, professionals are not living up to the expectations of society (Schön 1995). Whilst professionals are trained most often to solve a particular set of problems, the setting of the problem is often ignored. Engineers might be taught to design and build roads, but they find themselves in contexts where the road design is the simplest part. More complex are the reasons for the road and the implications once the road has been built (Schön 1995). There is thus a space/time component to the work that anchors it within the context of the design professional's frame. Schön (1995) further identifies that when confronted by a situation that is complex and uncertain, a practitioner may become a 'reflective researcher'. In this instance the process of research and practice happens almost simultaneously, but in a way that recasts the practitioner as not just a practitioner, but also a researcher. The kind of systems that designers find themselves operating in are becoming increasingly complex. Thus effective design solutions are going to increasingly depend on communication and collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders (Sato 2004). With this in mind, it seems appropriate to use a design methodology for a piece of work that concerns designers today, namely, the integration of a plurality of thought in the design and development process.

A further rationale for the methodology is that the design process is now an accepted part of the educational literature. The process of 'learning from doing' has been an accepted part of that discipline's body of knowledge for many years (Shaffer 2004). In fact Shaffer (2004) as an educationalist feels that the way in which design professions make decisions could be useful for others operating in the complex post industrial society. His solution is using new technologies, as opposed to learning through the more traditional 'case work' model. However as someone trained in the design process through the casework model, and subsequently working as a design professional, it is an embodiment of the theory: 'I hear and I forget'; 'I see and I remember'; 'I do and I understand' (Hayward 2002).

Part 2 of the thesis (phase 3 of the study) is a written and referenced triangulation on the piece of work created. It is a literature-based review, or reflection, derived from the core elements expressed within the artefact. The methodology for this element has been the creation of a Filemaker pro database, with a separate record created for each publication reviewed. Each record contains unlimited pairs of fields, one for a quote or extract, the other an interpretation of that extract (Appendix 6). In the first step of the process I worked through all areas expressed in the DVD, primarily using key words derived from each section and entered into the general search engine Proquest 5000. When I had a sense of sourcing sufficient references in all areas expressed in the DVD, the interpretations were printed out on separate slips of paper and clustered according to common themes. Once grouped into themes, I made a further search if necessary to identify disconfirming or additional information. This created a basis for the dialogue responding to the design work. A dialogue that explored the themes further either adding additional meaning, or in certain cases questioning the veracity of that expressed in the DVD.

The three areas of description - methods, skills and processes are a contraction of Bloom's taxonomy of education (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill & Krathwohl 1956). It being fifty years since its publication there have been both numerous variations and a greater understanding that the divisions are not absolutes. However, Bloom's taxonomy is easily understood, widely applied and adaptable (Bloom et al. 1956; Carneson, Delpierre & Masters 1996; Cornejo 2005; Dalgarno 1998). Thus in this instance I have defined the capacity expectations of a planning facilitator in Table 1.

The principle is that there are different levels of capacity and understanding relevant to levels of proficiency. If the role requires knowledge of a set of tools that only needs repetition of a list in a set order, it only requires a capacity to memorise a set of methods and procedures. Should the role require having the capacity to choose and apply a variety of different methods, it requires skill and a

decision-making capacity. However should it require an understanding of problem solving that

Bloom's classification	Verbs that describe the classification	Category used
<b>Knowledge:</b>	arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorise, name, order, recognise, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce, state.	<b>Methods</b>
<b>Comprehension</b>	classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognise, report, restate, review, select, translate,	
<b>Application:</b>	apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatise, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, practice, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write.	<b>Skills</b>
<b>Analysis:</b>	analyze, appraise, calculate, categorise, compare, contrast, criticise, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test.	
<b>Synthesis</b>	arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organise, plan, prepare, propose, set up, write.	<b>Processes</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose compare, defend estimate, judge, predict, rate, core, select, support, value, evaluate.	

**Table 1: Descriptor definitions**

Bloom's Taxonomy was an early description of different types of learning. Since publication, many people have adapted it for particular situations. My adaptation developed for this thesis is described in the right hand column.

needs creativity and a capacity to assess and judge the worth of solutions developed, there is a requirement for high level cognitive understanding and capacity. Thus within this research I am looking to see what methods, that is basic tools or processes, a participatory development specialist could use and whether there is a skill element attached to implementing them to achieve a desired outcome. However there is the possibility that while there may be a variety of methods and tech-

niques available, to achieve desired outcomes might require a constant re-appraisal of such tools and techniques to make them valid for the particular time and place in which they are being used. To adequately achieve this requires a solid conceptual understanding of what is trying to be achieved to start with.

### **Conclusion to the Chapter; Methodology**

The methodology used is an accepted process within the design and development professions. The work of Schön (1995), Kolb (1984) and others identifies the process as a legitimate form of learning. It does not set out to determine ‘the truth’, but understanding (Norsworthy 2003). In this instance, the methodology has been used to develop a product that contains ‘a truth’ or ‘variety of truths’ that is relevant and useful to the contemporary conditions of society. That it contains and reflects culturally held value judgements is an accepted part of the process. The triangulation process employed provides a significant degree of rigour. In the case of this thesis, the literature review provides an opportunity to critically assess the product and its development. It is the combination of the designed product synthesised from an experiential learning process, and the referenced review provides a triangulated whole that has meaning, rigour and validity.

## Chapter 2

### Philosophy, culture and relevance

This chapter outlines the personal rationale for the thesis topic. It describes why as a designer I became interested in participatory development.



Fig 1. Sydney Opera House 1957. Jorn Utson. Considered to be one of the finest examples of the intuitive stream. The intention was to make a great building, not to change the world.

A designer is described as someone who achieves meaning through decision oriented inquiry, developing products processes and systems that result in outcomes (Bethany 1996). I studied architecture because I wanted to create things, but I also wanted to make a difference in society. There is, or was, a culture within architecture that linked being modern with making a difference for people in the world, and I found this idea attractive. Jencks (1973) describes such an approach to architecture as the idealist stream, and describes how those

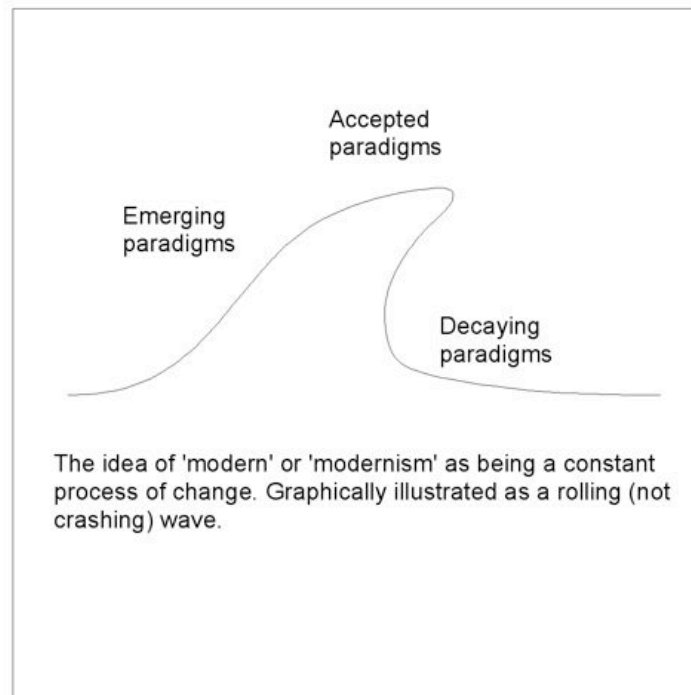
within that stream approach their work from “a loosely based set of social ideals - humanitarian liberalism, reformist pluralism and vague notions of Utopianism” (p.31). Above all, there is an obligation to propose new and alternative visions to the existing social order (Jencks 1973). This adds an extra social dimension to intuitive expressionism (Fig 1). I also love the exuberance of a newly emerging arena, a different way of looking at things. There is a vitality and life as new expressions challenge the cultural mores of the old. Should I hear the phrase, “It’s the end of the world as we know it!” I might suggest, “Yes it is, isn’t it wonderful?”

In a personal interview (Sydney 1976) with Col Madigan, designer of the Art Gallery of Australia, and Co-designer of the High Court of Australia, Col talked of how “the true battle is optimism over

pessimism” and “romanticism is false optimism”. I have often used these words of his to guide my own search for meaning in creation. Wistfully looking back to bygone days doesn’t get us anywhere, and when things look like they’re just not going to work - don’t give up, keep trying. We have to see what is happening today, use the capacities we have, and move forward. Forward to what? - Creating spaces loosely based on an idea that through our endeavours today we can create a world in which everyone can live an enjoyable life. For a designer to be relevant within the idealist paradigm, being relevant means being modern. To be modern though requires having an understanding of contemporary society within an historical context.

Modernism is sometimes defined as a specific cultural movement that emerged in the early part of the 20th Century. However it can also simply relate to modern, as in: ‘Of or pertaining to present and recent time; not antiquated or obsolete’ (Macquarie Library 1982). Industrialisation, technological development and innovation has resulted in a culture of change that has defined the meaning of ‘development’ over the last 1000 years of Western culture.

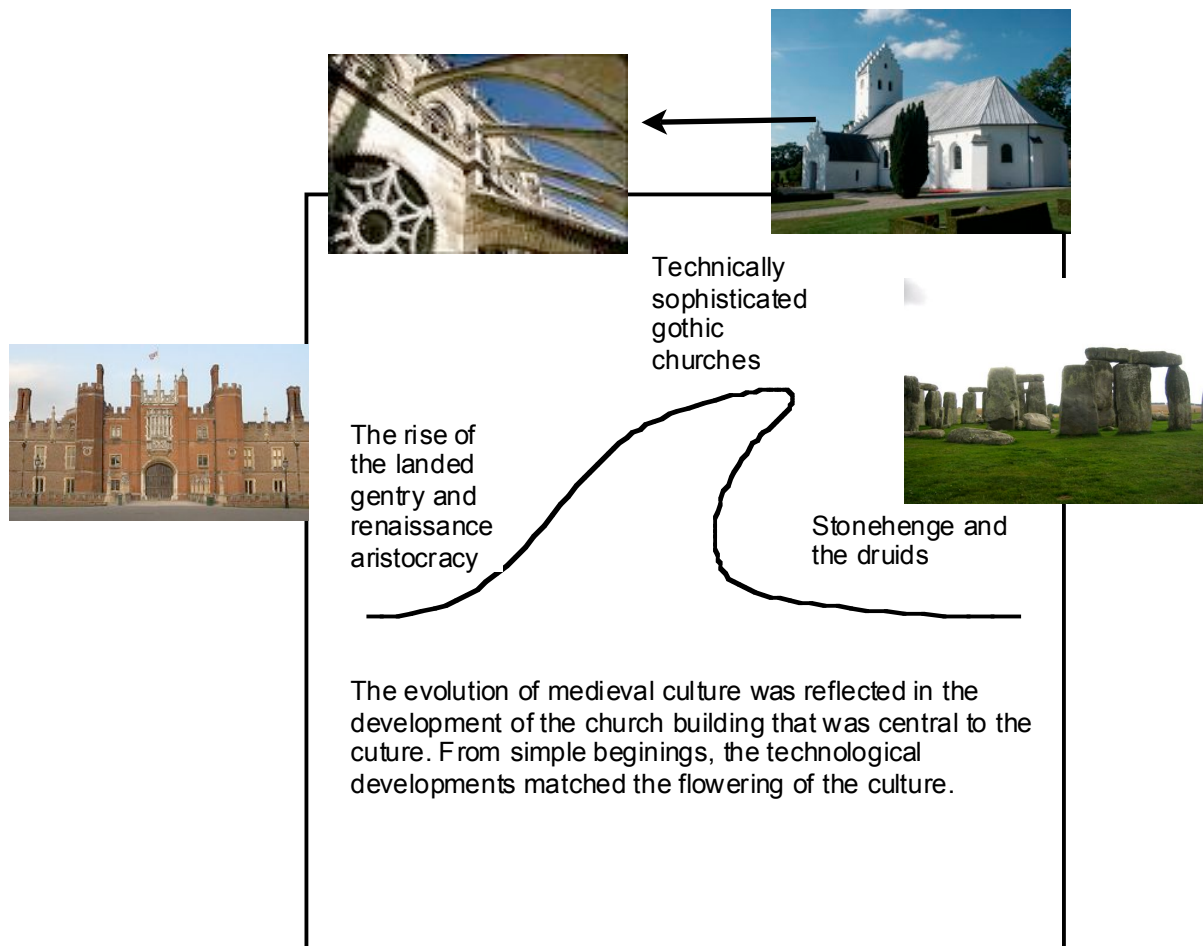
This change-based culture is linked to the increasing life expectancy and numbers of people living in the world today as compared to previous civilizations. In the history of Northern European culture, the history of civilization is defined in terms of how people have developed new ways of expressing themselves and solving problems. Waves of new thinking, each promising new horizons for humanity. Driven by desires for new freedoms, built on changing technology. Thus at any one time there are dying practices, commonly accepted practices, and emerging practices (Fig 2). This model is often used in workshops run in the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Though useful, nobody seems to know where it came from.



**Figure 2: The Wave Diagram**

The wave diagram provides a visual demonstration of growth and change over time. It is flexible in use and able to adjust to different space-time coordinates.

In considering some of the major waves of change occurring over the last millennium, one such wave was the evolution of medieval culture and Christianity in Northern Europe (Fig 3). As Christianity spread through Northern Europe, the old philosophies of Druidism and Roman gods were replaced by a new culture based on a moral framework that was expressed in the churches and cathedrals of the time. The masons who created these masterpieces were driven by a common desire to construct an expression of their faith. Over time they developed amazing capacities in load bearing stone technology and created a form of communication based on creating spaces that was the centre piece of the contemporary culture. In the process though there developed a theocratic bureaucracy that became increasingly restrictive and controlling. The expression of a new social order came through political processes underpinned by the newly discovered philosophies of the classics. Thus in a 'wheel within wheel' process, a process of generative change occurs that commences with a



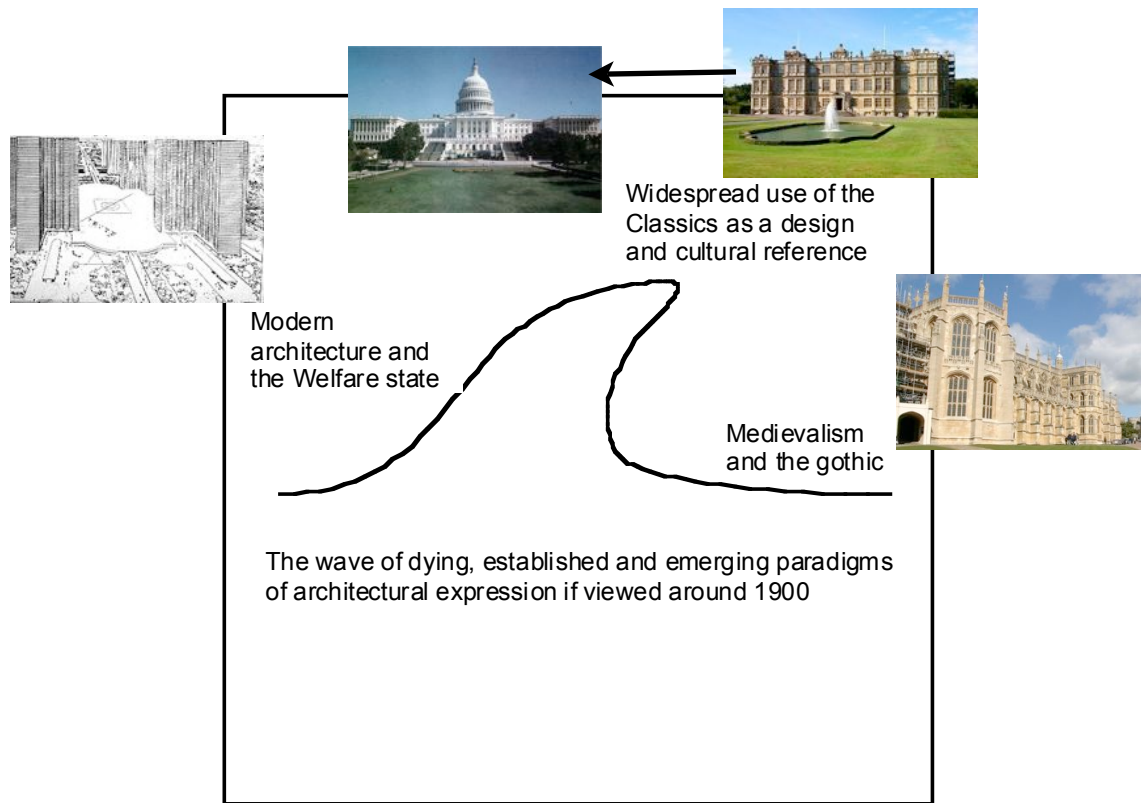
**Figure 3: An early wave**

In 1520, Druidism and witchcraft were on the decline, the church expressed through sophisticated structures such as Notre Dame was supremely powerful, but the rise of the renaissance expressed through Hampton Court Palace was on the horizon.

simple expression, but over time became more sophisticated until eventually replaced by the start of something completely new. I have illustrated this with an arrow between the two extremes.

These new ways of looking at the world were reflected in a society that emerged around the C15 and expressed itself within terms of classical philosophy and culture (Fig 4). In turn, this philosophical underpinning to society flourished and decayed .

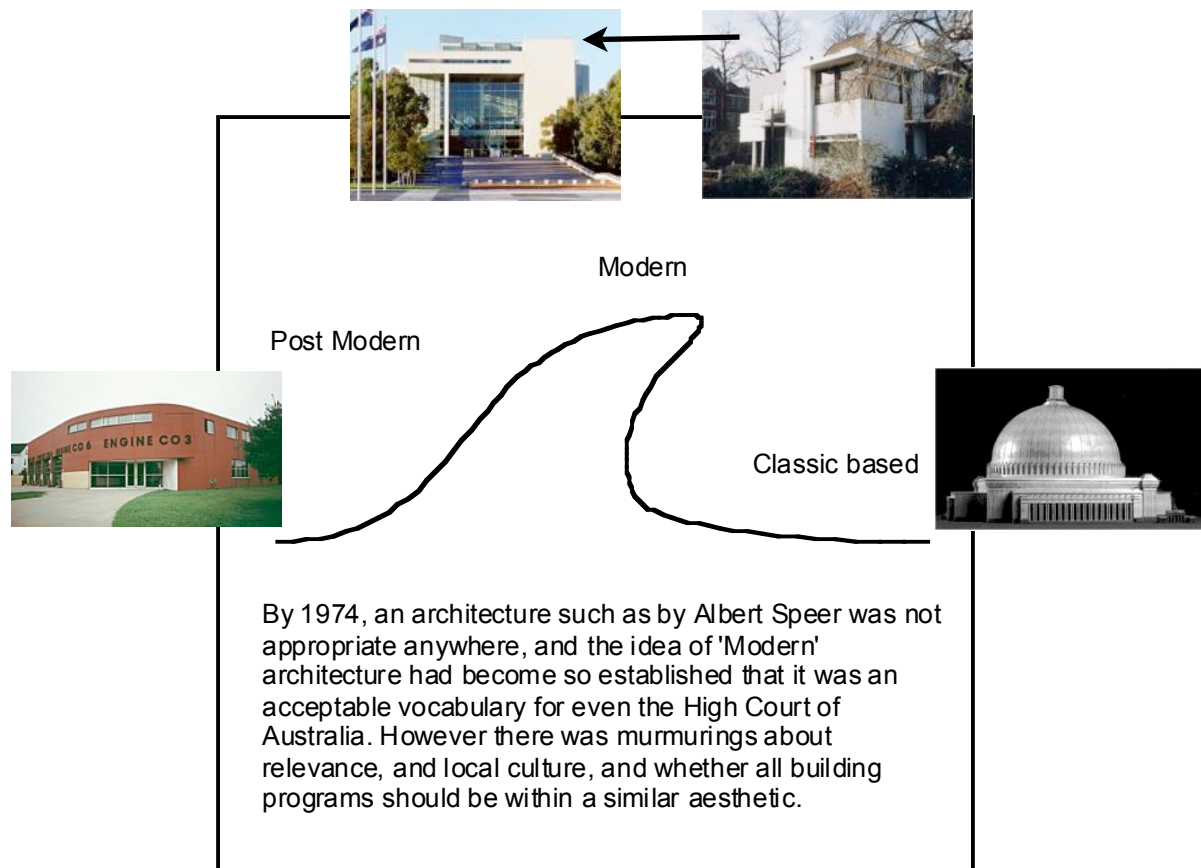




**Figure 4: A later wave**

In 1900 Medievalism and the Gothic was only something to romanticise about, the dominant philosophy and expression centred on the classics (an example being the State Capitol building in Washington) but a new industrial state, expressed through ideas such as the Radiant City was on the horizon.

The study of the classics and an architectural expression based on that study became associated with the status quo, and after the Russian revolution and the First World War it was associated by many to be the expression of the aristocratic elite. It was at this point that Modernism as a cultural expression arose. The driving force behind this new expression was both a sense of idealism and desire to change the world, but also harnessing the technological achievements of the era. This period between 1918 to 1935 was where a whole new expression was developed, linking art and architectural expression with technological awareness and a desire to create a new society. An example of this thinking was the work of the Futurists, who could see the excitement inherent in a bicycle. At the time of the rise in Modern architecture, Le Corbusier (architect, and a major force in this move-



**Figure 5: The latest wave**

In 1974, the early 'heroic' period of the modern movement was in decline, but modern architecture had become part of the establishment. What was on the horizon was the idea of buildings that reflected a multitude of cultural expectations.

ment) came under considerable criticism from a wide variety of sources, not just the establishment but also the Marxists and the Fascists. In the final part of his book, *The City of Tomorrow* (Le Corbusier 1929), Le Corbusier wrote: "Things are not revolutionized by making revolutions. The real Revolution lies in the solution of existing problems" (p.301). I interpret this as saying that we need to take a problem solving approach to the issues of the day, rather than reiterating old solutions to previous problems. In time what is known as modern architecture also became associated with the status quo, and no longer providing a contemporary solution to contemporary problems.

In his book, *The Language of Post Modern Architecture* (1977), Jencks identified a number of architects that were using different expressions, often based on ironic interpretations of the unselfcon-

scious environment. Post Modernism was a desire to become more relevant to the majority of peoples perceptions of what the environment should look like, but also maintain credibility within the architectural culture that places value on difference and self expression (Fig 5). This is both as a spacial experience but also as a conscious conveyor of meaning.

It was, I believe, an honest attempt to be socially responsive, but I believe no longer relevant as a development approach within the 'idealist' stream. Post Modernism was the emerging architecture of my training, and the desire to make a difference in society resulted in my first designing public housing, and later working in Africa. I enjoyed creating Police Stations, Clinics, Border Posts, Barracks, Training facilities, Offices, a minor Palace and many other public buildings that I felt were



Fig 6. Drop City 1967. Constructed from used car tops and supposedly 'environmentally efficient' but in reality the beginnings of a new variation of a romantic 'back to nature' view of the world.

meaningful and exciting and expressed my own enjoyment in the building program. However, as an Australian on a UK salary driving a German car down an American funded road to build a police station with a Portuguese contractor in the middle of Africa, it just didn't seem to be a particularly relevant development paradigm.



Fig 7. Rural alternative 1984. Signs of life, but a viable alternative to the present development paradigm, or just rural poverty?

The hippy and subsequent alternative technology movement started off in a truly exciting way as an alternative to the dominant development paradigm (Fig 6), but has become either rural poverty (Fig 7) (from my experience of living in Nimbin NSW), or a new romanticism (Fig 8) (Krier 1998). The idea of going 'back' to the past and 'living simply' is not something I find attractive to move forward to. Similarly 'appropriate' technologies are only appropriate for those who



Fig 8. Poundbury. 1990. Designed by the 'New Urbanist' Leon Krier, commissioned by Prince Charles, this ersatz Georgian village is highly contrived, with all the buildings designed according to a Master plan to ensure that it creates the right feeling of a traditional UK town.



Fig 9. Gege Police Station. 1990: The Author. Traditional Swazi homesteads are collections of 'stick and mud' huts dotted in groups on the landscape. As well as responding to the context of place, other 'Post Modern' elements are the blue roofs and 'hazard' window pattern providing appropriate signage.



Fig 10. Chinese Agricultural Mission. 1992: The Author. Using lightweight fibre reinforced concrete roof tiles and concrete window frames was an attempt to foster local rural women's economic development.

choose to use them. For example, I felt specifying and promoting concrete window frames an appropriate approach to use in Africa, and within the context of Col Madigan's philosophy that "The role of the architect is to raise the level of consciousness through rational innovation," (personal communication, Sydney, 1976) defensible. My intention was to demonstrate that such a technological development was available, could be adopted within the country and help towards economic sustainability. But many Swazis were affronted that I should design a Government building with what in their eyes were sub-standard products (Figs 9 & 10). It was my perception of what needed to be done, not theirs. Alternative technology was always fine in principle, but not for their project. Increasingly I felt that the development issues of today were far beyond concrete window frames and lightweight concrete roofing tiles. The broader development paradigm I was operating in was still being set within the context of first world development ideas. It was this larger paradigm that no longer seemed relevant. To accommodate my philosophy of wanting to make a difference by being relevant within the here and now (the contemporary conditions of society), I needed to take a new direction.

The development of the thesis topic, which includes the DVD, is my response to achieving appropriate development

solutions that will make a difference in society within the here and now. “The real Revolution lies in the solution of existing problems” (Le Corbusier 1929 p.301). The problems of today are not the same problems as existed in 1920. Modernism as a cultural force in the 1920’s existed within a socio/political and technical context that is different to today. Whilst shelter and the built environment remains a basic human need, it is the approach to achieving sustainable and appropriate solutions that is in question. I believe today’s challenge is to maintain the spirit that is at the heart of the Futurists and the ‘Modern Movement’, while achieving an appropriate solution within the contemporary conditions of society. It is the approach to development, not the development solution itself that became my focus for enquiry.

### **Conclusion to the Chapter; Philosophy, culture and relevance**

As a development professional I believe it is necessary to be relevant and skilled within the here and now (to be modern), which requires defining what that means in contemporary society. We live in a culture based on generative change. That is we effect change through a process of generating ideas based on experience and enhancing those ideas through further refinement. Over the last 1000 years of this culture (based in Northern Europe, but spreading throughout the world) there have been three major cycles of change within the built environment. The gothic period extended from around 1000AD to 1570AD, the Renaissance (based on philosophies derived from studies of the classics) from 1570 to 1918, and industrialised modern from 1918 to around the present day. However what is in question now is whether the approach to development and our built environment is still relevant given the realities of today.

In the next chapters I describe my exploration to define an appropriate approach for a development professional to take today.

## Chapter 3

### An iterative discovery process

In an informal way, the process for this work commenced while in Africa. At the time I was fortunate to be on the steering committee of a World Bank funded urban upgrading area. In this role I observed the consultants in some of their work. However I was aware that decisions were made by the consultants, and community meetings were events to inform the populace (Fig 11). I did though



Fig 11. With a Police presence, the consultants kept the community up to date with their plans.

participate in a USAID (United States Agency for International Development) funded facilitated workshop with a wide variety of agencies, and I also submitted my Masters thesis in Urban and Regional Planning on developing an appropriate Policing strategy in one of these areas. I determined that a sustainable solution would require engaging all stakeholders, though I was unclear how this could be achieved (Butcher 1982).

### Learning the hard way

On returning to Australia, a major first step was to purchase a block of land on a Neighbourhood



Fig 12. A simple shed building, more verandah than house. A beach house in the rain forest.

Title block in Northern NSW. There was a number of attractions to this move. Within the resources available, it provided the opportunity to explore my own ideas about a house (Fig 12), and without a mortgage also have greater control and choice in every day living.

- As in a block of units, individuals had freehold title of their own block, but a shared responsibility for the de-





Fig 13. An early Barbarian workshop. It was necessary to hold the facilitated meeting on an adjoining property, as there was no 'neutral' house amongst those on the property.

velopment of an additional 13ha of land.

- There was a written philosophy around Permaculture and developing a community, which suggested the potential of working with other people committed to environmental sustainability and social development.

At the first Annual General Meeting I attended (which was the 3rd for the development), the members could not agree on setting a budget for the following year. Everyone had their own idea of community, and expected the others to have the

same. Decisions had to be made in the traditional debate and vote process. With small numbers and members acutely aware that what they said in the meeting, or whose point of view they supported would effect their relationships outside the meeting, no decisions could be made. I suggested that we hire a facilitator, and eventually this was agreed to. The facilitator hired carried out a one day Technology of Participation (Spencer 1989) process, which was sufficient to break the jam and enable progress. At this event we agreed to fund a facilitator for the following year.

### Monthly meetings

In regular meetings, a major issue was trying to be both a facilitator and allow others to have a say,



Fig 14. The use of cards to help control the discussion process was not really successful, it was too hard in practice. Slightly more successful was using them to indicate degrees of agreement.

as well as have my own say as a participant. Literally having different hats to put on was only partially acceptable. At the first workshop, agreement was made to pay one of the members, a young psychologist, to run a workshop on conflict resolution. There were lots of ice-breakers, but it didn't seem to go anywhere. It was at a later workshop that I learnt of Karpman's drama triangle (Chapter 5 and Appendix 3), a sig-

nificant learning. I was able to design a number of workshops for the members of the property, all of which provided practice working with a group or different techniques (Fig 14), or an opportunity to develop a particular aspect of interest.

### The Lismore Economic Development Advisory Board (LEDAB)

I became a member of the LEDAB, and was impressed with how the Chair (a local businessman) ran a brainstorming and sequential voting process (he referred to it as a Delphi process, though I subsequently found out that this was not technically correct) to enable the group to develop projects. He also instigated, and the Board hosted on behalf of the Mayor, ‘industry lunches’ which



Fig 15. Meeting similar to the successful ‘industry leader lunches’ hosted on behalf of the Mayor. A consistent feedback message from all groups was that it was a rare opportunity for them to meet their sector counterparts.

provided opportunities for leaders of specific industries, such as the finance community or health sector, (Fig 15) to meet each other and provide information about what they collectively felt were important in the city. He would facilitate these meetings, but would only ask two questions: “What would you like to see for Lismore in the future?” and “What needs to be done?”. Unfortunately, having an ‘Aboriginal representative’ on the Board did not work, and she left after only a few meetings. The Board as a whole was not really interested

in the issues confronted by that portion of the community. As time progressed I became increasingly aware how the process used to identify significant projects was done extremely collaboratively, but the projects themselves did not engage the local community any better than projects identified any other way. There was no real desire, or appreciation of the need, to pursue inclusive processes with the broader community. The flow on process became too hard.





Fig16. Despite advertising and free giveaways, virtually all who attended had in some way been involved in developing the event.



Fig 17. Getting a group of people together is one of the hardest parts. Just taking lists of 'issues and concerns' doesn't lead anywhere.



Fig 18. Sitting behind a table is not a good working approach

## The first housing estate

I gained a position as Neighbourhood Improvement Program Coordinator at a NSW Department of Housing estate. My first job was to ensure that residents of the estate would attend a series of workshops to be run by an external facilitator.

The major learnings from this event were:

- Of the 40 people that attended over the two days, I had made contact in some form with 36 of them in the organisation of the event. i.e. only 4 arrived through the advertising alone. This confirmed my sense that it is the act of being involved in the process that has meaning for people (Fig 16).
- When working with the steering committee, if I gave an example of something such as the name for a project, and then asked for their ideas, ultimately they would only ever chose one of their own from the list.

Over a period of about 4 years, I hired a number of facilitators. For the most part I was not particularly happy with the service provided. Some lessons learned:

- Writing up brainstormed lists and subsequently sending them back type written up doesn't really help anybody (Fig 17).
- If after finding out that 'Kids on the Streets' and 'Drugs and Alcohol' are major issues, don't dismiss someone who raises the same issue on the third workshop because you've heard it already. People need to be heard.



Fig 19. If a sub-group is determined to sabotage a process by exercising power as a professional 'victim', it requires considerable facilitation skills. Unfortunately neither I nor the hired facilitator had them.

- As a participant, I did not find the facilitator sitting behind a desk and writing notes a good approach. It was too much like the teacher at class (Fig 18).
- Most sessions seemed to lack focus, or did not achieve clear decisions.
- There's only so much 'listening' one can do if a sub-group is determined to undermine the process (Fig 19).

### Action Research On Line (AREOL) ([www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/areol/areolhome.html](http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/areol/areolhome.html))

I became aware of AREOL, and carried out course Number 8. Conceptually, it seemed that Action Research was much the same as what I had learnt at college as 'the design process'. Once mastered, easy in the privacy of your own computer, harder to do with others.

### The fencing and home improvements projects

After gaining the Department of Housing's approval for estate residents to determine which houses should receive a front fence, I had to work out the process. My precept was that all should have the opportunity to be part of the decision making process. I designed a simple decision making process in which participants developed and ranked criteria. By providing examples of possible outcomes



Fig 20. By the third round of the funding allocations for home improvements, there was a good turn out.

based on budget, it gave a basis on which they could make decisions. Despite my anxiety, it worked. The houses were chosen, and the Client Service Officer was particularly happy. Whenever someone complained that they did not get a fence, he was able to reply, "Did you attend the decision making meeting that you were invited to?"

A major learning point was that if people are not used to making decisions on matters that concern them, there needs to be a process that allows them to learn that there is a new process (Fig 20). This means letting them experience the implications to themselves when they do not become involved, but quickly afterwards provide an opportunity at a later date to become involved in something else, such as another round of funding. I later became the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) Coordinator for the NSW Department of Housing, Northern Region.

### Neighbourhood Improvement Program Coordinator

As the Department of Housing Neighbourhood Improvement Coordinator I was responsible for six Neighbourhood Improvement Projects across Northern NSW. Some estates had NIP Coordinators, most didn't. I promoted the idea of Participatory Action Research (PAR), but it was considerably harder to achieve than anticipated. The reasons for this included:



Fig 21. The history wall is one of the most powerful participatory analysis tools for enabling groups to find their common identity, and learning about each other.



Fig 22. Carrying out participatory analysis type exercises was good, and participants got a lot out of it.

- The Department was looking for three year Community Development Plans, but these didn't respond to the residents reality. Most public housing residents only have a time perspective of two weeks, something I was explaining to a visiting Cabinet Secretary when the Aboriginal man standing behind remarked that most Aboriginal people only have a time perspective of 24 hours.
- The techniques are not easily transferable, it requires skilled facilitators to carry out the work (Figs 21, 22, 23).
- The standard approach to community development was advocacy at best. The NSW Premiers Department Place Managers program only operated as advocates. At that time they were not interested in a participatory development process.



Fig 23. After the 'training' I encouraged the residents to repeat some of the exercises with their friends, but it was too much to expect those participants to then run their own workshops.

- Support agencies had their own programs and agendas to fulfill. The Department of Community Services staff were stretched just fulfilling their critical case loads.
- The Department of Housing was constrained in its ability to fund projects beyond direct asset improvement.
- The standard models of community development are divorced from the real issues that effect people, and thus do little to enable people power and control where it matters to

them. Through a PAR process I initiated on an estate the residents decided that a solution to the issues of drug and alcohol use/abuse would be to have a 'critical friend' employed to assist people before they resorted to drugs and alcohol as a problem solving method. Unfortunately the Department with funds available had a policy of supporting 0-5 year olds. At a public meeting that the Department called to announce a redistribution of funds they had, they advised the residents that they were not going to fund the residents choice, but a 'Schools and Community' project. The rationale was that they had a lot of experience with similar communities, and that this would be best. They also sought residents support for the project, which was received in silence.

I increasingly became aware that the issues for people living on public housing estates are big, but are not going to be fixed within the existing development paradigm. Drugs, unemployment, poor education, low skills, dreadful life experiences. One off, instant hit workshops looking for the magic bullet are not what is going to work when tackling complex issues.

There is too much emphasis placed on the 'big event' workshops. For participatory development to work I started to realise it's better to work with small groups of people over time. There were a few areas where a participatory development process begun to work. In each case it was starting with a



Fig 24. Working with small groups started to work. The pride in developing a common shared vision was highly apparent.



Fig 25. By the time I had to leave, the group on one estate had grown in size, developed and obtained funding for an after school activity program, a monthly market and entertainment event, and a variety of other projects.



Fig 26. I organised a two day Technology of Participation course. Despite favourable responses at the time, I don't believe it lead to any practice change.

small group that wanted to make a difference (Fig 24). In each case, the first step was listening to their issues and concerns, then carrying out some analysis exercises followed by visioning, then leading to developing plans for actions that they implemented. It was from my experience with these small groups that I began to really believe that a facilitated development process has the potential of true development (Fig 25). It was though extremely time consuming, partly because I was having to work out what to do, but partly because of the magnitude of the problems and the participants own skill levels. On one estate, I spent six months working with one group of four residents meeting approximately once a month. They developed a \$300 project as a step towards overcoming discrimination.

### Working with Staff

I attempted capacity building with Dpt. of Housing staff. These included hiring in a Technology of Participation trainer (Fig 26), a psychologist trainer and designing my own course. On reflection I don't think any of them worked particularly well because the participants weren't that interested in the topic. Their job was to allocate houses, try and keep people from wrecking things and evict people if they didn't pay the rent. It was my job to develop training in community renewal, and their job to attend it. I thought that they would be inspired



by seeing how facilitation worked, but I don't think it provided a concrete enough solution to their specific problems, thus did not have meaning.

### Attending and Participating in Australasian Facilitators Network (AFN) Conferences

A major learning venue has been the AFN annual conferences. The first I attended was the second conference, held in Sydney in 1999. I have now attended six and presented at four. At each event there has been something that was of worth and a major learning has been to find how wide the definition of 'facilitator' can be. It has also been the nearest to finding a Community of Practice around the topic (Figs 27 & 28).



Fig 27. Attending the AFN conferences has always been an interesting learning experience. To see the wide variety of activities that fall under the heading of facilitation is quite surprising.



Fig 28. Running sessions at the AFN conferences have been an excellent arena to test ideas out with peers.

### Other courses

Over this period of living and working in Northern NSW, I also attended a number of courses around development and groups. These included:

- Carol Perry conflict resolution workshop: This was a workshop in recognising ones personal feelings in a conflict situation. It also highlighted the need for structuring non-blame 'I' messages and explained the 'drama triangle'.
- The Steyerberg conflict resolution process: All based on active listening, and people having to listen to each other. It did not involve a 'mediator' who made a decision.
- Strategic Questioning: A simple to understand process for working with an individual. I practiced on many unsuspecting hitchhikers.
- Open Space Technology: An excellent process designed

by Harrison Owen (1997), though it took some time to see how it fits. It's adherents tend to be messianic, and I'm wary of people that have the answer to everything. They remind me of Le Corbusier, or some advocates of mud bricks I have met.

- Log Frame course: The internationally accepted method for documenting aid proposals. Subsequently realising that the Technology of Participation process provided a group methodology to achieve this was a eureka moment.

### The Neighbourhood Job Access Centre

A final project I developed (and I believe is now a model across NSW public housing estates) was the Neighbourhood Job Access Centre. Whilst not exactly a group facilitation situation, it was a process I created to enable estate residents to gain access to casual jobs through a partnership between the Department of Housing and a local Non Government Organisation (NGO). It provided an opportunity for those people interested in casual work to collectively decide who was to do each available work package, and then individually take ownership and responsibility to carry it out.

By this time I started to realise that a relevant development paradigm should be to provide a framework that would enable multiple workshops with small numbers of people that in turn would enable them to come to their own solutions to their particular problems.

I designed a program (the meta-project), and started applying for funding, but I didn't have the capacity to gain the political support for such a broad ranging program. There was also a change in how the Department of Housing wanted to operate, and I had to seek other employment.



Fig 29. The Community Engagement Group met monthly to trade different ideas around community engagement.



Fig 30. It also gave me a forum and opportunity to practice as well.

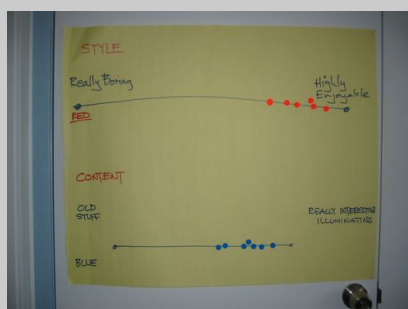


Fig 31. I become a bit more methodical about evaluation. But also realised that unless one was to take it further, and ask why those that put their dots at one end of the spectrum as against the other, it didn't help much.

## South West Strategy

I gained a 16 month contract with a community based Non Government Organisation (NGO), the South West Strategy. The position was funded for this period by the Qld. Department of Natural Resources and Mines. Based in Charleville, the job description was to:

“Coordinate economic, social and environmental investment into South West Queensland, through promoting an understanding and use of community based planning and development techniques.” It was at this point that I felt confident enough to start this thesis.

Some of the work carried out included:

- Conducting Semi-structured interviews with all senior public servants and business leaders to build a relationship and identify their visions for the region.
- Establishing a Community Engagement Group. This was a Community Engagement Community of Practice for those in the Region to practice and share their learning in the topic (Figs 29, 30, 31).
- The Quest for Regionally Significant Projects. I discovered that the Board to whom I was answerable were presuming that I would play a role similar to the LEDAB support person. Rather than run a workshop to find out what projects the Board thought might be beneficial for the region, I proposed and ran a project for the whole re-





Fig 32. The topics for 'the big issues' were collected from a variety of service providers. It was interesting how some were very adamant about a particular issue as being 'major', only for it to receive few votes.



Fig 33. Doing a 'card storm' across the floor to develop a script for a community play.

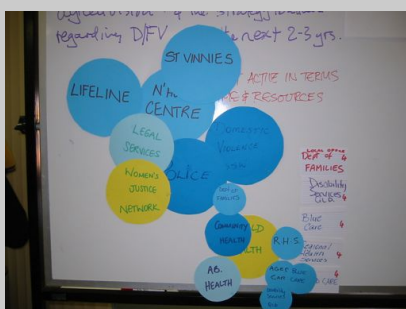


Fig 34. The Interagency Domestic Violence Group. A Venn diagram to identify the stakeholders relationships with each other. This became another lesson in making sure that resources to implement projects are actually there.

gion to participate in. I obtained a fortnightly spot in the local newspaper and local radio to promote this. The results of this exercise provided an immediate direction for the South West Regional Economic Development Board advisor to work on (gas bottling plant), but also provided the basis for the new Mayor to acknowledge the diversity of programs being initiated within the community and offer council support to.

- The 'big issues' and 'mood meter' participatory exercise at DPI drought field days (Fig 32). This provided many people a far clearer picture of how diverse the graziers and their general mood were in this time of drought. It clearly demonstrated that they were not monolithic in their culture. It also demonstrated how service providers can be passionate about their area of concern, but which might not be an issue to that particular sector of the community.
- Assisting by designing and implementing a process for developing a script for a community play (Fig 33). A community member had secured funding for a playwright to work with the community to develop a play about Charleville. What became apparent was that her skills did not extend to developing an inclusive brief. It was another great opportunity to develop a process.
- The Inter-agency Domestic Violence Support Group (Fig 34). This group met regularly and developed a number of projects. It was another salutary experience where the



Fig 35. An Open Space workshop for the OSDN integrated planning workshop.



Fig 36. The Neighbourhood house employee induction workshop process development.



Fig 37. Applied theatre and the work of Augusto Boal is I believe important in the larger area of participatory development.

person the group were expecting to gain funding from was not at the meetings, thus did not follow through with her initial verbal commitment.

- The Outback Service Delivery Network (OSDN) had engaged a consultant to develop a plan for their activities. A major element of the plan was to hold an annual ‘integrated planning workshop’, but did not describe how to do it. I suggested that I run an Open Space Technology workshop to meet this core part of their plan (Fig 35).
- The Neighbourhood house employee induction scheme workshop (Fig 36). This provided an opportunity to be more engaged in content. The major focus was to provide alternatives, enable the group to discuss them, and then develop their own preferred process.
- Demonstration Applied Theatre project (Fig 37). I have always been interested in the work of Paulo Freire, the educationalist (Freire 1973), Illich (1973) and Augusto Boal’s (1979) work in applied theatre. I obtained grant funding for a demonstration project by two actors from the Centre of Applied Theatre in Brisbane. I organised for them to provide demonstrations to a number of service provider groups. The Interagency Group on Domestic Violence later obtained funding for an applied theatre project on bullying in all schools in the region.
- The DPI EMS project (Fig 38). The project application had provided all the milestones to gain funding. In discussion with the Senior Scientist, I realised that it wasn’t



Fig 38. The DPI EMS project provided an excellent opportunity to work with a group that had concrete (though complex) aims, and just needed a process to work together to plan to achieve them.



Fig 39. After ranking all the sporting facilities available in the town for each sport according to a set of criteria, the group were able to see which were in most need of improvement.



Fig 40. Dirty Deeds in the Dust. An interagency collection of 'morality radio plays' designed and implemented through a group development process.

a 'team building' exercise that was needed, but a method for the new team to deliver the goods. I used a large 'who/what/where' system (Williams 1996) for each milestone over the two year project.

- The DPI/AWI 'forty plus' project. This was particularly interesting as the client wanted to develop a program that would empower the graziers.
- Improved Sports Facilities Group (Fig 39). This group grew out of the OSDN Integrated planning workshop. Through conducting an intensive participatory analysis process, the group came to understand the complete picture of sporting facilities in the town. The Shire Council Representative remarked that it would have cost a significant amount to hire a consultant to identify the data that the group did. More importantly, the group identified an agreed way forward.
- Dirty Deeds in the Dust (Fig 40) was an interagency collection of morality tales developed in response to a plan developed by the Gambling Help Educator in the town. The idea was to develop a series of tales for broadcast on local community radio that gave a different perspective on life to that promoted by the commercial media. Creating the tales in a collaborative way was the goal of the workshop process I developed.
- Charleville Woolshed Project (Fig 41). A variety of service providers were developing an idea for a combined tourist/educational/industry wool shed facility. I designed



Fig 41. Charleville Woolshed project. This workshop was designed to enable the group to develop an agreed feasibility plan for an integrated industry/education/tourist facility.



Fig 42. A combined training workshop with Wendy Sarkissian for NGO groups.



Fig 43. Interactive community engagement adult learning based training workshop for agency staff.



Fig 44. Interactive adult learning based training workshop for youth leaders.

an interactive workshop for the group to develop a feasibility plan that they would all agree on for costing purposes.

- Training workshops. As well as the Community Engagement Group and Applied Theatre Demonstration workshop, I was asked to run a variety of interactive adult learning based training workshops (Figs 42, 43, 44). On reflection, they would have been more successful if I had had Certificate IV in workplace training, but the principles used were within adult learning concepts. In future, similar ones will be better.

I was acquiring all this information, gaining knowledge and skills, but needed to consolidate it in some form to move on. Each workshop or engagement challenge provided a new opportunity to work with, but I needed to interpret and consolidate what I knew into some form of meaningful expression as a finished product. Something that would be a summation of my learning in this new venture that could be completed, handed over and reflected on. Due to the way I think and learn, I decided to create a DVD. This choice of media has a technological relevance in the here and now when considered in terms of the history of development in our culture of generative change.

## **Conclusion to the Chapter; An iterative discovery process.**

As an action learner, I needed to learn through experience. Thus I have over a period of about nine years placed myself in situations that have exposed me to participatory development. Initially this was as a member of a small community, but gradually became more involved in the larger arena. This involvement included hiring other facilitators and trainers, but increasingly became a personal 'hands on' experience. Through this process I gradually became competent in many different settings, but this learning was fractured and without structure. Again as an action learner, I created a DVD to synthesise my learnings and have a formal output on which to reflect and learn from.



## Chapter 4

### The DVD

This chapter explains the reasoning behind creating a DVD to both order my thoughts and describe what I had learnt about the ‘methods, skills and processes’ of participatory development. The format is a technically sophisticated multi-sensory medium, able to convey information through a variety of different media. The idea derived from looking at the work of a number of avant-garde architects trying to be relevant in the rapidly evolving consumer culture of the 1960’s. It is today’s dominant culture, but they were looking at it in its emerging context.



Fig 45. NSW public housing 1969. Whilst not built until the early 1970’s, the architectural expression driving the thinking of the public works architects of the time would have been the drawings by Le Corbusier in the 1920’s. There was a gap between the image and the reality, even by 1960.

The idea of fostering creativity and self expression through promoting participation in the development process seemed right, but it left a conundrum. As a designer I express my ideas and world view through the products I create, but what is the relevant format for today to express my own ideas about participatory development? To answer this, I recalled the work of Archigram (Cook, Herron, Chalk, Crompton, Greene, Webb 1973), who had been a driving force in art and architecture during the 1960’s. In their work they explored the relationship between technology and the city. They identified

how the heroic nature of the early modern movement had become systematically lost in translation over the years. For the most part it had stagnated (Fig 45).

Archigram, as in telegram - urgent architecture, were concerned that the buildings being constructed in the image of the modern movement were no longer within the spirit of the modern movement. Glass and steel might have been the new materials and technologies of the 1920's, but the new materials of the 1960's were plastics and electronics. In Archigram 1 (Fig 46) described in Archigram

(Cook et al. 1973 p.8), David Greene wrote:

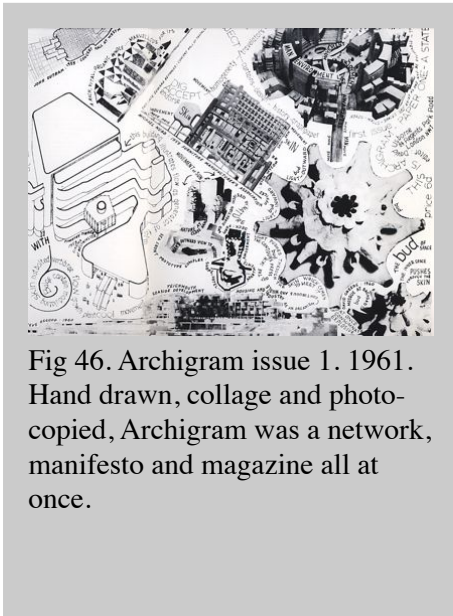


Fig 46. Archigram issue 1. 1961. Hand drawn, collage and photo-copied, Archigram was a network, manifesto and magazine all at once.

The love is gone.

The poetry in bricks is lost.

We want to drag into building some of the poetry of  
countdown, orbital helmets, discord of mechanical  
body transportation methods

and leg walking

Love gone.

A new generation of architecture must arise with forms and spaces which seem to reject the precepts of 'Modern' yet in fact retains these precepts. WE HAVE CHOSEN TO BYPASS THE DECAYING BAUHAUS IMAGE WHICH IS AN INSULT TO FUNCTIONALISM.

A mixture of fantasy and idealism, Archigram challenged the precepts of what modern architecture had come to be. They explored the consumer society in which they were a part of:



Fig 47. Archigram 3, in which ideas of expendability and adaptability are explored. In a world of unlimited resources, and it is acceptable to buy a new car every two years, why not a new house?

We are becoming much more used to the idea of changing a piece of clothing year by year, rather than expecting to hang on to it for several years. Similarly the idea of keeping a piece of furniture long enough to be able to hand it on to our children is becoming increasingly ridiculous...

The attitude of mind that accepts such a situation is creeping into our society at about the rate that ex-

pendable goods become available. We must recognise this as a healthy and positive sign. it is the product of a sophisticated consumer society, rather than a stagnant (and in the end, declining) society (Fig 47) (Cook et al. 1973 p.16).

Archigram and their contemporaries set out to create an architecture that was fun, responsive and



Fig 48. Instant City 1. Circa 1965 Unknown designers. The essence of a city is the dialogue that occurs within it. A city is not static and complete, but something that is constantly changing. The new technologies of plastics allowed fast changing buildings.

alive (Fig 48). Archigram fairly quickly became aware that what they were talking about was not so much about buildings, as the essence of what makes a city, a city. The manner in which people relate to each other, the opportunities for expression, the dialogue that teases out meaning. What they explored was the inherent possibilities of expression through changing fashions, the infinite variety of possibilities available through the technologically sophisticated consumer society.

While all buildings convey meaning, the meaning changes according to the social conditions of the time. However when considering today's technology of the wide screen, it can make the imagery of the building completely redundant (Fig 49). The Gothic cathedral might have first conveyed a spirit





Fig 49. Instant City 2 . Archigram 1965. Super large screens and multi media experiences providing the essence of the city suspended by balloons and cranes. Contemporary technology provides information and spatial experience that is far more powerful than stone.

of liberation, though subsequently become a signifier of oppression. This was supplanted by an architecture based on philosophies of civic concordance. As the philosophies that drove that form of expression became moribund and reactionary, they in turn were usurped by an architecture that combined personal expression with an intent to create spaces for the common good. However the information rich technologically sophisticated spacial experience of the electronic screen conquers all. This led to the idea of creating a DVD as a meaningful form of expression relevant for today.

The choice of media for the designed product (A graphic and photographic based Audio Visual, presented in DVD format) derives from my understanding of technology and society with a desire to be relevant today. It may not be the most sophisticated format to express the concepts and ideas developed, but as with all designed and developed products. it is a reflection of the skills and budget available. It aims to adequately fulfill its intended purpose, that is, to communicate a synthesis of the methods, skills and processes for a development practitioner to use in participatory development.

What follows is the product of an intuitively led process to resolve the dichotomy between the desire and legitimacy to express personal power, and the rights and legitimacy of others to express theirs in a potentially technically rich post consumer/industrial society.

- Its form is an information rich electronic spacial experience that exists as a discreet object that can be reflected upon.

- Its content demonstrates a process to create the framework in which individual liberty and desire for freedom of expression can exist, whilst also allowing for the dichotomy of people working together to achieve effective outcomes.

The content comprises the extent of my knowledge at that time, able to be structured into a meaningful whole.

### **Conclusion to the chapter; The DVD**

Over the years different forms of communication have been used to express ideas. The built environment has been one such media. However the built environment can also ascribe different meanings according to what people associate with the vocabulary or built expression. Furthermore, recent technological developments have resulted in methods of spacial experience that can not only overshadow any meaning derived from the built environment, but has also redefined what is the essence of the city. As a designer whose personal philosophy is grounded in creating and studying the built environment, I chose a contemporary technology to express my ideas.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Context and Relevance of the Study**

In this chapter I reflect on the introductory section of the DVD. Through a literature review, I check the intuitively developed thesis that a relevant development paradigm for today requires both engaging all stakeholders, and the empowerment of those without power. It looks at how conscious stakeholder participation is a comparatively recent development activity, and uncovers the reasons why, despite significant eulogies to its effectiveness, it is so difficult to implement in practice.

Participatory development is an emerging field in development theory and practice. In the introduction to the DVD, I ground the concept in the current industrial/consumer paradigm and current social and environmental issues. In this chapter I look in more detail at the rise of modernism as a culture of change, and its effects on global population growth and increased standards of living. I explore the manner in which the last thirty years have seen the rise of a movement advocating stakeholder involvement in development to achieve better project and policy outcomes. I also examine stakeholder participation in a variety of development sectors, and try to assess why it is considered a worthwhile policy objective. This leads into an exploration of why, despite the documented evidence showing the efficacy of such stakeholder involvement, it has proven to be so difficult to achieve. This provides the background to identifying the relevance of the study and the research question: What methods, skills and processes does the participatory development specialist need for effective practice? I conclude the chapter by checking the emergent conceptual framework or theory that defines the three general practice areas relevant to a contemporary development professional. The broad context of the study is the unprecedented success of modernism and industrial development in the history of civilisation, which has demonstrably enabled increased living standards and quality of life for many of those involved in the process.

Never in the known history of civilisation has the total human population been so great (Smithsonian Institute 2004). Not only are more people alive on the planet than ever before, but also those alive are living longer. Whilst there might be disagreements over the exact causes of the extended life spans, whether they are economic growth, public health or medical advancements, it would appear that improved sanitation, economic growth and increased life expectancy are mutually interdependent (Easterlin 2002; Riley 2001). While there are numerous conflicting theories about the process of modernisation, there is concordance over its existence (Knock 1999) and my observation is that while modernisation creates huge changes within traditional cultures, it is affecting all parts of the world in the guise of globalisation.

This process of development and modernism now usually referred to as globalisation destabilises traditional cultures, and for many creates a climate of uncertainty (Miles 2006). On the reverse though, it provides many opportunities with great potential for positive changes for humanity (McArdle 1999). From around the late 1960's there have been increasing concerns as to whether the change process in its current form can continue (Meadows, Meadows, Randers & Behrens 1972) and more recently demands for 'sustainable development' have arisen. Whilst sustainable development is difficult to define, a principal feature is the idea of overall global, environmental sustainability (Voth 2004) and the well-being of all people, all other species and the environment - not just for today but for countless generations to come (International Institute for Sustainable Development 2004). It has been during this same thirty-year period of concern regarding the long term sustainability of current development practice (that is, since the early 1970's) there has also grown the idea of participation in the development process and its potential in enabling sustainable development.

Within the broad spectrum of contemporary development history, the idea of stakeholder participation and involvement in the development process is relatively new. The earliest investigations into

collaborative work (as opposed to strictly command and control or an autocratic system) appears to be by Eric Trist of the Tavistock Institute, London. His research at a coal mine in 1949 led to the development of Sociotechnical Systems Theory which considers both the social and the technical aspects when designing jobs. It marked a 180-degree departure from Frederick Taylor's scientific management (Clark 2006). As a management concept it grew during the 1960's and '70's, but it became part of mainstream development thinking only in the 1980's and '90's. The management situation is slightly different to the idea of participatory development, because in the former the participants are still employees. Whilst there might be some similarities in the nature of the problem, participatory development is concerned with engaging citizens or volunteers or people in other agencies, other facets of life in the development process, not just members of an organisation. Employees might be an important stakeholder, but not all stakeholders are employees. A simple Proquest search across all databases for abstracts or titles containing the word 'stakeholder' reveals more than 23,000 entries. The earliest entry is 1973 (Rich 1973) with a definition of 'stakeholders' as ".....the various parties who have something directly at stake in the firm" which while it possibly suggests an employee is not exclusively so. It is though more limited to the current definition in the web-based encyclopedia, Wikipedia<sup>2</sup> (4th March 2006):

In the last decades of the 20th century, the word 'stakeholder' has evolved to mean a person or organisation that has a legitimate interest in a project or entity. In discussing the decision-making process for institutions -- including large business corporations, government agencies and non-profit organisations -- the concept has been broadened to include everyone with an interest (or 'stake') in what the entity does. That includes not only its vendors, employees, and customers, but even members of a community where its offices or factory may affect the local

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<sup>2</sup> This resource has been used to provide a contemporary view of commonly used but evolving words and phrases.

economy or environment. In that context, ‘stakeholder’ includes not only the directors or trustees on its governing board (who are stakeholders in the traditional sense of the word) but also all persons who ‘paid in’ the figurative stake and the persons to whom it may be ‘paid out’ (in the sense of a ‘payoff’ in game theory, meaning the outcome of the transaction).

More simply expressed as: “those individuals and organisations who can affect and are affected by an organisation’s activities” (New Economics Foundation & UK Participation Network 1998 web page). While uses of the terms ‘participatory development’ and ‘participation’ exist as far back as the 1950’s (Botchway 2001), formal inclusion of development beneficiaries and other stakeholders in development projects and programs did not occur until the late 1970’s.

Early proponents of participation in program and project development occurred within the physical planning and health fields, and shortly after within the rural development sector in developing countries. Sherry Arnstein (1969) published the seminal work ‘A Ladder of Citizen Participation’ in the *Journal of the American Planning Association* in 1969 and Denise Scott-Brown identified the shortcomings of advocacy in her firm’s urban renewal projects in 1972 (Venturi, Scott-Brown & Izenour 1972). In the health field, the first official acknowledgment of the benefits of including beneficiaries in health program development is The Alma Ata conference of 1978 (Morgan 2001). In the international development field, Rapid Rural Assessment (RRA) was being used unofficially during the late 1970’s but only gained acceptance as a legitimate development process in that sector during the 1980’s (Chambers 1991). Since then, the perceived benefits of enabling participation in the development process have spread across numerous sectors such as urban development, health and economic development.

Within economic development (Nunn 2001; Sirolli 1999) and poverty reduction in general, participation coexists with both transparent and more effective projects and programs (Livingstone 2001). The benefits exist in the field of environmental sustainability (Jones 2003; Love 1992) as well as urban infrastructure and services provision generally (Kebede, Radford & Taylor 2001). The understanding of stakeholder inclusion for effective development is nowadays not just limited to physical communities and the development of services and infrastructure, but also ‘virtual’ communities as exist in organisations themselves. Within the corporate world, there is also a need for a structured process that acknowledges employees’ ideas and incorporates them into the development of the organisation (Wood 2003). Furthermore, the usefulness of participation and stakeholder involvement in the development process is increasingly part of the policy frameworks for both traditionally ‘developing’ as well the ‘developed’ worlds. The concepts of stakeholder engagement and institutional change are not just matters for developing countries (Mayo 2000). The findings indicate that today it is considered that all areas of the development arena can benefit from formal stakeholder inclusion in the development process, whether economic, corporate, environmental, social or community, and whether in the ‘developing’ or ‘developed’ worlds. In fact, all the major development agencies investigated have some reference to community engagement or stakeholder participation in their policy frameworks. Examples being Oxfam (2006), UNDP (2002), World Bank (Jenkins 2004), the Federal Government of Australia (Management Advisory Committee 2004), State Governments of Australia (Elton Consulting 2003; NT Government 2005; Queensland Government 2001; Tasmanian Government 2003; Victorian Government 2005; Western Australian Government 2005) and Local Governments (VLGA 2001). On the surface, it would appear that all development policy-making sectors are pursuing sustainable development through stakeholder participation. Unfortunately, in my experience as a development professional, an employee and as a citizen the reality does not seem to match the rhetoric. There are a number of reasons for this discrepancy, with ‘empowerment’ a particular challenge.

After 25 years of implementing policies and programs within a participatory development paradigm, there is now a greater understanding of the complexities of such a concept (Morgan 2001). Despite the consensus that participation and empowerment produce sustainable results (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2001) and that there is a logical need for multisectoral/interdisciplinary planning with traditionally disempowered stakeholders, in practice this rarely happens (O'Neal & O'Neal 2003). A range of complex issues continue to hinder the widespread adoption of stakeholder participation in development processes, notably:

- Participation can be both a means to an end, and an end in itself.
- There are many levels of stakeholder engagement, and different degrees of empowerment.
- Participation does not necessarily lead to empowerment, though empowerment is necessary for sustainability.
- The process of empowerment requires those with power relinquishing power.
- The maximum number of stakeholders involved in the decision-making process may be limited, thus excluding key others.
- Empowered stakeholders can in turn disempower others.
- There is a lack of process skills and expertise.

To understand these barriers to adoption of the concept more fully, I've looked at each area in turn. This commences with the issue of whether participation in development is important as a means to getting projects and programs implemented effectively and efficiently, or whether it is the act of being engaged and participating that is the critical element.

One reason for pursuing participatory approaches in the last 30 years has been to improve the potential of program or project success. A development project or service delivery agency involving people (stakeholders) in the planning and development process will increase the potential of suc-



successful implementation (Boothroyd 1991). By having all stakeholders involved in the design of the project, there is far less likelihood of objections to the finished proposal (World Bank 1996) and to ensure sustainable results the involvement of beneficiaries in the planning process for services is required (Morrissey 2000). There is also the opinion that by not including all stakeholders in the decision-making process, the result will be misguided, poorly planned programs that have little chance of real success. This is especially the case with development projects in which intended beneficiaries include marginalised groups such as the elderly, women and those who are illiterate (Kebede et al. 2001). However, whilst there is this considerable documentation demonstrating that engaging all stakeholders achieves better project outcomes, others feel that there is more to participation than this alone. Their argument is that the real benefit of engagement and participation is in its potential to create long-term development sustainability. In other words, the reason for pursuing such a course is more than simply achieving project or program success. However it is not quite so simple as to whether the benefits of participation are as a means to an end or an end in itself, for it also depends on the definition of participation.

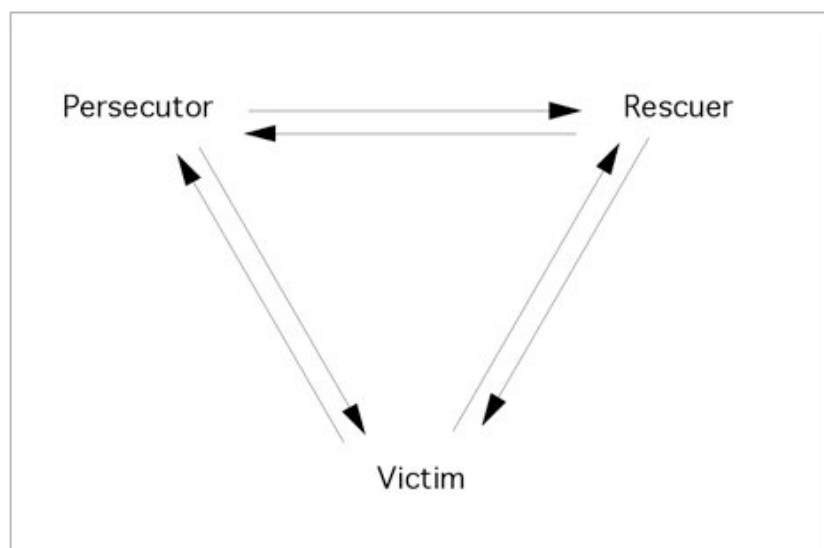
While stakeholder participation in the development process is beneficial for program effectiveness and better project outcomes, the term ‘participation’ itself has many layers of meaning. One understanding of participation in the development process is for participants to contribute some form of resource that will offset the cost of a service. A typical example being ‘sweat equity’ schemes where a development agency provides materials for infrastructure works such as an irrigation system or a school building, and beneficiaries provide labour. In a similar vein, a consumer is ‘participating’ in the development of the economy by purchasing a packet of cigarettes. It is a trade-based form of participation. Less commonly, a participatory development program means a program in which a local community or group effectively controls the whole process of service provision (Morgan 2001). Love (1992) identifies that participation can exist at all levels, and can take many forms. A

stakeholder merely attending a meeting and agreeing with decisions already made is still ‘participating’. There is though a distinct difference between the polarities of participation. When directed from above or made to occur through manipulation and coercion it becomes mobilisation, a means of getting things done. When it arises from below, it is a way for people to obtain a larger share of the benefits of development (Love 1992). Considering this, the term participation then has at least two different connotations.

- Getting others to be involved in your idea, program or project in order to ensure its success,
- Enabling others to develop their own ideas (Nelson & Wright 1997).

Whether the benefits of participation are then because it is a means to get a desired project implemented, or because it is an end for groups to determine their own projects is dependent on the particular situation. However the idea of participation as being either a means to an end or an end in itself is also simplistic, for it presumes that there are only two levels; the service or program provider (those with power), and the service or program beneficiary (those without power). In practice, there are many levels of stakeholder participation, with different degrees of power and forms of engagement occurring between them. The manner in which there are different levels of stakeholder engagement further illustrates the complex nature of power and empowerment.

There are many ways in which power is expressed between various stakeholders and which impact on participatory development. While Love (1992) identifies that participation can not only be an end, a means and even both, McIntyre and Pradhan (2003) maintain that participation in development is really about creating understanding through communication in such a way that it harnesses human energy and leads to generative change. It is though not just any communication, but communication of a particular type that leads to change, as opposed to communication that gets nowhere. Stephen Karpman (1968) identified in his Drama Triangle (Fig 60) that communication be-



**Figure 60: The 'Drama Triangle' by Stephen Karpman**

During the 1950's, Stephen Karpman looked at the relationships between step children and parents. His research lead to a far more widely applicable description of non-productive communication.

tween stakeholder participants often only exists at a manipulative level, with participant stakeholders alternating between being 'persecutor', 'rescuer' or 'victim' as strategies to gain power over each other. Communication between stakeholders occurs in such a manner as to maintain what is in effect a non-productive or static relationship that cannot, and does not lead to generative change (Appendix 3).

In this way, stakeholders participate in dialogue, but without any generative development actually occurring. The only outcome being an ongoing play for dominance through manipulation and emotional grandstanding. Whilst the context of the original observations was families and stepchildren, once the dynamic is understood, it can be observed operating in many other contexts such as business meetings and conversations between service providers and service recipients.

As documented earlier, I became extremely conscious of the drama triangle when working on public housing estates. Once aware of it I came to see that in some instances there was an almost symbiotic relationship between service providers and service recipients. Neither group looking for real change, but constantly exercising power in a rotating form.



**Figure 61: Arnstein's Ladder (1969)**

Shelley Arnstein developed her 'ladder of participation' to show the levels of engagement that might exist between a Government agency and citizens.

The subtleties of power and control that can and do exist within a nominally participatory framework are further illustrated in the various 'levels of engagement' (Brackerz, Zwart, Meredyth, Ralston 2005) based on the work by Arnstein (1969) (Fig 61). These demonstrate the concept of par-

ticipation and levels of empowerment that can exist between those with power and those without, from the manipulation of somebody else, through informing and consulting, to the complete handing over of power to others. There can be physical participation by an individual or group in a project without any form of participation that leads to generative change. Participation is not synonymous with empowerment.

While ‘Manipulation’ and ‘Therapy’ on the ladder can be included as forms of participation and engagement between stakeholders, they are not ‘participatory’ in the sense that they might lead to sustainability or developmental change. A study relating to industrial agriculture development in Canada and New Zealand identified that both dependency and self-reliance can be elements of development programs with participatory approaches (Grudens-Schuck et al. 2003). While participation need not mean empowerment, sustainability is achieved when engaging people in the more empowering types of participation. An exception to this is in times of crisis, such as when an airplane is about to crash, or immediately after a disaster has occurred. For a short period, and a short period only when there is a real physical threat, a directive leadership style will be more likely to lead to survival (Brenson-Lazan 2006).

There is a relationship between participation and empowerment, and in turn, a relationship between empowerment and sustainability (Lyons, Smuts & Stephens 2001). While participation *per se* does not mean empowerment, it certainly needs to be in the mix when working towards empowerment. Using participation with the intent to empower stakeholders leads to the possibility of sustainability (Botchway 2001). Thus while it might be difficult to be empowered without being given the opportunity to participate in the development process, empowerment is central to success, and subsequently sustainability, when considering the idea of ‘participatory development’. One obstacle in the way of this dynamic is that it requires shifts in power (Nelson & Wright 1997), which is not

necessarily welcome by all; for empowerment usually means adjustments to existing power structures.

There has to be a desire to use participatory techniques to empower, for the potential exists to use many of those techniques used in generative development in an extractive, or non-empowering form (Ward 2000). To achieve optimum results, support for a participatory process needs to come from the top. The indicators are that with good political support, good results will follow (Kebede et al. 2001). In effect, good governance - but above all effective participation - requires a desire to include others in the decision-making process (Love 1992).

Non Government Organisations (N.G.O's) specialising in development have been leaders in adopting generative participatory practices. This is partly because they are expected to achieve sustainable development results (Livingstone 2001), but also because the ultimate goal of an agency such as Oxfam is for people to manage their own lives. This occurs when people participate in making the decisions that affect them (Oxfam C.A.A 2003). Thus during the 1990's participatory approaches were pursued on the presumption that local people (beneficiaries) had the capacity to make decisions affecting their lives, and that acting on these decisions would, in turn, lead to more equitable and sustainable development (Guijt & Shah 1998). In a similar vein, as participation in a development program requires some form of action on the part of the beneficiaries, Botchway (2001) maintains that committing to and implementing action breaks down cycles of dependency and passivity. Furthermore, it is perceived that an engaged community will see their situation as one containing assets that they can build on, whereas a community that sees itself as having deficiencies will be dependent on external assistance (Sheil 1997). In other words, stakeholder participation in development programs is beneficial to ensure program and project success, as well as to work towards creating environmentally, economically and socially sustainable communities. Unfortunately,

despite many studies showing that stakeholder control and choice, and taking responsibility is more productive (such as with owner farmers) the current political/economic system does not always make decisions that reflect this evidence (Price & Pollock 2004; Vidal 2003). A further method curtailing genuine empowerment is by limiting or restricting the areas in which others can have meaningful input.

The process of empowerment requires providing the mechanism by which others have the capacity to make effective decisions of their own (Triantafillou & Nielsen 2001). The more tightly defined the parameters of decision making, the fewer opportunities there are for genuine participation and empowerment (Botchway 2001). In other words, sustainable policymaking requires not only participation by stakeholders, but also a relinquishing of, or willingness to share, power by those with the power (Holland & Blackburn 1998). An essential part of participatory development is for those in status positions to lay aside their values and listen to others (Rifkin 1985). The presumption that all stakeholders have the capacity to contribute in a rational way to decision making then recasts the power dynamics of development (Triantafillou & Nielsen 2001). It redefines success and failure, switching the emphasis from the inadequacies of the ‘beneficiaries’ (laziness, incompetence, etc.) to the inadequacies of the ‘facilitator developer’ and their skill set (Triantafillou & Nielsen 2001). Thus existing service provision agencies and institutions have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo (O’Neal & O’Neal 2003) and even most development training is not geared to listening and engaging with others in the development process. Many so-called participatory programs are merely dressed up in the rhetoric of participation. Beneath the label, the product is unchanged – it’s “business as usual” (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993; Rifkin 1985). One way in which this occurs is where there is limited stakeholder participation focussed at one level of society, such as established decision makers making agreements at a whole of government level. Such agreements do not necessarily make any difference to the person in the street who was not part of the decision-making proc-

ess (Eversole 2003) as ‘participation’ has not involved any form of empowerment or inclusion from that group of stakeholders. To further complicate the implementation of participatory development processes there is also the issue of those ‘empowered’ in turn ‘disempowering’ others.

It is easy for local power agencies to act ‘on behalf of’ the local community programs and subvert the power to benefit themselves (the local elite) (Veron et al. 2003). A major impediment to generative-based participatory development has been the naive assumption that ‘the community’ or beneficiary group are somehow harmonious and an “internally equitable collective” (Guijt & Shah 1998 p2). It is too easy for those with power to develop a program that involves participation of ‘the community’ or ‘the village’ while still not involving the intended beneficiaries. This is due to simplistic understanding of the power structures that play at all levels (Botchway 2001). Two specific examples I have seen are: 1) The Department of Housing establishing a ‘tenants committee’ on estates, and 2) The Department of Natural Resources and Mines establishing the South West Strategy. In both instances, there was an assumption that the ‘committee’ would truly act for the benefit of their constituents. In each case, my observation was that the committee acted on their own behalf. The members had no real need or desire to be more equitable or inclusive in their decision making than if the decisions had been made by a public servant. It was usually the more powerful members of that particular community that came on the committee, and in turn then controlled resources. There are always degrees of power and access to resources in all communities. It is fallacious to view a community or group as a homogenous entity (Botchway 2001). Local community leaders are often reluctant to adopt participatory methods, as it effectively undermines their status and local power. While this reluctance is a barrier to instigating participatory development in the short term, longer-term strategies can achieve results (Symes & Jasser 2000). However, because effective program development requires all sectors to change and be able to develop partnerships and cross-sectoral networks (Mayo 2000) the process of empowerment itself will change social structures



(Young 1992). This will ultimately have wide-reaching effects on society, even in such areas as the law (Delmas-Marty 2003). When it is commonplace for people to be consciously aware and responsible for their decisions, as opposed to being unconsciously unaware then real change will occur. Currently many are locked in 'the drama triangle', either passively accepting their lot, or railing at others (especially those with the power) whilst simultaneously demanding that they take action to rescue them (Triantafillou & Nielsen 2001).

Thus while the literature supports the argument I put forward in the DVD that stakeholder participation is relevant for economic, social and environmental sustainability, it also illustrates the complexity of what that means. In particular, this is around the manner in which 'participation' in the development process has many meanings, and that the issue of power is central to effective sustainable development. Finally, to establish the relevance of the last three sections of the study, I look at what the literature has to say about the skills available to carry out participatory development. I also consider those required of a development professional in implementing participatory processes.

Once the need for participation in the development process is accepted, it is then necessary to successfully implement it (Delmas-Marty 2003). One example that highlights this potential problem area is when a participatory approach to health development was promoted and yet could not be practised, because the new skills and techniques required were not part of the traditional planners' vocabulary or readily available (Rifkin 1985). Whilst the example is twenty years old, given the emerging nature of the skills, from my experience it is expertise still hard to find today. An example is when I looked for a facilitator in a large country town in NSW. Whilst there were a number of people with the capacity to design and build a suburban shopping centre in the town, the closest facilitator I could find was 300km away. Thus there is considerable culturally acquired expertise and available systems to create such things as a multistorey buildings, but we do not have the cultural

processes to solve the joined-up, complex, development problems such as drug and alcohol abuse or domestic violence that we want to resolve today (Madron & Jopling 2003). Therefore, while there is a growing understanding of the power of an enabling framework, the processes by which to implement them remain elusive (Drylands Research 2001).

It is unrealistic to expect that those without power will somehow become critically aware and powerful without any real outside intervention (O'Neal & O'Neal 2003). Equally, for generative participatory development to work, there needs to be an understanding by those with power of not only why it is necessary but also how to carry it out at all levels within a society or culture (Symes & Jasser 2000). Achieving participation in the decision-making process requires tools and systems to carry this out (Kebede et al. 2001); the problem is that even though participatory development is growing in popularity, there remains a considerable need to further develop skills and processes (Campilan 2000). Publications with such promising titles as 'Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets' (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993) are full of the benefits of participatory development, but short on practicalities. A typical quote being: "By connecting their own resources with those of the community, community colleges help to create a better, more secure future both for themselves and for their neighbours" (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993 p.2). Similarly, *Community Development in the Market Economy* (McArdle 1999 p.66) outlines the critical elements of engagement as follows:

A community development approach suggests that effective consultation should aim to:

- maximise participation in a minimal time frame through broad promotion;

- ensure authenticity and relevance to the lives and work of those being consulted;
- enable participants to express their views in their own terms/language;
- engage participants in ways that promote awareness of less obvious alternatives;
- provide multiple avenues for input;
- utilise existing community networks where available;
- ensure immediate as well as longer-term outcomes for the participants and their communities;
- affirm and empower those consulted;
- establish structures for ongoing involvement;
- provide feedback mechanisms to ensure that the recommendations genuinely reflect community perceptions; and
- consult the decision-makers as well as the community.

Community-driven consultations, grounded in these principles, enable people to participate in decision-making on matters which affect them and to take part in shaping their society around their vision for the future.

Unfortunately, it also does not offer much in the way of practical ways to work at the everyday level. Being a skill set, as well as information it requires practice to actually achieve results.

In terms of quantity, there is adequate published material offering lists of participatory development methods: ‘Participation Works!’ documents 21 techniques (New Economics Foundation & UK Par-

ticipation Network 1998) and there are 65 listed in the publication by the Department of Sustainability and Environment – ‘Effective Community Engagement’ (2004) and an ever-increasing number of methods from Southern Cross University (2003). There is no shortage of methods available. The skill needed by the planning facilitator, however, is to both choose which process(es) to use at any given time, and have the capacity or resources to implement them. The choice is critical to success and making the choice requires knowledge of complex variables such as the relationships between the various stakeholders. This raises the question of whether a development practitioner needs such skills personally, or can just hire them in when needed. As there is an implication that many of the techniques require working with a group of people, it appears necessary that the planning facilitator should have group facilitation skills.

Whilst the word ‘facilitator’ is used within the broader community in many contexts, the most accepted idea of a facilitator in current development literature is that it refers to a person who holds the process of the group, and is not involved in the content (Aigner, Flora & Hernandez 2001; Shields 1991). Within this general understanding, there are subtleties and variations expressed, such as the facilitator providing a structure that enables individuals to be heard, and also to listen to others. This is to enable people to move beyond their own perspectives and broaden their thinking in such a way that the group as a whole makes better decisions. Some of the function of facilitation is also to use innovative tools that enable participants to see the connections between the various ideas and realities of other participants (Brown & Bennett 1995; Stanfield 2002), and allow participants to move from ‘positions’ and fixed views to an awareness that differences of opinion can be a useful way of seeing old preconceptions in a new light (Brown & Bennett 1995). It is also suggested that facilitation plays a vital role in enabling individuals to feel that they are part of the group, and that their individual input is valued and recognised (Cameron & Gibson 2001).

It is an essential part of the participatory development paradigm to either have facilitation skills or have access to facilitators (Brown & Bennett 1995). Technically, having this broader perspective and commitment about inclusion and the concepts behind facilitation should make it possible for successful participatory development to occur. Technical staff can be hired and trained in facilitation and inclusive approaches (Symes & Jasser 2000). There are probably instances where this is perfectly acceptable, however it is the skills themselves that are at the core of the change process. Small groups and workshops are the catalyst for creating change (McArdle 1999). In running small workshops, facilitation skills are the key to ensuring productive group meetings. Even the implementation of the simplest facilitation skills can ensure a minimum level of participation and empowerment, whereas an absence of facilitation can have a detrimental effect. The fastest thinker or smoothest talker can easily, consciously or subconsciously, dominate a round table discussion and achieve agreements through manipulation. This often results in individuals feeling excluded, or that others do not respect their worth. (Shields 1991).

Facilitation skills and the idea of facilitation are required in both the personal and the broader context. It is necessary to extend the attitudes and perspectives of the group facilitator into a broader role, a role that profoundly recasts 'developer' into facilitator. A role that extends facilitation into an art form with as wide a range of skills and ethical practices as the more traditional professionals have in contemporary culture (Triantafillou & Nielsen 2001). This reframing of the traditional developer into facilitator can also apply to that of the policy researcher, which moves from being that of 'analyst' to one of 'facilitator' (Norton 1998). Implementing these skills ensures that **all** hear the ideas, issues and concerns of those less used to making fast decisions and can thus contribute to the development process (World Bank 1996). Just as the facilitator's role is to provide a structure for the group to make decisions, within the context of generative participatory development it is most

important that outsiders do not set the development agenda, but enable development to occur (Drylands Research 2001).

Thus, the literature confirms that the skills identified as those of a group facilitator are central to the participatory development paradigm itself. They are far more significant than as an 'add on' to the traditional development paradigm such as Occupational Health and Safety. Facilitation is both the central skill and a fundamental approach to participatory development. There are a number of purposes of group facilitation, including enabling participants to see things differently and make connections, but its most important purpose is to ensure that all participants feel that their individual contribution is of equal worth to others. This is the base-line standard for empowerment; the point at which individuals with power (having status within a group, eloquence, specific or specialist information, confidence or a loud voice) are valued for their contribution without disempowering those others with fewer attributes of power. As identified, the role of the facilitator is to be the holder of 'process', but the process used needs to be one that will lead to sustainable solutions. As generative change requires measures of both deliberate (planned) change and learning, it would appear that within the context of participatory development, there are two major themes: 'Planning' and 'Learning'.

While it is possible to engage stakeholders and enable them to participate in a development program in many ways, such as employing the local inhabitants of a community in data collection, a learning process has to happen for real development to occur. This requires empowerment in the whole development process (Ward 2000). Any development process requires planning, and there is a demand for planning skills to be available in all disciplines and arenas. This is within both communities themselves, and service providers (Boothroyd 1991). As it is not considered legitimate to institute a participatory development process if the community does not have resources (Botchway 2001) and

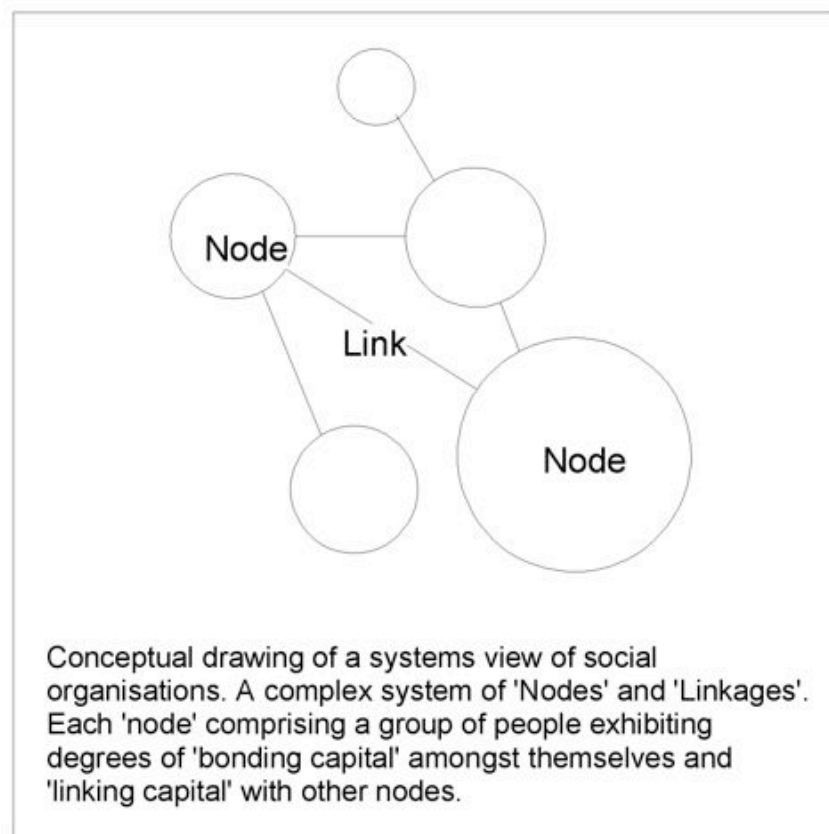
an essential resource is planning skills, these need to be provided in some form. Providing a manual is apparently useful as a means of teaching people basic planning methodologies (Boothroyd 1991). However, in my experience of working with both specialists in a particular field (eg: Plant species specialists in the Department of Sustainability and Environment) or just members of the general public such as those living on a public housing estate, not all people need, or want, to become planners. What they find useful is a planning professional to take those with other interests through a planning process that enables them to achieve their own solutions to their own problems (Boothroyd 1991). This suggests that there is a need for community planners i.e. professionals who understand the planning process and are able to assist community members to carry out their own planning and evaluation cycle (Communities in Control 2003). That is connecting the planning approach taken by professional planners, with an educational model of 'learning by doing' (Boothroyd 1991). In other words creating a link between planning and education; enabling others to create and implement plans and subsequently to learn from the process (Madron & Jopling 2003). It would appear that a key element of the participatory development professional's skill set should be to provide a planning process in a facilitative manner. If the participatory development professional has skills in facilitation and planning, is that sufficient for empowerment to occur and participatory development to realise its potential?

Unfortunately, from my experience the process of 'empowerment' does not happen overnight. It requires real commitment and the desire for inclusion by the facilitator and those in power. It is a process that takes time. Enabling those traditionally disempowered to gradually gain skills and confidence in making decisions and implementing purposeful change does not happen quickly (Dockery 1996). Real success requires creating an enabling framework that operates at all levels - at the global level, the state level, and the local level (Namuyamba 2001). I have already identified that one of the prohibitors to participatory development being widely adopted is that a participatory de-

velopment paradigm requires a major shift in contemporary development agencies practices, procedures, thinking and doing. The kind of changes required will have to be systemic in nature, requiring as much a perceptual shift about what already exists as one of physical organisation. A basic tenet of existing (traditional) social structures is that policy and decisions are determined at the top of hierarchical structures and implemented by others lower down the structure. All development programs have to occur within the here and now, which leaves the dichotomy of how to function as a participatory development specialist within contemporary society, for the fundamental skills of a participatory development specialist are to ensure equity in group decision making. One approach could be to act at any given time dependent on the context of the situation. However, having a greater understanding of the nature of organisational and social structures could provide better outcomes.

Christopher Alexander (1965) wrote that any attempt to conceptualise the workings of a city was doomed, for the city exists as a 'semi-lattice' with connections and linkages that are too complex for the human mind to fully comprehend. This could lead to an intellectual impasse paralysing action (for striving to understand the incomprehensible would prohibit action). However, there are ways of modelling this reality that can be useful to the development practitioner. A useful method is a diagrammatic model representing the 'unmappable' system as a system of nodes and linkages. (Fig 62). Whilst not definitive, it provides an approximation of the complexities of this state. It graphically reflects the three types of 'social capital' that reside in communities identified by Robert Putnam (2000). The concept of bonding, linking and bridging 'social capital' lends itself to the idea of contemporary society being a set or system of 'nodes' and 'linkages', in which success or progress is measured according to the strengths of the individual nodes and the linkages between them. Bonding refers to the strength of relationship between members of a homogeneous group, (such as a chess club), linking capital the strength of relationship between groups with common values (such





**Figure 62: Nodes and Linkages**

Mark Pearson, Senior Natural Resources Officer at Dpt. of Natural Resources and Mines drew this diagram while recalling a lecture he had attended. I thought it a fair representation of what Robert Putnam (2000) and Christopher Alexander (1965) were describing.

as between chess clubs), and bridging capital the strength of relationships between people with different values (such as the chess clubs and a bikie gang). Thus the diagram mirrors the idea that with increasing complexity and rate of change, successful organisations or communities achieve results that are more effective by operating as a set of systems rather than as a hierarchy (personal communication with Mark Pearson, Senior Natural Resources Officer, Dpt. of Natural Resources and Mines, Charleville 2001). Bob Dick (2005) maintains that this is already taking place within our existing bureaucratic institutions, though in spite of them not because of them. Ironically it is a theme even pursued by the military, albeit because of the changing role of that institution in its emerging role as an aid and development organisation (Fitz-Gerald & Neal 2004).

An interpretation of this complex reality is a 'soft systems' approach to development where those stakeholders that have a common interest (bonding capital) around any particular development issue work together in developing solutions that they can implement, then evaluate, learn from, and start again (Madron & Jopling 2003). In the context of this work, the words 'team' and 'group' are treated in the same manner, meaning a group of people (stakeholders) working together to achieve an outcome. In practical terms, existing opportunities need to be nurtured in order for groups to participate in the development process (World Bank 1996). To be effective though, it is necessary to design processes with the intention of engaging participants at an appropriate level. When appropriately engaged, stakeholders are more likely to contribute to making a decision that is acceptable to all the members of the group through the process of group facilitation. Whilst the provision of facilitation services to a group provides a practical application within a systems approach to development, there is also the issue of bridging between groups of different values. In other words, providing planning facilitation services for groups is one thing, but an important part of this systems approach to development would be to strengthen the linkages between nodes, as much as enabling the nodes themselves. This requires an added function for the participatory development professional that would be more akin to advocacy than facilitation. However, what is important is not to advocate the values of a different group, but to advocate the value of stakeholders with both similar and different values developing linkages between themselves. This is similar to the Steyburg conflict resolution process at a larger scale. (This was described at a training workshop in Nimbin January 2002, by Declan Kennedy of Lebensgarten, Steyerberg). It is where the facilitators role is to simply encourage each participant to listen to the other. It is not to take sides, mediate between the participants, or advocate on behalf of one.

Advocacy (lobbying on behalf of others) has traditionally been an important part of the development agency's agenda. However, there is considerable disquiet as to how effective such processes

actually are (Livingstone 2001). The focus of participatory development is around the idea that all stakeholders have something of worth, but that it requires conscious work to ensure that all hear each other's contribution. This is especially the case with poor or marginalised groups (Kebede et al. 2001). Whilst it is always necessary to work within the cultural context in which one is operating (such as holding separate meetings for women and men in Palestine) (Symes & Jasser 2000) enabling a group to consider who other potential stakeholders might be in their issues would be a requirement of the participatory development professional. Unfortunately this role would potentially be at odds with the notion of the participatory professional being a facilitator involved in process, not content. However there is a second way this can be approached, and that is as a specialist. There are many members of the broader community looking for mechanisms to engage others in the decision-making process (Boothroyd 1991) and this specialist could provide technical information in a similar way to that of other holders of specialist information contributing to a participatory process. That is, as a provider of information by which others can make decisions, rather than a value interpretation (Jones 2003). It would seem that as well as advocating for, or at least enabling a group to consider other stakeholders in their topic, there is also a need to provide specialist knowledge and training around the concepts of participatory development. In fact many development foundations believe that it is necessary to train local people in participatory development concepts and processes (Gulane 2003). As mentioned previously, I attempted this on one public housing estate, but realised that people have to have the desire and capacity to be inclusive and learn the skills.

Ultimately, advocating for participatory development and promoting occasions and processes so that more people can fully participate in the development process is also the promotion of modernism. A process-oriented approach to development allows the learning cycle to occur. This is compared to a project-oriented approach, in which each project is seen in a discreet manner and limited engagement with stakeholders without a focus on learning through participatory evaluation (Symes



**Figure 63: The emerging paradigm of participation**

Generative change is the precept of modern. Thus to be modern requires making decisions, being responsible for those decisions, and evaluating them in order to move on.

& Jasser 2000). Through engaging in the development process, participants then adopt the rituals and beliefs of the 'modern' (Triantafyllou & Nielsen 2001), but this requires empowerment in some form or other, for without the power to make decisions, learning can not take place. With greater understanding of the benefits and processes of stakeholders being involved in the development process, there will be a gradual shift from elites making decisions that are implemented by others to a participatory development paradigm (fig 63).

### **Conclusion to the Chapter; Context and Relevance of the Study**

This literature review evaluating the content of the introduction to the DVD is for the most part supportive of what it says. It does though provide considerably more detail. Participatory develop-

ment has a number of components which collectively form the conceptual framework within which a participatory development specialist acts. A principle finding is that involving stakeholders in the development process is applicable to all development fields. However, stakeholder participation in itself does not provide the sought-after sustainable benefits. Stakeholders can participate in the development process in many different ways, some of which can in fact create no change at all, or are even counterproductive to sustainable development. By combining the concepts of stakeholder participation with those of empowerment and generative change sustainable development can be achieved. Empowerment occurs when the powerful concede power to the less powerful but in such a manner that whilst they relinquish power they do not disenfranchise themselves. It is also necessary for those previously disempowered to take on the responsibility of acknowledging and acting upon their own powerfulness. Equally, empowerment does not occur when the powerful only relinquish power on an issue that is peripheral to the real issues that effect the less powerful. Empowerment can occur at all stages of the development cycle, at all levels of society and between individuals.

Generative change occurs when stakeholders are able to identify and develop projects and programs that contribute to their own learning. Whilst implied, missing from the DVD was the explicit need for evaluation. The techniques used would be similar to carrying out an ‘analysis’, but it is the ongoing learning cycle that creates generative change. To carry out participatory exercises that engage others requires the accumulation of knowledge as well as the capacity to practically and usefully execute a skill set. The knowledge needed is a combination of technical skills and a value system which provides the framework in which to implement those skills. The literature supports the key skill sets that emerged in the DVD:

- Group facilitation skills.
- Planning skills.

- Advocacy skills (for stakeholders to be included in the process).

Group facilitation skills are the capacity to implement processes that enable all in a group to both be heard and to have an equal say.

The second major skill base for the planning facilitator is a comprehensive understanding of the planning and learning process. The findings are that true sustainability occurs when stakeholders are involved in the development process, building their capacity through the learning cycle.

The third, and in some ways most complex skill required of a participatory development specialist is that of advocate, but an advocate for values that embrace participation in the development process as well as being a specialist in the skills that might enable it. This is the part of modernity where people embrace change to achieve desirable outcomes such as living a longer, healthier and more productive life. Whilst on the one hand the processes of stakeholder participation in development are already occurring, the logical implementation of participatory development is that there will be a fundamental and profound effect on society's contemporary fabric and institutions. There are many instances where there is a reluctance to fully embrace such concepts because of the ramifications, both on individuals with power (which is relative) and on institutions. The skills required by the planning facilitator are to advocate on behalf of the less powerful to be included in the processes, and to provide the information that will enable those with power to jointly and collaboratively work with others in the process for improved outcomes for all.

The emergent conceptual framework of this study into the methods, skills and processes required of the participatory development professional thus comprises three parts.

- 1) Group facilitation processes.
- 2) Facilitating groups in planning and learning.

- 3) Enabling groups and individuals to become aware of participatory processes in order that they might identify and engage other stakeholders.

The remaining chapters of this written work and the DVD 'Outside the Gates' are together an exploration into each of these parts.

### **Reflection on the form of the DVD Introduction**

The primary role of the introduction to the DVD is to provide the context for the three skill areas documented further. The intended audience is the development professional interested in the practicalities of participatory development. The 'language' used in the introduction lies within an epistemology of urban development theory and practice, an epistemology that is characterised by the creation of products and services. However the intention is for more than just those trained in that vocabulary to find it accessible and meaningful. It is a cartoon, a sketch on the back of an envelope, that relies on the viewer having sufficient background knowledge to interpret the combination of visual images and accompanying text. It relies on the viewer abstracting meaning beyond seeing a picture from Singapore, or a picture of Perth to seeing an image of a generic development model that has roots in the 1920's and now flourishes throughout the world. Similarly, it relies on the viewer having the capacity to read the graffiti images as a short-hand expression of the 'wicked problems' (Rittel & Webber 1973) and underlying issues that are such a part of today's development challenge.

The nature of the presentation is to convey broad concepts not detailed argument. It does not explore a number of key aspects pertaining to the subject, including how formal stakeholder participation in the development process is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Similarly, for simplicity's sake, the broad spectrum of development areas potentially included in this emerging paradigm have been reduced to the 'triple bottom line' elements of social, economic and environmental develop-

ment. This is a somewhat crude interpretation of the development arena and the complexities implicit in 'participation' for sustainable development. Again, the interconnectedness between group facilitation processes, empowerment and participatory development are not argued, but are provided as a statement of fact. What is presented is a taster, a synopsis of what had been learnt about the subject, not a thesis in its own right. As an introduction to the three primary areas of the DVD, the information is likely to be sufficient for the intended audience. It sets the parameters of the principal content and, at a little over four minutes out of the total 24, is hopefully sufficiently lucid to establish the context of the additional work for a tertiary-qualified professional interested in the topic of participatory development.



## Chapter 6

### Working with Groups

Working with groups is a fundamental part of participatory development. In this chapter I look at the three key elements identified in the DVD for working with a group as a participatory development specialist. These three elements respond to the differences between individual stakeholders involved in a project - their different communication capacities, personal strengths and weaknesses, and interests concerning the development topic. The first concerns pre-work and context defining that the facilitator needs to do prior to the workshop to ensure the group will become productive in the development process. The second and third are concerned with processes and techniques that will help the group make effective decisions that all members can accept. This is a form of consensus (personal communication with David Jago the first facilitator employed by the Barbarian Neighbourhood Association 1997)<sup>3</sup>.

While there is considerable literature on team-building training to make effective groups, the focus

Vignette 2: Despite their best intentions, the members of the Barbarian Neighbourhood Association found operating effectively as 'a community' challenging. Ultimately they employed a neutral facilitator to provide the process in order to collectively create an annual plan and budget for the development of the land they held in common. However, they had to first agree to engage a facilitator.

of this work is in situations where the individual participant's goal is not to be 'part of an effective team' but to achieve some collective results with other stakeholders that share some form of common interest or concern. This is sometimes only accepted out of desperation (Vignette 2).

Roger Schwartz (2002) describes four types of facilitators (Table 2), but it is the first that I have described in the DVD.

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<sup>3</sup> Over the years, I have found the definition of consensus he gave at that workshop both robust and useful.

<b>Facilitator</b>	<b>Facilitative Consultant</b>	<b>Facilitative Coach</b>	<b>Facilitative Trainer</b>
Third Party	Third party	Third party or group member	Third party or group member
Process expert	Process expert	Process expert	Process expert
Content neutral	Content expert	Involved in content	Content expert
Not substantive decision-maker or mediator	May be involved in content decision-making	May be involved in content decision making	Involved in content decision-making in class

**Table 2: Roger Schwartz (2002 p.40) Facilitation types**

An illustration of the various roles that people do within the description of being a facilitator, but it is the role outlined in the first column that is described in the DVD.

There are probably times when a planning facilitator has to carry out some of the other roles, but it is as a third party, process expert, content neutral person that the DVD describes. This does not mean that the others are invalid, just a different role for different situations. An example of such a different situation is the workshop I designed for the Charleville woolshed project. In this situation I provided a content framework for the group to make decisions, thus was more a facilitative consultant than pure facilitator.

**Vignette 3:** It was necessary for the Barbarian Neighbourhood Association to hire a neutral hall for its planning meeting, rather than use a member's house. Whoever's house, the venue would have immediately put some members ill at ease.

The role of the development specialist in this capacity is that of facilitator, not team-building trainer or advocate for a particular cause. There is a responsibility to provide an environment that will enable the group to perform effectively together for the

duration of the event, workshop or project. In the instance of Vignette 3 it was the participants that decided on a neutral setting, however the facilitator did enquire as to whether everyone would be

happy there. In this first type, the facilitator is responsible for the group making progress, staying engaged and working towards a quality product. A definition of an ideal facilitated meeting is:

.... a meeting where everyone is involved in contributing ideas simultaneously, ideas are shared anonymously without fear of reprisal, data is objectively analysed and integrated, diverse ideas are creatively merged, members stay on target, and teams leave with a clarity on future action plans (Ceridwen 1992).

At its most philosophical this is best achieved by the facilitator keeping a ‘stillness at the centre’ (Stanfield 2002) or ‘holding the space’ (Owen 1997). The role is the opposite of advocacy. Whilst advocacy is the persuasion of one particular point of view, facilitative inquiry attempts to find out what the truth is for that group (Stanfield 2002). In its application, it is the attitude of the facilitator that is important, not just the techniques (Pretty, Guijt, Thompson & Scoones. 1995). In practice, it means that the facilitator should maintain effective group processes through ‘politeness, openness, autocracy’ (Cowan & Beck 1996). This concept of autocracy relates to the process, and is explored further.

**Vignette 4:** At a Government Department’s forum on improving relationships with the Indigenous community, the facilitator asked the group if they wished to consider a question in small groups or as a group as a whole. The powerful speakers suggested as a whole group, resulting in only a few people having the chance to articulate their ideas. Informal questioning afterwards identified a high level of frustration and disappointment by many participants.

All individuals with an interest in a subject have some position, idea or viewpoint that they want to express, have other stakeholders understand and either hopefully adopt or at least consider. It is the role of the group facilitator to provide the optimum process for the situation. Where the planning facilitator has a mandate to provide the process, it is their responsibility

to be directive in keeping the group focused on what is important. In the instance of Vignette 4 the facilitator did not take adequate control of the process and many participants became disap-

pointed that their time and effort in being there was not practically honored. From my experience with running groups participants will accept a process as long as they can see that no one else is getting favoured treatment. They expect the facilitator to provide them as much as possible with a level playing field. In this situation they will become more comfortable as individuals in a group and can start being creative and making change. There are a number of factors that determine the comfort of the group, but an important one is the demeanour of the facilitator and ability to accurately reflect group expectations.

In his paper on Evolutionary Systems Design (ESD), Laszlo (2004) considers the development of sustainable futures. He identifies that it is only when we are in a comfortable and relaxed situation, in which we feel that our views and our individuality will be listened to and respected, that we can start working with others in a group towards creating “new types of relationships, new ways of being and becoming, and new ways of living” (p.33). This sequence is also identified by another macro-level thinker, M Scott Peck (1987) when he maintains that it should be “Community-building first, problem-solving second!” (p.104). Similarly, the Strengthening Rural Communities Project (Barraket 2001) identified that people living in a community with high levels of social capital are more likely to work together in planning and coordinating activities for change. It is interesting that the difference is only one of time and scale, not intent, to the expectations placed on those facilitating a group of individuals in a workshop. However, others suggest that having group members too relaxed and comfortable compromises creativity and good outcomes. One study has identified that creative people choose to live in areas where there is not strong social capital, for it allows them to express their own individuality. When there is strong social capital, people do not want to be seen to be different (Florida, Cushing & Gates 2002) as their views will potentially effect other parts of their lives.

At the micro level in a group setting, the literature reflects this tension between a need for people to be ‘in their comfort zone’ and enabling them to participate as individuals. On the one hand, it is im-

**Vignette 5** At the Lismore City Council crime prevention program evaluation workshop, at which the Mayor attended, I ensured that participants could rank degrees of success for the program anonymously, though in such a way that the collective view was able to be seen by all.

portant to establish a context in which people generally feel comfortable, such as that the times are right, venue not intimidating or sub standard etc. (Brown & Bennett 1995), and on the other to avoid ‘group-think’ (Cornejo 2005). Group-Think

happens when the individuals are unwilling to express a differ-

ence of opinion to the others due to the possible implications to relationships external to the workshop. I have found this especially important to be aware of when working with small groups (See Vignette 5). A version of this phenomena occurred in Vignette 6, because nobody wanted to dispute the idea of the ‘important’ facilitator. Thus to achieve a productive and creative environment requires group members to feel personally comfortable, yet not be in a situation of needing to be with their friendship group. At a simple level a facilitator can accommodate this tension by moving people around or not letting them sit in the same place as their work colleagues or friends.

To achieve this involves more than organising the physical environment. The planning facilitator needs to also modify personal behaviour to suit the participants, taking care to establish an appropriate setting, and use language and processes that will help increase rapport and trust between participants.

**Vignette 6:** On his scoping visit to the public housing estate, the facilitator suggested the group offer free make up sessions supplied by cosmetics representatives to attract people to the future event. It was only later that the group indicated how inappropriate this would be, as most residents have real problems with door-to-door cosmetic sales people. Their suggestion was free bingo sessions with food and household staples as prizes.

Just as sales people know it is important to be culturally acceptable to the people they are working with in terms of dress, words and body language, so it is for the facilitator (Shields 1991). To make a group feel comfortable it is important to know the culture of that group, for different cultures even put different emphasis on what might be spoken about either pub-

licly or privately (Feuerstein 1985) and to be aware that the cultural norms of one group may be quite different to the next. This can be between one suburb and another, or even in the same locality over a short time (Sarkissian et al. 2003). If new to either the locality or facilitation, it is especially important to carry out some prework or scoping as it is important in all ways to be acceptable with the participants. It is easy to make erroneous assumptions and it is necessary to understand what is important to the individual and group, and relate at that level (Cowan & Beck 1996).

Having group members feeling comfortable with the planned process itself is an essential part of enabling a group or team to be effective (McFadzean 2001). Running through the proposed workshop format with a local representative group is one technique to achieve this (Dick 1991). It means

**Vignette 7:** Designing the Australian Wool Institute/Dpt. of Primary Industries Workshop for Graziers took three meetings and numerous phone calls. Understanding the dynamics between the two organizations, and the independent graziers that funded them through subscriptions and who they wanted to engage was difficult. It was even more difficult when it was realised that they wanted to develop a program that would empower graziers, but some how make the decisions before hand.

that the group gains an understanding of the role of the facilitator, and the facilitator develops a greater understanding of the content focus that the group has in common. An example is in Vignette 7, though I omitted to mention this element of prework in the DVD. The competent facilitator makes sure that the planned workshop is appropriate in terms of local customs and norms; these might include local attitudes to: “gender, informal

livelihoods, social groupings, speaking out in public” (Wates 2000 p.18). Thus, it is necessary for the facilitator to be aware that their own presence at a meeting will have an impact on their capacity to provide a good service, and they should be prepared to spend time and energy to understand the culture and norms of the group they are working with. This could even include understanding and planning for different concepts of time and space held by different cultures. Usually, effective and sustainable outcomes are the product of creating a safe environment for the individuals attending (Owen 1997) for people will only make change when they can see that it is of benefit to them and from a standpoint in which they do not feel threatened (Burkey 1993).

While carrying out effective preplanning is important, there are always subtleties that will take extra effort to understand. For instance, even similar cultures such as Australian and North American can have significantly different attitudes to such things as openness. This is especially the case where expression of feelings are concerned. Optimally, the facilitator needs to be able to modify their own style according to the context (Dick 1991). During a workshop, differences in culture may mean rephrasing instructions, cutting out jargon and technical terms (even the meaning of symbols such as a tick and a cross can be different across cultures) (Dudley 1993) and possibly phrasing questions hypothetically. This is especially the case when dealing with feelings, where working in one way can sometimes be more productive with some groups as opposed to others (Dick 1991). There are thus many subtle nuances required in establishing an environment conducive to multistakeholder decision-making, including the ability to understand the cultural differences between groups of people. Further examples of how understanding culture needs to play an important part in workshop design is the manner in which the tools and methodologies used need to be appropriate for the context. In a village in a developing country, participants might draw maps and diagrams in the dust on the ground, for paper and felt tips would be alien, uncomfortable or just simply unavailable (Robinson 2002). Similarly, it would not be appropriate to have the executives of a multinational sitting on the ground, drawing in the dust. However, if participants are not sitting on the ground, it is necessary to consider the layout of the space, including tables and chairs.

The physical layout of the meeting space is important. There are many different possible table layouts and each has its own advantages and disadvantages, but during a workshop, there is no reason to maintain one single table type throughout. There are various advantages to all, though the tra-

**Vignette 8:** I find U shapes for smaller groups and cabaret style for larger seem the best combination. Even where giving specific information such as a PowerPoint presentation, both these formats work well.

Holding a workshop outside nearly worked, except for the sun; it was really too hot for comfort.

ditional meeting layout with rows facing the 'head table' at the front of the room has a number of problems. At one level, it suggests that this is where the decisions are going to be made, and there is also the problem of people falling asleep at the back (Pretty et al. 1995). Whilst small groups can be in a circle,

recommended layouts for bigger groups include the 'U' shape, cabaret style and the fishbone (Stanfield 2002; Williams 1996) (Vignettes 8 & 9). For optimum results, a configuration should be cho-

**Vignette 9:** The Prime Minister's Department ran a series of workshop/presentations on creating partnerships. The promoters used Open Space Technology in the workshop section, traditionally requiring all participants to sit in a circle. This was not possible due to fixed seating in the auditorium. The seating arrangement did not help, but it also did not completely compromise the process. People were still able to determine their own topics and create the 'market place' - the essential elements of Open Space Technology.

sen for each work group in its individual location. Key criteria include ensuring that there is maximum capacity for participants to see and interact with each other (Hunter, Bailey & Taylor 1992; Stanfield 2002; Williams 1996), having a wall space on the long side of the room on which work produced by the group can be displayed and viewed and ensuring that coffee and tea facilities are available preferably in the main room, but

if not possible, somewhere close by (Bennett, Rolheiser & Normore 2003; Sarkissian, Cook & Walsh 2000).

There is sometimes a need, especially with large groups, for 'break out spaces'. These are subsidiary spaces where smaller sub-groups can meet to discuss specific sub points, usually before reporting back to the main group. Whilst there can be a variety of types of breakout spaces, eg. by the water, in the woods, near the bar, etc. (Owen 1997) the basic requirements are the same for a general workshop. They have to be safe and congenial to work in and have the appropriate work tools available. It is the facilitator's responsibility to ensure that the space is appropriate for the intended meeting, hence part of the preplanning work is for the facilitator to check that an appropriate venue and layout is available. The facilitator will also design the most effective process for the group to



consider the content to be covered. This should be based on the parameters of the problem, time available and other information gained when obtaining the brief. Generally the DVD covers these areas, though it did not explicitly go into the issue of recognizing cultural differences of different groups. Once a suitable physical and cultural environment is established, the planning facilitator provides a process to ensure the participants address the problem effectively and creatively.

A primary tool in the process design is to ask questions rather than giving dictums to ensure participation and involvement (Williams, 1996). However, whatever questions are asked, it then becomes the facilitator's responsibility to ensure that all participants have a capacity to contribute to the question presented, and the decision-making process.

Neither creative thinking nor the concept of doing things and learning from them are part of our mainstream culture. There is an emphasis on 'getting the right answer', which leads to non-creative thought (Hughes 2003). This is despite trial experiments showing that through a conscious process of looking at a large range of ideas prior to making a decision, results were considered superior to the ones where people had fastened onto the first idea that came to them (Johar, Holbrook & Stern 2001). I recall as a first year architecture student discussing my project proposal with my tutor, and asking in exasperation whether "I had got it right". It took time to realize that solutions to development problems are never right. Some are just better than others, but by constantly looking for new ideas it is possible to achieve those better solutions. The commonly accepted term for the process used to generate a large number of ideas is 'brainstorming'.

Whilst creative thinking is not part of mainstream culture (Hughes 2003) the idea of brainstorming a variety of different ideas is becoming a generally accepted practice. However, as a formal activity within a meeting context, it is a relatively recent development. Believed to have been 'invented' by

an advertising executive, Alex Osborn in about 1941, there are strong associations made between brainstorming and creativity. However, it would appear that there has been a morphing of these skills. The original rules of brainstorming that Osborn developed are:

- No criticism of ideas.
- Go for large quantities.
- Build on others' ideas.
- Encourage wild and exaggerated ideas (Stanfield 2002).

Generally, there is agreement about the 'rules of brainstorming' and also an acceptance of some newer hints and tips, such as: doing a 'practice' brainstorm first (Dick 1991); having more than one person writing the ideas down (Hunter et al. 1992); limiting the time for a large group (Pretty et al. 1995); employing a 'round robin' approach; having all 'jargon' defined (Chamala & Mortiss 1990); and ensuring that each idea has a noun and a verb for clarity (Gilles 1998). The traditional 'shout it out' process is still used most often by business groups, though the reasons are not fully understood (Nagasundaram & Bostrom 1994), for whilst useful in some instances, it is not always the optimum technique.

Traditional brainstorming is considered essentially a group process for creativity. It is a process in which participants both call out their ideas and use others ideas to freely associate new ideas, but it is becoming recognised that the activity is effective because it generates diversity prior to decision making. An individual can brainstorm just by sitting down with a pencil and noting ideas as they arise. The aim should be to keep the ideas flowing, without crossing any out, grouping them or anything else that would interrupt the flow (Nyssen. Haile, Moeyersons, Poesen & Deckers 2004). Alternatively, the facilitator can modify the process in various ways. One variation is Nominal Group Technique (NGT), which is considered to 'outperform' brainstorming in terms of creating more use-

ful ideas. Brainstorming NGT is where people think about the items themselves, and then call them out in a round robin fashion to be added to the ‘public list’. It is considered superior to ‘shout-it-out’ brainstorming in terms of idiosyncrasy and overlap (Dick 1991). As well as variations, it is possible to use combinations of different systems such as participants developing individual lists first, then discussing or building on from one list to another. Different systems have different benefits (Dick 1991). Another alternative is to give individuals time to process their own thoughts, and then form participants into groups of 2-4 people. Each group then reports back on what their thoughts and ideas were, which the facilitator then records on a flip chart (Williams 1996). Nowadays a group can generate a collection of ideas on a computer without the flipchart. Group Support Systems (GSS) is a computer-based facilitation system that enables group members to interact in a more creative manner (Nagasundaram & Bostrom 1994). Dick (1991) has given considerable thought to the subject and has identified how by using different variations of the brainstorming concept, the facilitator can achieve combinations of idiosyncrasy of ideas, or overlapping of similar ideas that are expressed differently. The DVD illustrates a variety of different brainstorming techniques, and in my experience a group likes to do different things during a workshop. Thus as well as picking the most appropriate method for the particular situation, or sub situation, sometimes it is good just to do a different technique for variety.

Whilst ‘creativity’ has been the traditional goal for brainstorming sessions, there are other valuable

**Vignette 10:** During a brainstorming session in a workshop with a small group of public servants, the Manager would always immediately add to, or change any staff member’s contribution. It was difficult to remain polite, and still note the earlier idea before also noting the Manager’s input. On reflection, I should have used a different brainstorming process such as card storming. It would have made it easier to record and take account of all ideas.

outcomes. One is the ‘laying out’ of a wide range of ideas and viewpoints for consideration; the other is a contribution to team building, or developing social capital. Individuals can often feel that their worth is not respected by the usual meeting processes (Shields 1991) and using brainstorming techniques helps demonstrate that all ideas are of worth, not just those from the

senior management or those with the most personal charisma (Hackett & Martin 1993). However, it requires conscious work to hear their contribution, and as illustrated in Vignette 10 demonstrates a weakness of the ‘shout it out’ technique. This is especially the case with poor or marginalised groups (Kebede et al. 2001), for effective participation needs to account for all capacities.

Whilst brainstorming has uses beyond creativity, it is also not the only method for generating creativity. Consciously looking to other sources and examples can also inform decision makers and assist towards achieving a better solution. In the Community Engagement training I am currently responsible for, we first ask participants to discuss amongst themselves their concepts of Community Engagement, and then provide selected literature for them to read prior to coming up with definitions. This is in a training context, but could potentially be used as part of a development type workshop. Also, collecting ideas can occur before the meeting. In the Barbarian Neighbourhood Association I started asking for people’s development ideas two months before the planning workshop. We would then have a long list of ideas and wishes already formed before the meeting. However, whatever method the facilitator uses, at the end of such an event the group (and facilitator) has a long list of ideas, problems, issues or concerns that requires working with. Brainstorming can generate many ideas, but the facilitator must help the group move to the next stage. In fact, it is often necessary to reduce the number of topics generated to manageable numbers (Williams 1996). The options appears to be grouping the ideas in one of two ways. The essential difference is whether to name the groups first, and fit the ideas into those groups, or to form the ideas into groups and then find a suitable name for each group.

The most cited method to reduce a long list into something more manageable is variously named collation, grouping or creating affinity diagrams. Thought to have been developed by the Japanese

anthropologist Kawakita Jiro described by Haselden (2003). The process is to group the different ideas into categories and then apply new names to each category. The process is described:

First, the students should brainstorm. Second, the students should organize the information and add other relevant information as appropriate. Finally, the students should label the naturally formed categories (Haselden 2003).

For lists of brainstormed ideas, the facilitator can write symbols beside the ideas; if on cards and

**Vignette 11:** When in a large hall working with a community playwright, I realised it was necessary for the group to brainstorm some ideas but there was no convenient wall to work with. Also, the only paper was A4 sheets. The group did the collation process on the floor.

there is space, physically group the ideas in clusters (Bergdall 1993). I especially like this process, and since finding that enabling a group do the work on the floor worked (Vignette 11). I have consciously used the floor on occasions in subsequent workshops. Some are adamant that the names for clusters of ideas should be determined only once all ideas have been

grouped, with none discarded. Also, that whilst in the process of grouping, the emerging groups should only be labeled with a symbol or letter not a number to avoid any semblance of hierarchy being predetermined (Bergdall 1993; SkyMark 2004; Stanfield 2002). Others believe, however, that as the clusters emerge, temporary names for the groups might also emerge. Otherwise, name the clusters with a number, letter or symbol (Williams 1996). This process is conceptually very similar (though simplified, and only accessing the knowledge of the group itself) to the research methodology Grounded Theory (Glaser 1998).

In addition to the opinion that forming groups and then naming them creates a better reflection of the content, many see the act of naming the groups by participants to be an important part of the consensus-making process (Spencer 1989; Stanfield 2002; Williams 1996). It enables individuals to communicate with each other and helps them to see each other's views. Whilst participants might find it hard to come up with a name that includes all the items in each group (Vignette 12), it is the

**Vignette 12:** A group of service providers had been struggling to find an appropriate name for a particular group of ideas. All were looking ready to accept a proposal, though obviously not entirely happy with it. When I directly asked the quiet policeman for his take on the matter, he said the precise three words that had evaded all others.

process of deciding the name that really brings the group together (Bergdall 1993). In fact it is recommended that individuals not be allowed to put symbols on their cards and come up and attach them themselves, as this loses the group consciousness. The naming is where 'buy in' by the individuals as a group is really occurring. The group needs to own the naming

process. If pushed for time, it is better to get small groups to come up with names rather than the facilitator take the list away and come up with names for the group to ratify later (Stanfield 2002).

The facilitator's role in this process of naming the groups is to read the clues from participants and

**Vignette 13:** A community group already had many ideas they wished to pursue. Rather than quiz them to help identify the rationale for the projects, I took the group through a visioning process. After identifying 4–5 broad 'visions', I asked them to allocate their project ideas according to which vision each would help achieve. There was also an 'other' category where projects that did not fit the visioning categories could be placed.

assess whether all are happy with the final name. The facilitator should not provide a name for the grouped ideas. Whilst this approach does seem to be the most favoured, there is not absolute consensus. Gilles (1998) suggests the facilitator should first ask the group to identify a number of categories by scanning the list of ideas, and then construct the affinity diagram (the clustered list) by fitting the brainstormed ideas into the

categories. Vignette 13 also illustrates a situation where it was best to fit the new ideas into pre-defined groups.

When working with large numbers of people Wendy Sarkissian et al (2003) use a two-stage approach with table leaders providing categories at the table level (after each table has done brainstorming) followed by the top categories being written on moveable 'Post-It' notes and taken forward to the front of the room. Here, (in total silence) the group as a whole combines the top ideas from each table into ten, unnamed, columns. Anybody can move any Post-It note, until everybody is happy with the groups. All stay where they have been placed (Sarkissian et al. 2003).

**Vignette 14:** During one workshop, a wide range of ‘visions’ had been created. Asking the group to work through a Technology of Participation process using cards with everyone was too in depth, and wore everyone out. I should have carried out a form of ranking beforehand, or a less rigorous method of collation.

Thus while there is a preponderance of those recommending that the product of a brainstorm should be first grouped then named, it is neither an absolute nor without variations (Vignette 14). Of greater divergence was whether the collation should occur before or after some form of ideas ranking. The

popular Open Space Technology process is a major variant. Once the brainstorming phase of an Open Space exercise has occurred, the next steps are: ranking – convergence – action (Owen 1997).

There are instances where the collation or grouping process is omitted completely: after brainstorming, the issues might be ranked according to priority (Sarkissian & Walsh 1994) or potentially with a large list of options, voting on the total list can quickly reduce it to manageable proportions without endangering group commitment (Hackett & Martin 1993). Three variations of reducing a brainstormed list by direct voting are also offered. The first is where participants choose two or three each from the list, and write these down on sheets of paper. Total the number of votes for each item. Another method is for the facilitator to simply ask; ‘who likes this idea?’ in which everyone can vote for as many items as they like. The third is for participants to choose about ten items each, and rank each item on a one to ten scale. Again, total the number of votes for each item. A further variation is suggested, in a situation where an immense amount of data was collected over a five-year period. From this data, a random selection of 100 entries was drawn. Each of these was first assessed for clarity, and then groupings made from the 100 entries drawn (White, Behara & Babbar 2002).

Whilst it is possible to move directly from a brainstormed list to a ranking process, even if a collation process is used, it is often still necessary to rank the collated groups. Again, it appears that it is

up to the facilitator to judge whether to make a preliminary consideration of criteria before carrying out the ranking. For this there are a variety of multi-voting techniques available. Hunter et al.(1992) outline four decision-making processes, (collective, majority rules, individual, sub group) but recommends whole group collective decision making rather than any formal ‘voting’ method. Theo-

**Vignette 15** In a workshop comprising mostly service agency workers, but with one public housing resident, participants had to rank issues using sticker dots. The public housing resident’s delight was obvious when she realised that she had a voice and that it was of equal worth to all others in the room.

retically, once a group has gone through a brainstorming and collation process, discussion would be a good method for the group to decide on their priorities. Unfortunately, discussion tends to favour quick thinkers, or members with the most power, and any result is likely to be the one they like the best,

not necessarily an inclusive outcome of what the group thinks. Formal ranking processes can help in this situation (Vignette 15).

There appear to be two major formal voting methods or variations to the traditional ‘first past the post’ voting technique, and myriad variations of technique with each. The two major variations are sequential voting and multi voting. In sequential voting the intention is to obtain a graded reaction, using techniques such as the ‘fist to five’, which works well to get a general idea of where people’s priorities lie. In this, a closed fist represents a rejection of an idea, five spread fingers high acceptance, four fingers less acceptance and so on (Gilles 1998). A variation is participants holding hands in the air. This is similar to the common questionnaire process of asking respondents to indicate their preference on a Likert scale. The process can also involve participants placing a mark on a continuous line between two extremes. In terms of techniques, facilitators can use all those listed on the DVD and more for sequential voting. At the end of an Open Space Technology process, there is a considerable amount of material around each of the topics and, as mentioned previously the facilitator requests participants to prioritise the issues/topics rather than collating the results. Using a prioritising process of the total number then takes a considerable time to tally as a whole, and Owen



(1997) recommends electronic tallying processes. A less high-tech method for ranking in all kinds of situations though is sticker dots.

Sticker dots are a useful way for participants to see a visual representation of how the group as a whole is thinking. Participants can place one, two or three dots on any item, though if there are many people (eg. over 60) it might be better to only give participants one dot each. There are three major advantages of using sticker dots as a ranking tool. It is quick, it is easy (thus not favouring

**Vignette 16** When working with a group of graziers, there was concern about participants being influenced by each other in an open voting system, but it was desirable to have the visual impression of sticker dots to generate further discussion. Participants first recorded their votes on individual sheets. These sheets were then randomly redistributed in the group. Group members then transferred the vote on the sheet they had in front of them onto the 'public' sheets. This created the desired collective impression.

those with high-level skills) and the results are highly graphic and visible. While the result might not reflect any one individual's preference, there is no doubt it reflects the thinking of the group. Once participants have placed the dots, it enables a conversation to take place around the findings themselves, rather than any one particular personality of the group (Williams 1996). This is possible even when there is concern about

'group-think' influencing how people will vote (Vignette 16). Sticker dots can provide instant feedback as to the collective feeling of the group, and also allow continuum voting where dots are placed on a line between two extremes (Wates 2000).

Continuum voting is close to ranking and scoring in concept, as it enables people to move beyond individual differences and concentrate on the data itself. The important element of all the visual analysis tools is not necessarily the result of the analysis, but the sharing of the information and the participants' discussion. It is the process of doing the analysis that counts, not the final product

**Vignette 17:** At the beginning of a workshop process, I asked participants to brainstorm ideas for the name of the agricultural program they were developing. Throughout the workshop, participants indicated their preference by placing ticks against the ideas. Towards the end of the workshop, they spent time considering just the top three ideas, and voting again on those.

(Pretty et al. 1995). This leads into the idea of multi voting.

The second major variation is to carry out more than one round of voting. An example of this is in the DPI/AWI (Dpt. of Primary Industries/Australian Wool Institute) workshop for participants to work out a name for the program they were developing. This is explained further in Vignette 17. The process is

useful in complex situations and can involve developing criteria (either by participants or the planning facilitator) against which to rank items. It is then possible to vote against each criterion and sum the totals, or carry out a further round of voting (Dick 1991).

Multi voting is simply a process that allows for more than one round of voting on a particular issue. The exact process is not necessarily different to those used in sequential voting, though it is often the case that the ‘ends’ of the first round of voting are considered as givens before the second round is carried out. I used this process in the ‘Quest for Regionally Significant Projects’ in SW Qld. After the first round of voting on the 64 ideas generated, the top 3 and bottom 20 were taken as given. More information was provided for those remaining and the community invited to vote again.

There is considerable overlap between voting for a decision after a brainstorming process, and ranking and scoring as a participatory form of analysis. Two ranking-based systems used more often in analysis, rather than decision-making (though not always) are:

- Pairwise ranking, seen to be best when comparing items against each other.
- Matrix scoring, scoring items on a matrix against different criteria (Pretty et al. 1995).

Whilst the techniques used in analysis and evaluation are the same in many cases, the desired outcome situation is subtly different. Usually the ranking carried out at the end of a brainstorming and collating process is to decide on some form of action. That is even if the action decided upon is to

have further discussion and carry out a further form of voting or ranking. However, in analysis, the ranking and scoring systems, although often technically the same method as used in decision making, are to help participants to develop a greater awareness or understanding of their world.

A common process methodology is to break the larger group up into smaller units, though there does not seem to be any specific optimum number. This is perhaps because it is possible to define group effectiveness in a variety of ways. This includes numbers of decisions, problems solved, intensity of emotional experience (Parker 1980) and while the planning facilitator is concerned mainly with decisions being made, a group happy (or happy enough) to be together is a more productive group. However, power in any group is not equal and this is especially true when working across sectors of society around a common issue (Oliver 2002). Traditionally run groups (without a facilitator) become increasingly unproductive as the group size increases. This is especially the case with complex problems (Fried 1972). A group of between five to seven members is considered the optimum, though I have broken a group of six into three groups of two when one participant was a particularly dominant individual. Generally though the group size should be small enough to allow the less confident to be part of discussions, while large enough to allow shifts in roles and withdrawal from embarrassing situations (Parker 1980). Once a sub group gets beyond this size, there should be a separate facilitator to each table (Sarkissian, Cook & Walsh 2000). In Open Space, where the ideology is to not have additional facilitators it is still recommended that when there are a number of sessions with similar topics, that they not be combined. It is considered preferable to have ten people at each session able to contribute, rather than twenty in the same session feeling frustrated or not actually participating (Owen 1997).

**Vignette 18:** The Barbarian Neighbourhood Association had a formal document describing a sub-committee process for decision-making. However, whenever a sub committee developed a plan of action and reported back to the whole group, the whole group dismembered the plan. This led to ongoing frustration and resentment for all members.

The traditional way for large groups to work on complex problems is to split a problem up into small components each tackled by a subcommittee. Unfortunately, any group working through a problem and coming up with a decision underestimates the opposition (Vignette 18). Considering the time and energy that has gone into making the decisions, there is an ex-

pectation that all will applaud them. Unfortunately, it is usually exactly the reverse. The logic and commitment to the decision by those involved in the process is very different to those not involved (Dick 1991). Williams (1996) provides a note of caution about having small groups working on different parts of a problem, stating that it should only be used when there is an impasse. However, small teams working on different aspects of the same problem can work on information gathering. In other words, small teams working separately to the main group can be effective if restricted to finding information and reporting back for the whole group if it then makes a decision based on the information presented. This compares with the common sub-committee process of a small group making a decision and reporting back to the larger group. There is some thinking that once a group has agreed to the broad directions, a small group that is specifically interested in the project can carry out implementation planning. They then report back to the plenary session (Bergdall 1993). This idea can even extend to individuals being able to make decisions within boundaries agreed to by the whole group (Hunter et al. 1992). This is a microcosm of the larger picture in which a hierarchical communication structure works best within the group for simple tasks and a decentralised one for complex tasks (Parker 1980).

So while it is not 'wrong' to have different groups looking at small parts of the problem, the essence of participatory decision making is to have all included, especially in complex issues. While not allowing enough time, and having a changing group membership are two critical negative factors

which result in a group not functioning (Shields 1991) another pitfall to avoid is ‘group-think’. This is where individuals within the group will modify their judgments to outwardly agree with the more dominant members. This is more prevalent in close-knit groups of participants where the group members support the individual in other ways outside the group itself (Parker 1980). There are no absolutes, just indications of better ways of working that will always require judgments being made by the individual that is dependent on a particular situation. Once it has been decided to create smaller groups who will consider the same question or issue, the optimum process is to start with the individual, working out to a collective viewpoint.

After ensuring that participants clearly understand the question, and are perhaps even given some examples of ideas, the concept of ‘Think/Pair/Share’ is for individuals to have time to consider the question and then discuss their response with others. This might be with pairs forming into quartets, or it might be with a larger group. When small groups of two or three first think privately about the topic in question, then discuss their ideas with one or two others, the procedure fulfils a number of functions. It enables people to have time initially to contemplate the issue privately, and by then talking to just a few others provides a ‘safe’ environment in which to express themselves and test their ideas or feelings. Lastly, by having the small group report back to the whole, it helps clarify and build on others ideas (Williams 1996). This process is recommended with a number of variations, including the individual being asked to select the best three or four before beginning to share, and either the clearest or preferred ideas written on cards (Stanfield 2002). The facilitator’s responsibility is to provide the right tools for the group to achieve the best solution in the time, keep the group focussed until it makes a decision, and sum up at the end (Shields 1991). Unfortunately, it is possible to carry out a perfectly acceptable change methodology, except that the problem is not suited to that methodology (Cowan & Beck 1996).

## **Conclusion to the Chapter; Working with Groups**

Working with groups is not an exact science, but an art requiring skills and experience. While the literature shows there is some general level of agreement across the topic, there are no absolutes.

The areas that have a greater consensus are:

- Ensuring that the space is comfortable and adequately set up for participants to communicate with each other.
- Having all stakeholders involved in a problem considering the whole problem, not sub committees.
- Using a variety of different techniques to:
  - Collect ideas/gain input from as many participants as possible.
  - Enable the group to synthesise commonalities from the variety of ideas.
  - Enable the group to come to an agreed decision.

Beyond such wide parameters, how the facilitator actually runs the group is extremely diverse and dependent upon personal style and experience. The evidence suggests that a planning facilitator needs a 'toolkit' of various techniques to enable a group to work together. This is in addition to having the skills to determine when and how to use the most relevant process, together with the capacity to actually do it. The DVD does not highlight many of the ambiguities expressed in the literature, suggesting that there is also a need to consider and plan for a variety of situations, none of which might replicate the others.

## **Reflection on the ‘Working with Groups’ content of the DVD**

The primary learning from this literature based reflection on the DVD content is that the DVD appears almost doctrinaire compared with the possibilities and ambiguities expressed in the literature. However, the DVD does place an emphasis on some of the major themes, such as the brainstorm – collate – rank process that the literature supports to a large degree, albeit not as a definitive rule without variations. Equally those that consider it, generally support the other major theme of breaking down large groups into smaller ones. The manner in which it is preferable to have the whole group work on a problem rather than sub-groups working on part of the problem and reporting back is interesting on two counts. The first is how this area does not seem to be tackled to a great degree in the literature, the second being the distinction between a sub-group developing information compared to one making decisions. The DVD does not identify this at all.

The traditional role of a facilitator is enabling a group to make or reach a decision. The development specialist (or planning facilitator) is interested in the problem solving or design process itself. It is this process of purposeful change that provides meaning and direction to development. It is linking group processes with the idea of generative change that is the essence of participatory development. Thus the planning facilitator needs to understand this design process to be effective.

## **Chapter 7**

### **The creative cycle**

This chapter looks at the generative change process, and how a planning facilitator might assist a group to achieve purposeful change in a structured manner. It starts by examining terminology and the process of change itself, leading to a consideration of the system proposed in the DVD presentation. An analysis of the particular methods explored in the DVD follows, and compares these methods with those identified in the literature review. After this literature review based reflection, the chapter concludes with some learnings concerning the 'Creative Cycle' content of the DVD.

The title of the relevant portion of the DVD is 'The Creative Cycle'. However this title is only partially accurate. The section is concerned with how change is made. Some components of this process are creativity, problem solving and generative learning. Creativity itself is complex, and has defied many attempts to define it precisely

From a scientific point of view, the products of creative thought (sometimes referred to as divergent thought) are usually considered to have both originality and appropriateness. An alternative, more everyday conception of creativity is that it is simply the act of making something new. Although intuitively a simple phenomenon, it is in fact quite complex (Wikipedia 2006).

The potential areas in which to consider the idea of creativity include the person or group, the context, the product, the process. All of which can affect the success or otherwise of the outcome of a creative act (Nagasundaram & Bostrom 1994). It is possible to solve problems without creativity, such as researching to see if somebody else has already solved it. However if working with a group



there needs to be a process for them to make this decision. As previously developed in Chapters 5 & 6, the planning facilitator is working within the context of a group wanting to make change in some aspect of endeavour, such as a project or program. Ideally this should be in such a way to ensure that individual or personal growth and change (generative change) occurs. Whilst creativity and problem solving are often components of generative change, each is possible to exist in its own right. Wikipedia lists 22 common methods of problem solving, including ‘lateral thinking’, ‘hill-climbing’, ‘research’, and ‘trial and error’ (Wikipedia 2006) which demonstrates that there is no one set way to solve problems. It is rather through the complex act of ‘design’ that purposeful change is made (Luka & Lister 2000). With this in mind a better title might have been ‘The Design Process’ or ‘Generative Change’ or even ‘The Learning Cycle’, all of which were considered but rejected. ‘Design’ because of its narrow association with the applied arts, ‘Generative Change’ because I felt it might not mean anything, and ‘The Learning Cycle’ because of its use in the education field. I finally decided to utilise the Wikipedia common definition of creativity, as “making something new”, together with the term ‘Cycle’ to suggest that it is a continuous process of making new things. Thus the context for this section is around enabling a group go through the complex nature of creativity, design, problem solving and generative change. A complex and not necessarily logical process. Perhaps sub-consciously, I also liked the potential reference to Gino Severini’s cycle.

Because of this complexity there are many attempts to create simplified versions for specific tasks. For example, there are plenty of design principles for all manner of engineering or specific design endeavours. I have developed my own approach to architectural design, an approach that works for me. However there is no one generalised design process to use across all engineering or general design problems that will ensure guaranteed acceptance by others of the product or decision (Chen et al, 2004; Davis 1989). However, planning and design activities are necessary to carry out, as “plans are how the group is going to arrive at what it wants to accomplish” (McFarlane, Carpenter & Youl

1996), but while there is no one method, there are many different ‘generic’ planning methodologies available (Boothroyd 1991). Thus while this section of the DVD is called ‘The Creative Cycle’ it is not solely about creativity, but a general design approach. In Table 3, I analysed 22 design or problem-solving methodologies described in the literature reviewed to see whether the approach documented in the DVD is credible.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	j	k
Reference	process	first	analyse	vision	plan	action	evaluate	Last	type
(Sushil 2000)	1)analyse situation 2)actor (characteristics of those involved) 3)process (what is or might be changed) 4)learn (from the potential change) 5)action 6)performance	analyse situation	y		y	y	y	evaluate	not stated
(Moynihan 2004)	1)assessment and plan 2)implement and monitor 3)evaluation 4)adoption	analyse situation	y		y	y	y	act	circle
(Zarafshani, Azadi & Monfared 2004)	1)plan 2)act 3)observe 4) reflect	plan			y	y	y	evaluate	circle
(Future Search 2004)	1)focus on past 2)focus on present (internal and external) 3)future vision 4)identify common ground 5)plan action	analyse situation	y	y	y			plan	not stated
(Onyango-Ouma, Aagaard-Hansen & Jensen 2004)	1)investigate health issues 2)develop visions 3)take action 4)facilitate change	analyse situation	y	y		y		act	not stated
	1)choose the right idea and understand it well 2)investigate and find out more 3)report, discuss and plan 4)take action (individually and together) 5)discuss the results of the action 6)do it better and sustain the action	vision	y	y	y	y	y	evaluate	not stated
(Stanfield 1997)	1)objective 2)reflective 3)interpretative 4)decisional	analyse situation	y		y			plan	spiral
(Butler 1996)	1)situation: define the current situation 2)target: define the desired situation or state 3) proposal: the best course of action	analyse situation	y	y	y			plan	not stated

(NSW Premiers Department 2006)	1)establish local goals 2)develop indicators for the goals 3)design a research plan 4)gather the data 5)analyse findings 6)develop action plans 7)evaluate progress, evaluate the process 8)share the findings	vision	y	y	y	y	y	evaluate	not stated
(Hill, Lippitt & Serkownek 1979)	1)formulate problems 2)generate proposals for solutions 3)forecast the consequences of solutions proposed 4)plan action 5)take action steps, and evaluate outcomes.	analyse situation	y	y	y	y	y	evaluate	not stated
	1)accept the situation 2)analyse 3)define 4)generate ideas 5)select 6)implement 7)evaluate	analyse situation	y			y	y	evaluate	not stated
	1)explore problem 2)prioritise development 3)evaluate program	analyse situation	y				y	evaluate	not stated
	1)define the problem 2)set and prioritise objectives 3)select solutions 4)try the solutions 5)evaluate the solutions.	analyse situation	y	y			y	evaluate	not stated
	1)assess needs 2)set goal 3)plan action 4)implement 5) evaluate	analyse situation	y	y	y		y	evaluate	not stated
(Kebede et al. 2001)	1)prepare and mobilise stakeholders 2)prioritise issues and stakeholder commitment 3)formulate strategy and implement 4)follow-up and consolidate	stakeholder mobilisation	y		y	y	y	evaluate	not stated
(Parker 1980)	1)define the problem 2)analyse it 3)develop alternative solutions 4)select the best one and render it effective.	analyse situation	y		y	y		act	not stated
(Ceridwen 1992)	1) identify problem 2)analyse cause, solve problem 3)implement 4)evaluate	analyse situation	y			y	y	evaluate	not stated
(Williams, Lacy & Smith 1992)	1) speculate – create new options 2)analysis (evaluation) or new options 3)decision and act 4)evaluate	vision		y		y	y	evaluate	not stated
(Davis 1989)	1) identify objectives and goals 2)involve all the skills and information available 3)analyse resources available, market situation, construction methodologies etc. 4)test and analyse solutions	vision	y	y			y	evaluate	not stated
(Wates 2000)	1)what is wrong? 2)what is your dream? 3)how can it happen?	analyse situation	y	y	y			plan	not stated
(Spencer 1989)	1)vision 2)underlying contradictions 3)strategic directions 4)systematic actions 5)implementation time line	vision		y	y			plan	spiral
(Norman 1998)	1)goal 2)intention 3)action sequence 4)execution 5)evaluation 6)view of the world	vision		y	y		y	analyse situation	circle

**Table 3: Creative Methodologies**

The table documents a variety of different problem solving or design processes described in the literature reviewed. It is not an exhaustive search, but demonstrates the variety of thinking around the topic.

In this analysis, column ‘b’ records each of the stated parts of the methodology. Column ‘c’ identifies an interpretation of the starting point of the sequence and column ‘j’ an interpretation of the end-point. Columns ‘d’, ‘e’, ‘f’, ‘g’, ‘h’ are the areas of the problem-solving process used as the ‘Creative Cycle’ in the DVD, with a ‘y’ identifying whether I consider the process has a corresponding step. The final column identifies whether the process is cyclic, a spiral or simply not stated. Thus the literature not only shows that the creative design process is ‘fuzzy’, but even without making a comprehensive literature search, identifies 22 quite different problem solving or design methodologies.

Creative process elements	Number of methods including element /22
Analysis	18
Vision	13
Plan	15
Action	12
Evaluate	15

**Table 4: Elements within Methodologies**

This table identifies the number of times each process element was included out of the 22 different systems analysed. Whilst not all contain those in the DVD, across the range there is more than half of each element

Allowing for differences in terminology, there are many commonalities between these 22 methods. These can be seen in Table 4 – ‘Elements within Methodologies’ which illustrates that there is a preponderance of methods that explicitly suggest doing some form of analysis, together with an almost equal number that include some form of planning and evaluation as part of the cycle. The numbers of methods that also include ‘Action’ and ‘Vision’ are also significant.

	Beginning of process	End of process
Analysis	14/18	1/18
Vision	6/13	
Plan	1/15	5/15
Action		3/12
Evaluate		9/15
(Stakeholder analysis)	1/1	

**Table 5: Start and End Elements**

Whilst there is no uniformity in detail, there is a general approach reflected across all 22 problem solving processes. What this suggests is that there are no absolutes, but that there are some common principles.

Looking at the order of these elements (Table 5), by far the majority of those with an ‘Analysis’ step start with it, though six start with some form of ‘Vision’. For some, identification of the current situation is crucial before an individual or group is able to move on to the next stage or cycle of the process (Cowan & Beck 1996), and groups need a common understanding of what exists in order to start forming a collective solution (Brown & Bennett 1995). There is though considerable emphasis on the need for vision or objectives to be clear: "if you don't know where you are going, then how will you know when you've arrived?" (McFarlane et al. 1996 p.17). Planning without a vision has no context (Chalcraft 1995), and while the action and evaluation cycle commences with a view of the world (analysis), action cannot happen until a goal or vision is generated (Norman 1998). The widely used Technology of Participation (ToP) strategic planning process starts with a focus question and moves towards developing a common vision (Spencer 1989). Creating a vision and developing common goals is a central part of empowerment (Honold 1997). Almost half of those processes that include ‘plan’ end with that activity, and the majority of those with an evaluation step end the whole process with that.

As to whether the processes are linear, circular or spiral, by far the majority make no specific claim. Whilst some of the methodologies are circular, suggesting that the start of the process is not entirely relevant, by far the majority have a start and finish point, even if defined to be a spiral or cycle.

Reflecting on the 'Creative Cycle' described in the DVD, it would appear to be no better or worse an approximation of the chaotic nature of design, and mirrors the broad thrust of the methodologies cited above. It follows a system that commences with Analysis or Vision, leads to Planning, and finishes with either Action or Evaluation. Drawing on my experience as a designer, the reality is often rapid-fire movement between 'Analysis' and 'Vision' at the start of the process. Ideas are likely to occur at any stage, often even while preparing the brief. So there is a potential for the planning facilitator to allow group participants to bounce back and forth between 'Vision' and 'Analysis' before settling on a collective vision that is firm enough for all to support and start planning to achieve.

Not discussed is how design ideally starts from the 'big picture' and works to the detail, with many iterations of the problem-solving sequence in the process. The solo designer might understand this, and have many techniques to carry out the problem-solving process as a solo event, for it is through the repetition of carrying out these complex activities they become more skilled in the problem-solving process (Cowan & Beck 1996). When translated to the group situation this would make it important for a group to achieve action early on in order to keep the faith, and gain confidence in its own abilities to do things, (McFarlane et al. 1996). However, the context of this observation is in keeping up group morale, rather than the technical process of working from the outside to the detail. A participatory development process designer working with a group requires more formal skills and techniques to ensure that the whole group is involved in this iterative process. Thus when working with a group, it is necessary to have a knowledge of methods that will enable the whole group work

through any or all of these stages, at the right time. There is a wide variety of techniques available that ‘fit’ within the different parts of the creative cycle, together with new ones being constantly invented. Literature on the methods available for a group to carry out an analysis suggests that there are many permutations of those covered in the DVD (Kaner 1996; Pretty et al. 1995; Williams 1996).

Participatory Rural Analysis (PRA) is one of many variations on the theme of engaging people in the development process. The techniques that make up PRA are often merely mechanisms to enable empowerment and participation in development (Robinson 2002), and PRA facilitators make use of a variety of tools that enable participants to analyse their own reality. These usually include: Venn diagrams, transect walks and various ranking and scoring systems (Robinson 2002), open-ended interviews, focus group discussions, matrix ranking, mapping and seasonal and historical diagramming to bring out the ‘rich experiences’ and ‘local knowledge’ of village communities (Triantafyllou

**Vignette 19:** Public Housing residents who brainstormed, ranked and scored all the services available in their neighbourhood became aware that their grievances were not about lack of quantity or quality of service provision. Their desired life style was not going to be achieved through greater service provision.

& Nielsen 2001). I have found semi-structured interviews and mapping exercises particularly useful (Vignettes 19 & 20), especially when working on a new project. Through selected targeting and appropriate questions the technique can engage those not normally wanting to be engaged. This also helps ensure that participants who have a consciousness of the group’s own history can engage in their own development (Botchway 2001). A ‘Journey Wall’ is an extremely powerful technique for a group to

**Vignette 20:** Conducting semi-structured interviews with all senior public servants, Councillors, key industry personnel at the start of work in SW Queensland enabled contacts and linkages to be made. It also provided an opportunity for these important stakeholders to have input into the process in a responsive way.

explore its common heritage. It provides long-term members (or those involved in the topic for a long time) with an opportunity to display their knowledge and wisdom on the subject, and new members, or those with less experience, the chance to see their input in a broader context (Williams 1996). At a

broader level, PhotoVoice<sup>4</sup> is a mechanism through which people make private knowledge into public knowledge (Lykes, Terre-Blanche & Hamber 2003) and Video enables people without traditional communication skills - such as literacy - to convey their realities (Mayo 2000). White (2003) found that using facilitated visual analysis techniques enabled group members develop their own reality. As the information (from the interviews) was 'unpacked' and mapped, the group itself went through a valuable learning process (White 2003). Whilst the total cycle for change might go through a series of processes, learning can occur at each stage (Department of Sustainability and Environment Victoria 2004). The role of a development facilitator is not mechanistic but more of an art form. Sometimes a common vision is identified at the start of a change process, and can be modified at this early stage. The DVD identifies some, but not all, legitimate analysis and visioning exercises. There is no shortage of methods available, knowing when and how to implement them is a key skill.

One aspect of visioning is to assess the degree to which a group should stretch themselves, or to establish and refine a safe common vision that they can all work towards achieving. While a major element of any change process is to have some idea of vision (McFarlane et al. 1996) and a step by step process should be provided in order for people to move from one position to another, the vision element should relate to the group's own situation (Cowan & Beck 1996). It needs to be visionary, yet not so general as to provide no direction for the project, eg: 'Improving standards of living' is too general (Samset 1993). In addition, there should only be one purpose for a project. Too often there are multi-purposes, which leads to confusion and lack of motivation (Samset 1993). Visioning exercises carried out with a group are important for success, but must be carried out in a supportive environment (McFadzean 2001). There are different techniques available to enable groups to achieve different degrees of 'paradigm shift'. Deciding which visioning exercise to use is dependent

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<sup>4</sup> PhotoVoice is where participants are given cameras and instructions to take pictures of what are important to them in their environment. I used this to mixed results with public housing residents. Video can also be used for the same purpose.



on whether the intent of the exercise is to preserve the existing paradigm, stretch the existing paradigm, or break the existing paradigm.

Paradigm-preserving techniques for creating new visions include; “brainstorming, brainwriting, hexagons, 5W + H, force-field analysis and Word Diamond” (McFadzean 1999 p.374). Other than brainstorming, these techniques are not described in the DVD<sup>5</sup>. It is important for the overall success of the visioning technique to use the appropriate mechanism for the particular group. The techniques mentioned above do not pose many challenges for the participants. They are mechanisms that work within a group’s comfort zone (McFadzean 1999). This could be a number of small groups of two or three writing their own common vision. When all the groups have presented back to the others, the whole group can build one combined statement (Williams 1996). More challenging are paradigm-stretching techniques such as object stimulation and, “metaphors, rolestorming, heuristic ideation and assumption reversal” (McFadzean 1999 p.375). (Again, techniques not described in the DVD). Still more challenging are paradigm-breaking techniques, which are more culturally difficult. These include, “visioning, role-playing, dancing, singing and story telling” (McFadzean 1999 p.375). A commonly used technique of this kind is a guided visualisation where the facilitator reads out a framework and individuals imagine a ‘day in the life’ or similar in the future. The role of the facilitator is to seek positive visions, but to be careful not to bring in personal values or assumptions. In these more ‘paradigm shifting’ exercises it is important that people are ‘brought back’ and the facilitator is prepared for reactions from participants who may be effected by the process (New Economics Foundation & UK Participation Network 1998). Vignette 21 describes an example of this at a visioning exercise that I was a participant in. In determining what to do in

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<sup>5</sup> In the conclusion I identify that I am not totally familiar with many of these techniques, and that this is an area I would like to spend more time investigating in the future.

**Vignette 21:** At the end of a demonstration workshop on visioning, one lady was in tears. She could not imagine still being alive in 5yrs time.

the now, a vision of the desired state in the future is the starting point. Once a vision has been articulated, a strategic plan can identify the steps necessary to be taken to achieve that vision or

goal (Cowan & Beck 1996).

The literature describes planning as central to the design or problem-solving process, and yet it is an elusive concept. When asked for a definition of a plan, or ‘business strategy’, Professor Rick Oliver at the Owen Graduate School of Management, reports to being somewhat stumped for an answer. It is not a clear concise topic. There are numerous definitions of business strategy. Key words that come out are: direction, organising tool, objective, pattern of decisions, guide, course of action (Oliver 2001). Strategic planning is that which requires potentially new ways of doing things and adopting new directions. The probability is that the results will also require a new commitment to resources but the stakeholders will not see the benefits for some time. There is a presumption that the implementation will have a lasting impact (Brown & Bennett 1995). It appears that part of the complexity is that different fields have different terminology for the same thing, thus business and strategic planning are essentially the same - the process of taking an objective or vision and work-

**Vignette 22:** During a two-day workshop on Logframes, I felt that the challenge was how a group could complete one. The eureka moment came some months later when I saw the similarity between the Technology of Participation process and the Logframe.

ing backwards to see how to achieve it. It is the process of analysing and securing resources, gaining commitment and monitoring progress (Chalcraft 1995), which is very similar to a development NGO satisfying the increasing demand from donors and financiers for accountability in projects (Living-

stone 2001). Within the international development field there is a generally agreed format for laying out development projects, and a coordinated approach to definitions and terms. This key tool is the Logframe matrix (Orr 1999; Samset 1993), for which I attended a 2 day training workshop, see Vignette 22. The Logframe matrix is a methodology to assist in project design, not project manage-

ment or research. The Logframe arranges actions in a causal hierarchy, each causal event relating to one level of the hierarchy (Appendix 7 - pdf No.6). Each event is best described in a single sentence, without containing any 'follow through' words such as 'through' or 'by' (Orr 1999). The confusion in terminology exists not just between fields of endeavour, but also around the difference between 'strategic' and 'operational' planning. Thus marketing strategy is seen as long-range operational planning, and marketing tactics as short-range operational planning (Greenley 1989), though such similarities in terminology only add to the manner in which 'tactics' are confused with 'strategy' (Oliver 2001). Similarly, in Logframe usage, it is common for users to mix up outputs of a project (the concrete effects of actions) and outcomes (the results that the project hopes to achieve). Each belongs to a separate level of the hierarchy, and getting them muddled makes for difficult planning and evaluation (Samset 1993). Wikipedia (4 March 2006) defines strategic planning as:

. . . the process of developing strategies to reach a defined objective. As we label a piece of planning 'strategic' we expect it to operate on the grand scale and to take in 'the big picture' (in contra-distinction to 'tactical' planning, which by definition has to focus more on the tactics of individual detailed activities). 'Long range' planning typically projects current activities and programs into a revised view of the external world, thereby describing results that will most likely occur (whether the planner wants them or not!) 'Strategic' planning tries to 'create' more desirable future results by (a) influencing the outside world or (b) adapting current programs and actions so as to have more favorable outcomes in the external environment.

So whilst there is an acceptance of the existence of 'strategic planning', there is also a wide range of language and descriptors around what it is. Thus whilst not finding anything in the literature to sup-

port the description used in the DVD that ‘strategic planning’ answers the question ‘Why’ a program or project should be pursued, and that ‘operational planning’ answers the question ‘How’ a project should be made to occur, there is equally nothing to suggest that it is fallacious. What does seem to be clear though is that there is a requirement for a logical linkage between a desired outcome or vision and the elements that make up a strategic plan.

The Technology of Participation (ToP) achieves a similar hierarchical structure with separate causal events found through asking the sequence of questions below, starting with the topic of the vision:

- What is your Vision?
- What are the underlying blockages to achieving the Vision?
- What can you do to overcome these blockages?
- What Actions do you need to take to achieve these Outputs? (Spencer 1989)

By using the Logframe matrix combined with the ToP questioning sequence a planning facilitator can enable a group to develop a strategic plan without even mentioning the words Goals – Outcomes – Strategies – Outputs (Butcher 2001). The usual planning sequence for this method is to commence with a vision and work down to concrete actions. However, the matrix framework can also work in reverse if necessary. This is where a group has an idea of doing something, which may or may not have any strategic importance. Asking the question ‘why?’ (Cowan & Beck 1996) or ‘for what?’ or ‘for what reason?’ (personal communication with Viv McWaters, Melbourne 2006),<sup>6</sup> enables the group to find out more about the rationale behind a statement or belief. This helps the group to be clearer about why it is considering a particular action or taking a strategic approach. Again, there appears to be no hard and fast prescriptions around what is or what isn’t the perfect strategic plan, though there is a commonality that suggests having a rationale for doing something is

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<sup>6</sup> Viv feels that asking ‘for what reason?’ puts people less on the defensive than asking ‘why?’.

preferable to not. Once a rationale for doing something is identified, an operational plan can be developed to establish how quantifiable, measurable, achievable actions can occur.

**Vignette 23:** The application by the senior Government Scientist to undertake an EMS project in the grazing industry had been successful. The project proposal outlined 12 major funding milestones over the course of the two-year project. This document listed the goals the team were to achieve. Working together as a team with 'who/what/when' cards, the individuals came together as a team, and created a workable plan to which all had contributed.

The 'who/what/when' index cards illustrated in the DVD enables members to see if and when there may be time conflicts and adjust activity planning accordingly. However, it is possible to further enhance commitment to action by asking questions such as: 'What is this timeline revealing to us?' or 'What do you notice?' (Williams 1996). Equally important is ensuring that if the 'who?' is not present, then someone who is present is

identified to be responsible for liaising with the one who is not (Dick 1991). It is an opportunity to enable a group focus on how to achieve an output (Vignette 23). Often participants will only complete a few cards, in which case it is necessary to ask focussed questions such as; "When are you going to decide where the meeting will be?" "How are you going to let people know about the workshop" "Will there be food?" (Williams 1996). These then become the activities that a group has to carry out because of its planning activities. The planning facilitator provides a structured process; the group members identify the actions themselves. However, before the group implements those activities, it is well for them to consider Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of their endeavours.

A strategic plan needs to be a live document. To be of value it cannot just sit on a bookshelf (Chalcraft 1995). This means that it requires constant modification and updating, to keep it alive. The M&E part of the process is essential for ongoing learning and iterative improvement. An evaluation plan is often required as part of a project funding application. The rationale for evaluation is to measure and assess the worth of a program (Evans 2000). However, those intimately involved in the

development and implementation of a program are likely to have a different view of the 'worth' of a program to that of an outsider looking in. The planning facilitator needs to help people overcome their concerns about 'failure' and the presumption that there is always a linkage between evaluation and accountability (Boothroyd 1991). Certainly, the evaluation of some projects can only occur over a long time period, thus there might be a longitudinal research component of a project by external evaluators (Evans 2000). This type of evaluation is different to participatory evaluation where group members make their own assessment of a project's worth. The latter is necessary as a learning activity and is part of the total ongoing process of incremental change (Boothroyd 1991). There needs to be a recognition of the difference between work carried out as external assessment and that of an evaluation process carried out by a group as part of their involvement in a total project (Campilan 2000). As with other areas, the DVD did not explore many of the subtleties identified in the literature. For example, the terms Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), which are often linked together, are in fact different activities. Estrella (2000) identifies the differences:

#### Monitoring

- Knowing who we are.
- Observing change.
- Kilometre check.
- Regular ongoing assessment.
- Routine reflection.
- Feedback.

#### Evaluation

- Reflection process to look back and foresee.
- Assessment of achievements/impacts over a longer period.
- Learning from experience.
- Valuing.
- Performance review. (Estrella 2000)

The easiest way to monitor the progress of a project is by comparing progress made to progress planned. It might be as simple as keeping photos (McFarlane et al. 1996), keeping diaries and meeting notes. There are often items that were thought to have been important at the time of planning that for various reasons did not materialise, and vice versa. There has to be an acknowledgment that

Level	Type of Learning
1	Learning facts, knowledge, processes and procedures
2	Learning new job skills that are transferable to other situations
3	Learning to adapt
4	Being innovative and creative - designing the future rather than merely adapting to it

**Table 6 Levels of Learning (Ward 2000 p.153)**

Similar to Bennett's hierarchy or Bloom's taxonomy, it is possible to evaluate a project according to different levels of meaning.

programs will evolve during their lifetime. This will require a degree of flexibility in their evaluation (Livingstone 2001). A further subtle aspect of the M&E part of the cycle is that there are different levels of learning (Table 6) (Ward 2000).

These are similar to those identified by Bennett's hierarchy (Bennett 1976) or the Snyder Evaluation process (Dick 1997). However, to what degree the participatory development practitioner utilises these more sophisticated evaluation techniques depends on the group and their project. These illustrate that there are many areas of learning available to a planning facilitator working with a group interested in this area. However, for generative change to occur the important part is for the group itself to undertake some form of evaluation. It is better to ask the simple questions of 'what worked?', 'what didn't work?', and 'what might work in the future?' than to ask nothing.

As the area of Monitoring and Evaluation is important for generative change, the DVD does not convey this importance sufficiently.

### **Conclusion to the chapter; The Creative Cycle**

In this chapter I looked at the creative process, and how a planning facilitator might assist a group to achieve purposeful change in a structured manner. I commenced with an analysis of a variety of different problem solving or decision-making processes, none of which was identical to the process demonstrated in the DVD. However, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the cycle proposed reflects the general principles for generative change. This indistinctness further demonstrates that a planning facilitator requires a high-level understanding of the creative process. In the analysis of the particular methods represented in the DVD that followed, when comparing them to those identified in the literature review, I found that there were many more methods than those covered in the DVD. In terms of planning, the major issue identified was how unclear this part of the process is, with considerable confusion over terminology and the meaning of various terms. Again, this demonstrates the need for a high-level understanding of the various methods in order to be skilled in their



use. I conclude the chapter with learnings concerning the ‘Creative Cycle’ content of the DVD after this evaluation through the literature review.

### **Reflection on the creative cycle section of the DVD.**

On reflection, the most dramatic insight is that it might be more accurate not to refer to any kind of ‘creative cycle’ at all. It might be more accurate to call the section, ‘Elements of Creativity’, with each of the sections laid out as a discrete part. This would then allow a planning facilitator to devise an appropriate workshop activity based on an analysis of the group, rather than to force some kind of process that is by no means true in all instances. However when considered against all the creative or problem solving processes documented in the literature, explaining the creative process in the form of a cycle could not be considered erroneous. Even if not exact, it provides a structure that can assist decision-making by the planning facilitator. In terms of the methods, skills and processes required by a participatory development specialist to carry through these tasks with a group, visioning exercises and the role of monitoring and evaluation should be further considered.

In terms of visioning, the literature identified categories of paradigm shift that a group might go through dependant on the type of visioning exercise they carried out. This makes good sense, though unfortunately it has not been possible to identify instructional descriptions for many of the techniques referred to. This suggests a need for more research in the area. It means developing a greater understanding of visioning and becoming more adept at using the techniques. This includes gaining a greater understanding of when to use one as opposed to another.

Concerning ‘monitoring and evaluation’ in participatory development, it might be more accurate, and cause less confusion to have used the term ‘learning’. This might also help differentiate those

activities carried out by a group for learning purposes from assessment activities by an external agent.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Engaging Others**

In this chapter I consider the role a development specialist might play in promoting stakeholder engagement as a strategy for others to use in creating and implementing successful projects. It considers the position of a consultant in relation to participatory development, while also examining some of the problems experienced by project owners when engaging other stakeholders in their projects and some potential approaches to overcome these problems. These approaches might be employed by a consultant, advocate, trainer or specialist resource. The chapter opens with considering a central issue encountered when working with a group who want to tackle a particular problem, or who are interested in creating a tangible product or service – the issue of power and empowerment.

This chapter reflects on the Engaging Others section in the DVD. It became a part of the DVD from realizing that there were a number of useful tools that I had come across, but which didn't fit the logic of the first two sections. It was in working through how to include these, but still have meaning, that I became more aware of the duality of being a specialist in the participatory development area whilst still working with a group. A situation I had been involved in was working with a Charleville group interested in improving sporting facilities. At a particular point they became aware of the need to engage others, in which case I needed to provide them with useful information that would enable them to design an engagement process.

In Chapter five I identified that a central issue concerning participatory development is that of power and empowerment. Whilst the issue of empowerment explored in that chapter demonstrated that it is considerably more complex than just those with power and those without, there are often groups with more power to influence what happens in a project, and those without power who are

influenced by the impact of a project. In other words, two significant stakeholder groups that are likely to exist are those with resources, and those without resources. For example one stakeholder group is one with power and resources that might have an impact on any solution generated, and the other is one whom the working group has power over. The issue of power is relative, not absolute. All groups will have the capacity to effect others in some manner, just as others have the capacity to affect the decisions and ability of the group to act unilaterally. Working as a consultant does not often result in working with those with limited power, however it does happen through some delegated process, or when acting in a voluntary capacity. It is of utmost importance to ensure that

**Vignette 24:** The interagency domestic violence group in SW Queensland produced a stakeholder map prior to developing projects to tackle the issue in the region. A key stakeholder identified was the CEO of a public health project with funds available for domestic violence projects. As she had given assertions that funds would be available for projects developed by the group, they were not concerned that this stakeholder did not attend. They were thus particularly disappointed when she funded projects of her design, and only partially their own.

stakeholders with power are included in the engagement process (Robb 2000), for while it is simpler to concentrate on delivery of outputs, the effectiveness is potentially negated when there are structural issues with power stakeholders interests at stake. Unfortunately the process of enabling a group to develop visions and plans is so exhilarating that there is a tendency for groups to avoid such unwelcome political realities (Eyben & Ladbury 1995). This occurred to me on a number of occasions,

most explicitly in my work with the interagency domestic violence group in SW Queensland, (Vignette 24). In allowing a group to ignore those with power there is always the potential of projects being designed but not implemented, resulting in higher levels of frustration and impotence. It is however more usual to be working with a group that has power and the issue is participants not appreciating the need to engage those with less. Regrettably, but understandably, the more power a stakeholder group has the less interest it has in empowering others. In fact, program managers often spend considerable energy pretending to empower others, without actually doing so (Sachs & Calhoun 1981). Development agencies (and Management groups) might say that they want to engage a particular stakeholder community, but unless they go through a significant change in their opera-

tional processes, there will continue to be a huge gap between the rhetoric and reality. There needs to be work done with this group (White 2003), for stakeholders with power must not only create a climate for creativity, but must also ‘walk the talk’ in regard to enabling participatory activities to occur (McFadzean 2001). When working with a sponsoring body, or a group with power over others, there needs to be more than just rhetoric and a will to engage with the stakeholder community. It takes developing skills and commitment that will also result in organisational change (Robb 2000). All the engagement processes in the world are futile if those with the power are unwilling to empower those without (CMA 1996). Some of the ways in which those with power evade the issue include:

- Working with ‘representatives’.
- Defining the problem too narrowly.
- Engaging after decisions are made.

A common response by this group is to engage stakeholder representatives. This often includes establishing a ‘management committee’ with representatives of all the various stakeholder groups. However, to gain the full benefits of stakeholder involvement it is necessary to work with more than just representatives of the stakeholder community. Engagement processes need to be positively constructed to empower and promote individual participation (White 2003). A second evasive action is to circumscribe the nature of the problem. The more tightly defined the ‘box’ or parameters of decision making retained by those with power, the less opportunities there are for genuine participation and empowerment. There is a sliding scale of participation and the potential benefits. The more confined the limits of a program, the less the benefits of any participation (Botchway 2001). This issue also occurs when those with power make the significant decisions, leaving other stakeholders to be engaged only in peripheral problems or details. Within traditional service delivery based society, participation potentially happens at two levels. At one level, it happens at the point of policy and program planning. At this level program promoters have to decide what level of participation to

involve the intended beneficiaries. At the second level, are the 'on the ground' facilitation and group process tools and techniques (Robinson 2002). The problem often occurring is that the promoters at the higher level do not ask the important questions. In considering ways forward though, there is yet again the problem of expertise. Unfortunately, whilst stakeholder analysis is considered a vital part of participatory development, there is very little in the way of techniques and data to enable groups carry this out (Kossoudji 2001). There are though likely to be three situations that participatory development specialists might find themselves in - adviser, advocate and specialist resource. An area in which a participatory development specialist might be engaged is as a consultant. A required function is to provide advice.

As identified in the previous chapter it is only possible to approximately define the creative process, with no specific and absolute commencement point. Thus, a development specialist will have to make a value judgment concerning the appropriate form to commence an intervention. Of all the twenty-two problem solving or design methodologies listed in the previous chapter, only one has identifying stakeholders as the first step in the process. It is also the only one that explicitly sees involvement and inclusion as a necessary part of the problem solving process. However, whatever the situation there has to be a context and history attached to the project or group and whilst the literature suggests that there is no 'absolute' place in which to 'start' a development process, and despite the lack of methods advocating stakeholder analysis as a starting point, there are compelling reasons for this to be the case. Thus as a consultant, the advice given might be not to offer advice, but to ask questions around stakeholders for a project:

What this requires is:

- Identification of Stakeholders.
- Learning about and learning from Stakeholders (Kossoudji 2001).

In terms of a stakeholder identification process, a simple starting point would be to ask the group: ‘who might be some other stakeholders in the project?’ (Strachan 2001). However to ensure that all stakeholder’s are being engaged, more rigorous process next steps would be to carry out a stakeholder analysis that looks at each stakeholders capacity to be involved, their interest in the issue or topic, and the development of appropriate ways to engage them (Kebede et al. 2001; Southern Cross University 2003). One technique is a three-step process:

- Listing the stakeholders in relation to a specific issue.
- Developing a long list of all potential stakeholders and tagging them by both interest and relationship to the issue, i.e.: those stakeholders that:  
are affected by, or significantly affect, the issue;  
have information, knowledge and expertise about the issue;  
control or influence implementation instruments relevant to the issue.

Mapping of stakeholders by different criteria or attributes in relation to the issue (Kebede et al. 2001)

To assist in answering these questions, using a mapping technique based on Arnstein’s ladder of participation could be used (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2005; Robinson 2002). There is criticism of Arnstein’s ladder in that it places considerable emphasis on power over and power under, with the covert implication that the higher up the better. In practice though, many engagement processes require a variety of different techniques and that the ‘higher’ or more engaging processes also include the ‘lower’ or less engaging processes (White 2003). Variations of Arnstein’s ladder, such as the IAP2 ‘Spectrum of Participation’ and the DSE ‘Spectrum of Communication’ attempt to address some of these issues. Before carrying out such detailed analysis though, it might be a component of the project that the stakeholder group is exceptionally wide, such as a whole

community. In this instance, it might require finding out who is interested in participatory development to start with. If the stakeholder group is wide, such as a physical neighbourhood, finding people interested in community engagement itself would be a first step.

Just as with any other development initiative, it is necessary to network and involve those who are interested in the topic of stakeholder engagement, including local community leaders, schools, etc (McFarlane et al. 1996). It is also necessary to be aware that stakeholder communities are diverse, which might well mean holding a number of different processes to engage different members (Hunter et al. 1992).

At this broad level of participatory development, there appears to be three different approaches that the participatory development specialist might use. These are:

- Only work with those that are interested in participatory development.
- Advocate on behalf of those without power for them to be included in the decision making process.
- Meet people ‘where they are at’, and enable them to make an informed decision as to how they want to proceed with their project.

The first is to only work with those that are interested in participation and empowerment (Robb 2000; World Bank 1996). This strategy ensures not wasting energy trying to persuade those not interested in participatory development to adopt it. It is though potentially contradictory to the second, advocating on behalf of those without power to be included in the decision making process. This is not advocacy for a particular project or development idea itself, but to enable other stakeholders (especially those without power) to be included in the participatory decision making systems (Eyben & Ladbury 1995). This might be necessary even when groups or individuals have ex-



pressed a desire for participation in the process. Any group that the planning facilitator is involved in will want to achieve something. The aims of that group could be as diverse as planting trees, creating next generation mobile phones or establishing micro finance cooperatives. Those who believe that their endeavours in such activities are worthwhile and useful will put considerable time and energy into ensuring that their project is a success. For the participatory development specialist, there is a belief that stakeholder engagement is worthwhile. It is a belief that a project, or designed output created with all stakeholder's views being incorporated at the time of conception and development will be considerably more robust than one developed in isolation and having to be modified at a later date to accommodate others' input (Pearl 2004). Thus, a planning facilitator having this belief will take on a responsibility to promote that others are involved in the activities of the group (New Economics Foundation & UK Participation Network 1998). This promotion role being advocacy as explored earlier in Chapter Five.

There are instances when the intention is for group members to take on the role of 'participatory development practitioner' themselves (Capacity Building). At these times, it is possible to play either one (or both) of two roles. The first is as a 'trainer', the second as an information rich knowledge base. Someone training others in the field would ideally have expertise in the area of adult learning and workplace training (Pretty et al. 1995). When in the role of a specialist, abiding by the same rules as any other specialist operating in a participatory development frame. That is providing value free useful information that will enable others make an informed decision.

In a general sense, the role of the specialist in participatory development processes should be, just as with every other specialist, a resource available to other decision makers (Rifkin 1985). There are three 'off the peg' facilitation processes suggested on the DVD. These were chosen for their usefulness in achieving some fundamental goals. The idea of presenting them in the DVD being how a

holder of specialist knowledge might be able to present to a group some alternatives or options from which they can make an informed choice on how to engage others.

As mentioned in Chapter One, Methodology, there is a tendency within the design world for reflection to be more akin to post completion rationalisation than reflection as a learning activity. I would suggest this is correct to a degree in that it happens, but it is not devoid of a learning opportunity. In considering the three techniques (Semi-structured interviews, Open Space Technology, Speak Out), suggested as suitable for a participatory development specialist to present to a group as unbiased information from which the group members could make an informed decision, there is only my experience to uphold its legitimacy. At the time they were chosen through a process of informally researched intuition, the reasons being that they seemed to be either core processes, or systems that I found personally useful as starting blocks in participatory development. One of the core elements I did not consciously identify at the time was how it is necessary for those with power to listen to those without power, rather than informing, advising, selling or manipulating them. At the time this idea was not fully formed, however it has since been formalised into the Community Engagement training carried out by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. The skill of active listening, or empathetic listening is a major element of counselling or coaching and underpins many empowering interventions, including two of the three chosen methods. These are:

Semi-structured interviews (sometimes known as open ended interviewing); a mechanism for a respondent to provide more information than that potentially anticipated by the questioner. This provides an element of power to the respondent for it allows them to discuss to a greater degree than a formal or fully structured survey the topic or extent of what the one with the power (the questioner) has control over. It is also valuable as a tool for building relationships (linking capital) with a stakeholder (Sociology Central 2005). Combining the idea with the ‘objective – reflective – interpretive

– decisional’ (ORID) conversational questioning sequence (Stanfield 1997) it provides a relatively simple but effective listening process.

The speak out provides a conceptually relatively simple alternative to a public meeting, but is specifically designed to enable organisers (those with power) to hear what others have to say on specific set topics (Sarkissian & Walsh 1994).

Open Space, a mechanism that whilst deceptively simple in its idea is also extremely powerful in its ability to enable and empower people discuss what is important to them (Owen 1997).

### **Conclusion to the chapter; Engaging Others**

This chapter again centred on the issue of power and empowerment. I considered the role a development specialist might play in promoting stakeholder engagement as a strategy for others to use in creating and implementing successful projects. It looked at how a consultant, advocate, trainer or specialist resource uses power when working with a group wanting to tackle a particular problem, or are interested in creating a tangible product or service. In doing so, this section of the work has brought the role of a participatory development specialist around full circle. As a direct consequence of their possession of specialist knowledge, the planning facilitator is a person with power, who in turn has a responsibility to empower others. This can be either by advocacy, or through the transfer of knowledge and capacity building.

## **Reflection on the DVD**

The first part of this DVD section provided tools to enable a group identify other stakeholders in their particular project. The first exercise (size of the problem) is probably extraneous, but hopefully does not cause confusion. Providing a simplified version of Arnstein's ladder is probably acceptable, however in current practice the IAP2 spectrum has been proving useful for groups to analyse their stakeholders. The second section comprising some standard or 'off the peg' facilitation and planning techniques is hopefully useful for beginner participatory development practitioners to attempt. A major omission (though it's usefulness as a project development model to those setting out on the journey was not fully understood at the time) being the 'converge – diverge' diagram (Kaner 1996) and World Café (Brown & Isaacs 2005).

This chapter concludes the literature based evaluation of the DVD. The next stage of Kolb's learning cycle is described as abstract conceptualisation. This is a process of either identifying what has been learnt with other known theories, or synthesising this new material with other learnings to generate new theories.

## Chapter 9

### Abstract Conceptualisation

Kolb's learning cycle describes a process where after the evaluation of a concrete activity or output, there is an opportunity to derive general rules describing that experience, or the application of known theories to that experience. This is described as 'abstract conceptualisation'. This element of the cycle is where links with other experiences are made and meaning is described, either as new insights or as possible conjecture and hypothesis. It is the starting point for active experimentation and the creation of the next concrete experience.

With regard to public architecture and spaces, the facilitation processes identified in the CD are being increasingly required by the development specialist to ensure engagement and buy-in by all stakeholders. This is in order to both reach optimum outcomes, but also enable constructive dialogue to occur between people with a common interest. In this way people become more engaged in events that have impact on their lives, building different types of social capital between them. In my current work with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, a 'concrete output' of how these skills are being taken up to develop agreed directions for projects and programs is outlined in the Epilogue.

Within the broader thesis more has been discovered than the 'methods, skills and processes' for participatory development. Of particular interest is:

- the idea of 'wicked problems' being the issues of today (domestic violence, mental health, drug and alcohol use/abuse) as opposed to 'tame problems' (building roads or bridges). At the same time is the role of control and choice in creating concrete experiences to tackle such issues (Rittel & Webber 1973).
- the centrality of 'generative change' in modern culture.

The facilitator in a workshop provides a framework for people to express themselves, listen to each other and assist them come to mutually agreeable development solutions or concrete outputs that will lead to achieving preferred outcomes. However this idea of creating frameworks that enable individual control and choice within the built environment was also explored during the 1960's.

In the 1960's the Archigram team identified how consumer society provides more than just goods



Fig 64: Plug-in City. Developed over the period 1962-4, this became one of the most celebrated concepts of Archigram. The idea was for dwelling units to be moved from one locality to another, hooked into a giant fixed infrastructure.

and services. Along with the instant city concept referred to in Chapter Four, they also explored how consumer society and contemporary technology could provide individuals high levels of control and choice in their environment. One of their most well known and explored concepts was the idea of the plug-in city (Fig 64 ). This was the idea of providing a framework into which people could 'plug-in' individual dwelling units. These ideas provide an insight into further levels of meaning to what is taken now for the everyday

within the environment. Whilst Le Corbusier was enthralled with the car as a piece of engineering, it took Archigram and others of the era (Banham 1971, Lord, Michels, & Schreier 1976) to see it's architectural potential. By looking at the total package of a consumer living pod that can be changed and disposed of, but plugged in to a service infrastructure, it is possible to see how the car and the highway system have the same relationship. Le Corbusier used technology as a conceptual basis to develop a new architectural expression within the built environment. It was an important step in breaking down the cultural preconceptions of the establishment. But as far as providing an environment that offered a liberating spatial experience with promises of control and choice, freedom and independence, through developing technology it was not the architects that provided it, but Henry Ford. Just as gothic architecture developed from initial buildings not much more complex



Fig 65: The advertisement for a Model T Ford shows a couple, having a picnic in the fresh air with the words 'Free and Independent' across the bottom. Conceptually, it is the same artefact (4 wheels, seats, engine and drive train) as today's cars.

than a barn to become over time an outstanding spatial experience full of meaning and an integral part of society, so with the car. In 1918 the Model T was only marginally more sophisticated than a horseless carriage, but was already promising Freedom and Independence to its adherents (Fig 65). Today, the car and the highway system is far more than something to use to go from A to B (Fig 66). There is a relationship between our consumer/industrial society and the car that is analogous between medieval society and the gothic cathedral.

Both provide a superb spatial experience through their built expression, both promise some form of utopia or ultimate freedom to participants. Compare the spatial experience of a peasant walking down a medieval cathedral (the sounds, the lights) with cruising down the freeway, (stereo on, climate control, lights passing and unfolding, moving gracefully between and around the others, able



Fig 66: The "liberation machine" Whilst still offering the same promise as the Model T, the car has become ever more sophisticated in what it can deliver.

to put the foot down at any moment one chooses - total control). The spatial experience that provides this conditional freedom is more than legal, it is the centre piece of the industrial/consumer society. The combination of the car and the freeway infrastructure provides a highly desirable life style (Fig 67). The newly retired with time and resources available

will take to the road visiting instant cities every night, often for years. Paradoxically, the car and highway system are so ubiquitous, so part of our culture that we don't notice that it's there. A Google search for the largest man-made structure in the world produces the great wall of China. No mention of the international highway system.

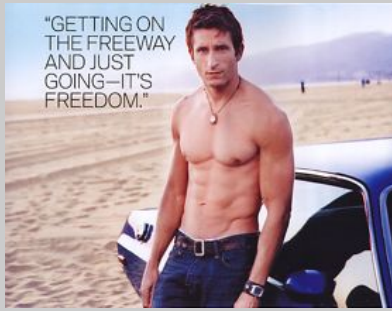


Fig 67: As expressed by Jonathan LaPaglia But it is not just film stars that enjoy the spatial experience of the car on the freeway.

Despite it's delights, I along with many am concerned at the environmental and social problems caused by the car based consumer society. Having lived and worked in Africa and knowing that 80% of the worlds resource use and pollution is caused by 20% of the worlds population, it is incomprehensible to imagine the car based society as we know it adopted globally. It is unsustainable. In fact I hope that the car along with the society that creates it has reached it's apotheosis. By

society, I mean the specific capacities of those involved in creating contemporary artefacts which is different to the idea of a culture of generative change. There is little call for stonemasons nowadays, but at the time when stone was the primary communication technology it was a principle skill in the culture of generative change. Effective generative change requires satisfying those human needs that are currently enabled by the car and freeway system. The car in itself is not a human need, but a strategy to achieve real human needs (Rosenberg 2003). Most often the need associated with the car is mobility, but in a practical sense legs can do the same. The underlying need is the liberating experience provided by the car, together with the capacity to gain new knowledge. The needs that are satisfied by the car and freeway system that have to be met in a different form are what this combination provides both as an experience in itself and what it provides as an end product to the travel. It is the dual qualities of spatial experience together with an ability to express oneself and learn from others that are in my mind the most important aspects of the car and consumer environment that require alternatives.



From serious contender, to the 'golden age'	Technology	Principle determine on city form	Structure or framework	Examples of cities established within that dominant era	Media for ideas	Outcome	
1000-1570	stone	buildings		Exeter, Winchester. Salisbury			
1570 - 1860	sailing	boats	water	Sydney, London, New York, Manchester (canal)	Goods and services, especially printing and personal travel	Increasing personal freedom of expression for more people	Increasing flexibility of system
1860-1950	steam	trains	railways	Birmingham, Pittsburgh, Delhi			
1950-2000?	oil	cars	highways	Los Angeles, Houston, Canberra			

**Table 7: Evolving technologies**

Over the last 1000 years there has been waves of different technologies, each of which has provided more people more opportunities for self expression and personal creativity. The communication of ideas has mainly occurred through sharing artefacts, and physical travel (meetings and personal exploration).

Whilst it is a responsive and technologically sophisticated environment, the car and freeway is only the latest in a long line of developments that have formed our cities (Table 7). The common thread with all these technological innovations is communication and the creation of technological systems that allow increasing numbers of people to expand their conception of time and space. This is both in expanding ideas and concepts about space and time, as well as providing more people opportunities for self expression.

## The emerging technology, it's society and environment

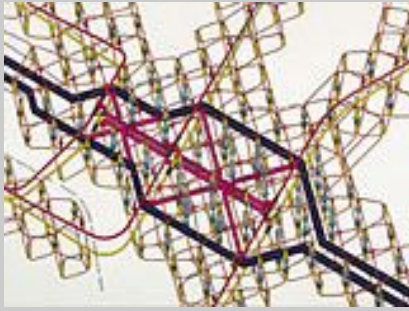


Fig 68: Archigram 1964. Infonet covering the world.

In 1964 Archigram conceived of an information network covering the whole world (Fig 68). They felt that this information net or framework would result in a metamorphosis of the built environment. It was only a matter of time before the engineers worked out how to do it. In an obvious way, the internet and digital revolution will provide the mechanism for more people to work from home and potentially travel less, which will have an impact on our society and built environment (Fig

69). A simplistic adaptation of new technology to maintain

the current paradigm. It is also really interesting to see the development of such proprietary software items as 'Eluminate', which allow interactive workshops and classrooms to occur using the net. However while this technology provides a system for communication and decision making, it is



Fig 69: The emerging digital revolution will impact our society and our environment in ways we can't imagine. I do though believe it is necessary to imagine the potential of a built environment in which people have control and choice, freedom of expression and meaningful communication between each other to develop and grow (Scott & Borgman 2003).

also, in a sense, unreal. For humans there are grounded needs, one of which is shelter. What this thesis demonstrates is the need for individuals to have the capacity to express their values and beliefs and be both involved in the process of generative change at all levels, the individual level and a

broader social level. To achieve sustainable, generative development there needs more than overlaying the new digital technology to existing concepts of social organisation.

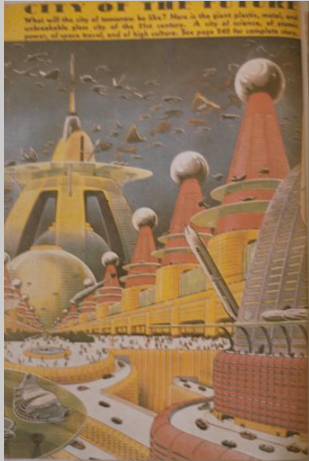


Fig 70: The not so instant city. Le Corbusier has not been the only one with grandiose ideas concerning how others should live. Portrayed is the completion of an idea, not what cities are really about, which is the continual development and expression of ideas.

Archigram identified that the city is not a fixed structure, but something that is constantly changing as it changes and adapts to new ideas. The idea of the ‘complete’ city is not tenable, and Messianic visions of rail-centric new cities without cars are just another form of romanticism (Crawford 2002) and as impractical as the science fiction, and not so science fiction, megatropolis’s also conceived in previous

years (Banham 1976) (Fig 70). However the contemporary paradigm of Archigram in the early 1960’s was the emergence of a broad scale consumer society, with no real environmental concerns at that time. Their explorations into individual expression and control and choice was achieved through the filter (or frame) of the consumer society. A contemporary of the Archigram network during the 1960’s was Andy Warhol. As an artist, Andy Warhol explored the meaning of consumer society. The explosion in the exchange of goods and services during this period lead him to state: “buying is fun, selling is work” (Warhol 1975) for consumerism enables people to experience new ideas and define oneself easily. However what Andy Warhol also demonstrated was that modern technology has made creating artefacts simpler. It does not take great technical skill to operate a photo-booth machine, a machine that can produce images of a quality once requiring years of apprenticeship to achieve. This might seem obvious, but when Landry and Bianchini (1995) write in the Demos publication, ‘The Creative City’ that: “We need to complement existing ways of thinking with new mindsets and additional methods for coping with change” (p.4) they do not mean enabling

more people to buy more stuff. Unfortunately their examples of a creative city are more akin to modern day versions of C18 civics, but the subtext is to enable people to create more, rather than consume more. In other words to use our understanding of technology to move from a consumer society to a generative society. This might seem a subtlety, but it places a different emphasis on the creation of goods and services, and even how we measure success. In the 1920's the Futurists were both inspired by technology for it's human potential, as well as the inspiration for their work. As with Archigram, we need to maintain that spirit, but realign the use of technology in a direction that is relevant for today.

At it's core, this difference is described by Karpman's (1968) drama triangle. The provision of goods and services in contemporary consumer society is defined by expressions of power. The control and choice provided by Archigram's concepts were (and are) dependent on the availability of an item that provides that control and choice. In other words the car provides considerable freedoms, but you have to own a car to exercise those freedoms. To own and drive one requires being successfully integrated into consumer society. The car has enabled many, but at the same time has disenfranchised others from participating properly in society (The under 17's, over 70's, or those without the money etc.). However the Welfare state and the service centre is characterised by the 'rescuer' part of the triangle. 'You poor thing, you don't have access to a car; we will arrange a bus for you'. The final sector being power played out as a 'victim' - 'We don't have a car, or a bus, what are you going to do about it?'. A different scenario would be more of an enabling framework, such as how facilitation provides a method to practice 'Reflective Practice', 'Action Learning', 'Action Research' or 'Design' in a collaborative manner, not as an elitist activity to be implemented by others.

We are going through a period of major social upheaval as adjustments are made to environmental realities, which will probably accelerate in the near future. A major learning in this research has

been how important gaining knowledge and understanding is for sustainability, and the role of action learning is in gaining knowledge and understanding. In creating the DVD, I identified that one of the roles of a participatory development specialist is to advocate for the less powerful to be heard and engaged in the creation of concrete outputs.

The idea of facilitation is to provide a framework in which others have the capacity to express themselves. I have already mentioned the role of facilitation in enabling stakeholders input to the creation and management of public land and buildings. In Chapter Two I used the built environment to illustrate how social ideas have changed over time. However as well as illustrating changing ideas, it also demonstrates that where development has been ‘successful’, there has been a gradual increase in the numbers of people able to express themselves within the built environment. At the time of the early renaissance and the rise in the power of secular society, there were only a few that had the capacity to express conscious thought as opposed to what is commonly known as the vernacular, or unselfconscious environment.



Fig 70: Low cost housing development in Melbourne during the 1860's boom period. Enabled by trams, everybody could afford their Vanbrugh inspired mansion,

Robert Smythson is considered one of the earliest architects within today's conception of the role (Wikipedia, 28 Jan 07). However, Wollaton Hall and Longleat could be considered early suburban houses. By suburban house, I mean that they are free standing family homes designed as an expression of the individual's tastes, as opposed to a multi-unit development created by someone anticipating someone else's tastes (Figs 70, 71). They are the expression of those with sufficient secu-



Fig 71: A low cost self-help housing development in Cape Town, South Africa. Over time, this will probably become as sought after an environment as Carlton or Paddington is today.

lar power to demonstrate their own identity in the built environment. Many others have found that an attractive idea and worth striving for. As an expression of individual values the suburban house is a liberating artifact. Within a prescribed set of rules that relate to set backs and overlooking, the consumer/owner in Australia has tremendous control and choice over what actually happens on their lot. The suburban environment provides a mechanism by which many people make choices, take responsibility and are accountable for

their actions (Fig 70). In other words, practice generative change. In most cases the result might not be complex and sophisticated architecture, but in each instance it demonstrates the values and ideas of the occupant, and provides an object that can be planned, implemented and reflected upon. This is both at the time of conception, but also in very small increments throughout its life. It would be



Fig 72: 1950. Rose House, Harry Siedler. Now revered, this house in suburban Sydney was considered so outrageous that it took a law suit to be built.

almost unheard of today for a planning department in Australia to reject an application for aesthetic reasons alone within a suburban context. Despite criticisms from many, it is the suburban environment where most avant-garde architecture actually occurs. Suburbia is bonanza land. Sometimes people are upset about the choices made by others (Fig 72). Sometimes peoples choices are seen to be simplistic. Sometimes peoples choices are seen to be too erudite and unfathomable. All are the legitimate expressions of the decision makers.

The built environment may be only a part of most peoples lives, however it has been a central part of mine. Prior to moving to Africa I designed and built multi-unit public housing. It was exciting

and meaningful for me, and allowed me considerable opportunity to ‘learn by doing’. However I have also worked with residents who live on public housing estates. It is in those communities that there exists the highest levels of ‘wicked problems’ within our society. This is despite having roofs that don’t leak, reticulated water and sewage. Maslow describes how it is necessary to first meet basic needs, which once met enables higher levels of consciousness to be achieved (Wikipedia, 1 April 07). However in our consumer/welfare culture the opportunities to use the built environment as a place to develop and grow are curtailed. My experience of working on public housing estates is that the idea of rental housing beyond short term expediency is not conducive to long term sustainability. More sustainable solutions would be to enable home ownership (in an enabling social structure), ideally with programs that enable greater access to specialist expertise. To be meaningful what is required is home ownership that enables control and choice and a learning experience, the enactment of what John Turner (1972) calls ‘Housing as a verb’. This concerns iterative change and improvement over time, as opposed to the purchase and subsequent discarding of a consumer article.

Just as people now go on adventure holidays rather than expeditions, creative development could be promoted and enabled. Everybody can be creative. Being the ‘first’ to climb Mount Everest was once worthy of attention. Today, the personal achievement and learning gained by those many now making the climb is only of note to themselves, but is personally of no less importance. What is most relevant today is the clean-up expedition collecting the detritus left by those climbing before, to enable those following achieve the same sense of awe and personal achievement.

Building shelter that is conducive to the physical needs of people is a ‘tame’ problem. What is important now is to expand the framework to enable individuals control and choice in creating, managing and making meaningful decisions concerning their built environment and beyond.

## **Conclusion to the chapter; Abstract Conceptualisation**

A sustainable future will depend on individuals having the capacity to express themselves and participate in generative change. Present social structures and technological developments are conditioned by exercises in power and conditional control and choice. The emerging digital technology will potentially provide avenues for a greater capacity by individuals to be engaged in society and its structures. Such technologies in themselves though will not lead to sustainable development and there needs to be frameworks developed that promotes real control and choice in such basic human needs as shelter. To achieve this will result in almost incomprehensible changes to our social structures, but the suburban house has the potential to be resilient and adaptable to changing situations. Facilitation provides frameworks for people to be heard by others, to listen to the views of others and create meaningful outputs. The opportunities for individual control and choice within the built environment need to be strengthened and made more explicit.



## **Chapter 10**

### **Conclusions**

In this chapter I draw conclusions from the major components of the study. I identify that while the research topic was to identify the methods, skills and processes required by a participatory development specialist, the thesis generated additional understanding and knowledge.

Thus this chapter looks at the four outputs that exist within the thesis.

- Data collection and methodology
- The DVD
- The Evaluation
- The Thesis

### **Data collection**

I carried out the data collection process through a mixture of formal and informal methods. This included participating in facilitated workshops, reading practical guides, designing workshops, attending formal training programs and non-formal training events such as conferences. This provided a personal knowledge base that I used to develop a series of concrete actions. In this process I observed the conceptual similarity between the concepts of action learning, action research and the design process. All are based on the idea of using accrued knowledge to undertake a concrete action that is then reflected on and used to inform the next action. This concept is also the basis of our culture of generative change that values evidence based practice.

## **The DVD**

I used the information gained in the data collection process to create a DVD that describes the methods, skills and processes required by a participatory development professional. The literature based evaluation of the DVD content mainly confirms its content against existing knowledge. This does not mean that it is devoid of originality, creativity or 'newness'. It is a matter of scale. A small area of original observation that I believe is significant is to identify how the Technology of Participation process can be used to enable others to complete the internationally accepted 'LogFrame' for providing a clear program logic to projects. This is documented fully in the pdf attachment No. 6. In the scale of participatory development knowledge and understanding, this is probably quite minor. An analogy being a modern day climber of Everest finding a different way round a particular rock. Of more importance is identifying the relevance for today in being someone who has made their own way up the mountain. It might not make the news, but is a major achievement for the person doing it. Possibly of greater note is how this linkage between program logic and a group working together is a detail of the bigger picture expressed in the DVD. This clearly articulates the dual development considerations of our time, namely multi stakeholder decision making, creativity or generative change through applying logical processes and the role of the development practitioner in facilitating that process.

## **Evaluation**

After creating the DVD I evaluated the information described within it against a literature review. The data for this was gathered in a process not dissimilar to the 'brainstorm' and 'collate' process described in the thesis. It is also similar to Grounded Theory. Evaluation is an essential element of the methodology. Specific conclusions have been written at the end of each chapter, though gener-

ally the literature supported the description of methods, skills and processes described in the DVD. Nothing was found that outright countered what was demonstrated, though there was a considerable amount of nuance not adequately described. That this was the case further demonstrates the legitimacy of the research and learning process.

## **The thesis**

In the broader aspects of the thesis I have been concerned with the general topic of modernism, technological development and what might be relevant practice today as a development practitioner.

The overt quest in this project was to identify the relevant knowledge and skills for the here and now (to be modern within a culture of generative change) for a development professional who approaches their work from “a loosely based set of social ideals - humanitarian liberalism, reformist pluralism and vague notions of Utopianism” (Jencks 1973). This study makes the link between architectural theory and history and the emerging discipline of facilitation. Whilst explored intuitively, as is typical of a designer’s learning methodology, the thesis interweaves this relationship with generative change in technology. The digital technology of the DVD allowed me to express myself through manipulating space to convey meaning in a contemporary way. It is a component or characteristic of Archigram’s understanding of the city as an information rich, technologically sophisticated event. However the content builds on that understanding by demonstrating a role for the development professional to enable the individuals within the city (contemporary society) to actively contribute in the creative process itself. It is this aspect of moving from a development paradigm based on service delivery (consumption, whether through purchase or provision) to an enabling culture that is particularly relevant today. Whilst Archigram identified how consumer driven technology had changed the experience of the city, they were still working within a ‘top down’

paradigm, a service provider/service recipient or manufacturer/consumer paradigm. What this thesis has clearly identified is a shift required by the development professional from providing services or products, to enabling others develop solutions to problems.

Of crucial importance to understanding this change in approach is the work of Stephen Karpman and the drama triangle. The research carried out in this thesis identifies how the ‘community bully’ operates at all levels of society, exercising power as either persecutor, rescuer or victim. This exercise of power is destructive and does not lead to generative change. What results is a paradox. On the one hand it is necessary for people to work together to achieve optimum solutions. On the other, it is necessary for people to have the opportunity to express themselves, develop a vision and to learn from individual endeavor, for to quote Col Madigan, “ego is the starter” (personal communication, Sydney 1976). It is the process of generative change in creating and evaluating tangible products and services that provides meaning for many. This thesis demonstrates the need for frameworks that enable individuals to express their personal judgments and world views, in a manner that also allows others a similar capacity. It is the role of the development specialist today to create such frameworks.

The findings from this complete work are:

- The process of generative change or experiential learning through creating and evaluating tangible products and services is the precept for being modern.
- The evolution of technological development through this process has progressively enabled more people a greater capacity to both explore concepts of space and time as well as express themselves (make decisions) and thus participate in the process of modernism.
- Participatory development provides a framework for others to communicate with each other and develop more effective products and programs.

- The practice of participatory development crosses over all development centred disciplines and has its own role and specific body of knowledge.
- The practice of a participatory development specialist is based on a tangible but evolving knowledge rich practice, and the execution of that body of knowledge is dependent on the experience of the practitioner and context of the work required.

It is impossible to see into the future, but it is necessary to have a vision to work towards. My vision is of a sophisticated pluralistic society which will require a variety of different frameworks and systems for people to plug in their own expressions that are meaningful to them. The facilitator in a workshop provides a framework for people to express themselves, listen to each other and come to mutually agreeable development solutions. It is an emerging discipline that will no doubt grow, develop and mature. “Things are not revolutionized by making revolutions. The real Revolution lies in the solution of existing problems.” (Le Corbusier, 1929 p.301)

## Epilogue

### Community Engagement Planning: Fundamentals Training Pack

After creating the DVD, the next significant concrete object that I have developed is a two day course for project managers in planning community engagement. I have carried out this project un-



Fig 73. Participants exploring their common understanding of community engagement through the post-it note exercise.

der the auspice of my current employer, the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment. As the community engagement facilitator responsible for learning and development I lead the design and development of this two day training program in collaboration with my colleague, Kate Henderson.

The desired learning outcome is for project and program managers to learn skills so that they can take a planned approach to identify and appropriately engage stakeholders in their project or program.

The course is designed on adult learning principles with participants building on their existing knowledge of community engagement, combined with the technique used in the creative arts of building and reflecting on models as a learning mechanism.



Fig 74. Working in groups of three, each group develops a community engagement plan for a hypothetical project. In this case, the redesign of a country town high street.

Participants initially explore their own and others knowledge around community engagement through the post-it note exercise (Fig 73) and a short ‘literature review’.

Initially a simple project (a kitchen renovation) is used to demonstrate the basic worksheets and templates we provide to assist in designing a community engagement plan. The course concept of generative change through practice is then realised through participants creating community engagement plans for hypothetical projects using the worksheets and templates (Fig 74). These hypothetical projects are varied, but include such concrete outputs as a new walking trail through a park, or the redesign of the main street in a country town. The participants do not design these objects, they design the engagement plan to identify stakeholders and ensure they are engaged appropriately for the 'level of stake' and 'resources' they have available to impact on the outcome.



Fig 75. Four basic community engagement tools are explored by groups of four, and their essential characteristics conveyed back to the others in a creative manner. This would be an enactment of a 'kitchen table discussion'.

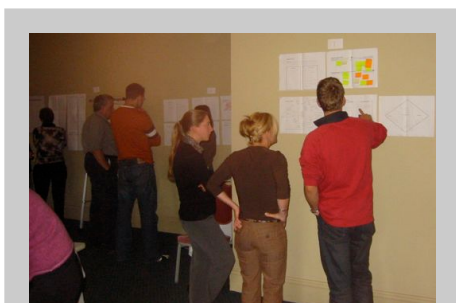


Fig 76. The gallery process allows all participants the opportunity to present their own engagement plan, and also see two others. They also have an opportunity to modify their own plan.

After further exercises looking more closely at other areas of the topic (planning evaluation of engagement activities and the centrality of listening) and some of the more useful tools associated with community engagement (Semi-Structured Interviews, Kitchen Table Discussions, Speak Out and Open House) (Fig 75), participants are provided with a further hypothetical project to work with. At the completion of this task, all participants have an opportunity to present their plan and view two others as a 'critical friend' (Fig 76). This provides a learning opportunity that enables them to further modify their own plan. This is a conscious inclusion of generative change in developing the engagement plan.

Demand for this interagency course has steadily grown over the last year, exceeding the Departments capacity to deliver. The strategy to satisfy this demand has been to recruit facilita-

tors from other departments to deliver the course. All necessary documentation for two facilitators to deliver the course is provided on a CD and distributed on completion of the trainers course (Fig 77).

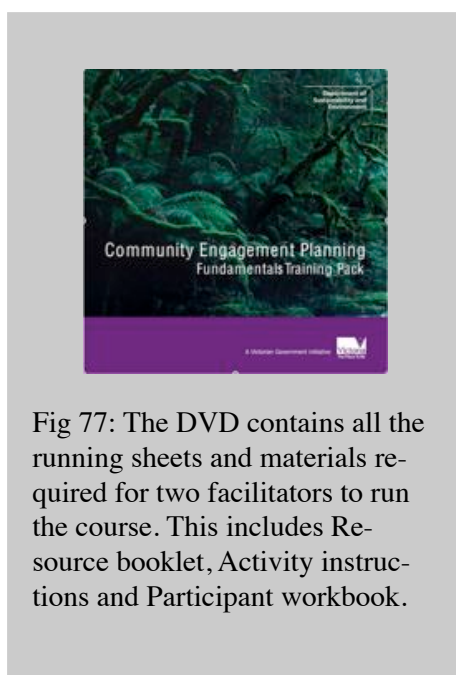


Fig 77: The DVD contains all the running sheets and materials required for two facilitators to run the course. This includes Resource booklet, Activity instructions and Participant workbook.



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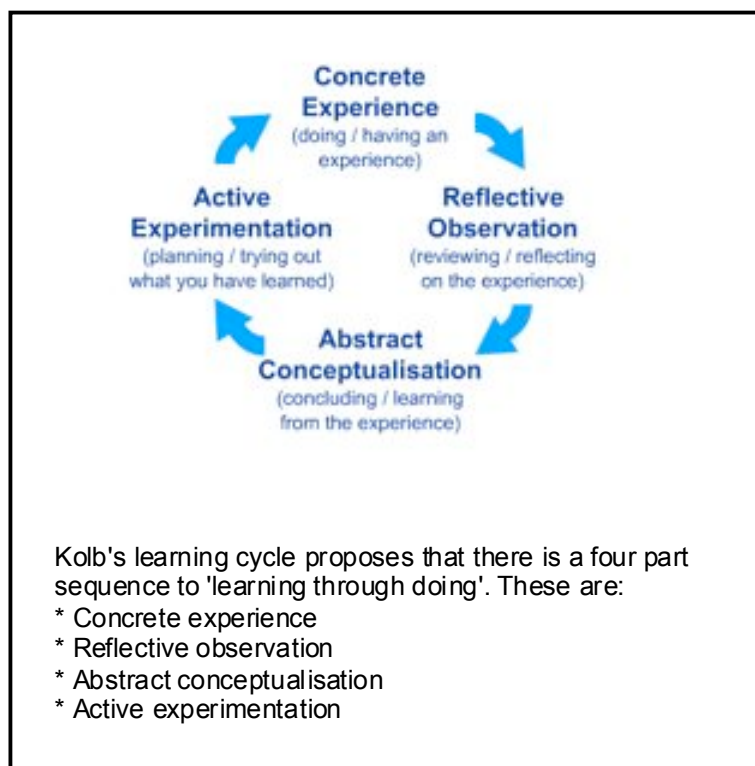
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## Appendix 1

### Kolb's learning cycle

I have used David Kolb's work 'in a general way' because Kolb's learning cycle is, like many things in the world, a model of reality but not reality itself. In 1984 David Kolb published *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. In this publication he proposed that people learnt from experience in a four part cycle as illustrated in Figure A .



**Figure A. Kolb's learning cycle.**

This conceptual model attempts to provide order to the disorganised reality of Experiential Learning. It is my experience that it is neither entirely right nor wrong, but useful.

The cycle can 'start' at any point, but the principle is that for deep learning to occur it is necessary to experience each part of the cycle. These are:

## **Experience**

First of all, we have an experience. The majority of daily experience is not worth further movement on the cycle. We are already familiar with it, and there is no need for further interpretation and hence no need for learning.

## **Reflection**

After experiencing something which does not fit well into our current system of understanding, we then have to stop and think harder about what it really means.

## **Abstract conceptualisation**

When we find that we cannot fit what we have experienced previously, then we have to build new models. This theorizing gives us a possible answer to our puzzling experiences.

## **Active experimentation**

After building a theoretical model, the next step is to prove it in practice, either in 'real time' or by deliberate experimentation in some safe arena. If the model does not work, then we go through the loop again, reflecting on what happened and either adjusting the model or building a new one.

There is though considerable literature either challenging this model, or at least that suggests there might be differences. Alice and David Kolb themselves maintain a bibliography that extends to thousands of references on the topic of experiential learning ([www.learningfromexperience.com](http://www.learningfromexperience.com)).

Others, such as Phil Race (2005), think that the whole model is unrealistic. However, there does seem to be a general agreement that it is possible to learn from doing things, even if the exact reasons why or how are unclear and subject to ongoing debate. In other words, there is also an element of truth to the saying attributed to Confucius:

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.

## Appendix 2

### Key experiential events forming the research base.

Approx. date	Event	Key learning
1995	Participation in a facilitated workshop	That there are different ways of decision making to those usually convened.
1997	Being part of a 'community of equals' unable to make a decision. (Barbarian Neighbourhood Association)	The need and value of a content-free process specialist. Experiencing and understanding the reality of the 'Community Bully'.
1997	Attendance at 2 <sup>nd</sup> Australian Facilitators Network Conference – Sydney	That there is an emerging field of diverse facilitation skills.
1997	Participation in the AREOL Action Research On Line course	That there seemed to be a similarity between Action Research and Design.
1997	Attendance at a 3 day 'Strategic Questioning' training workshop	A process of enquiry, similar to the ORID method of focussed conversation, that has links to the learning cycle.
1997-9	Engagement of facilitators to work with community groups, primarily Ministry of Housing tenants.	Many facilitators don't deliver, or confused motivation with facilitation.
1997	Development of 'Vote for the Worst' and other processes in the creation of a Community Action Plan for a public housing estate.	The possibility of adaptation of Rapid Rural Analysis and Participatory Rural Analysis principles to western culture.
1998	Participation at the 4 <sup>th</sup> AFN conference Brisbane and presentation of 'The meta Project'	That the political dimension of facilitation was not universally appreciated.
1998	Design, development and implementation of a process to enable Ministry of Housing tenants decide on a fencing program on their estate	That 'value free' information can be provided for stakeholders to make decisions. That effective multi stakeholder decision making processes are possible. That group facilitation is a skill that can be learnt.
1997-2000	Budget allocation workshops for Barbarian Neighbourhood Association and development processes with Ministry of Housing common interest groups.	Refinement of understanding of group processes. Understanding of the 'brainstorm/collate/rank process.



1998	Attendance at a 'Technology of Participation' (ToP) course	A process for strategic planning with groups.
1999	Design and implementation of the Home Improvements Program.	That complex projects can use the same processes as simple projects.
1999	Attendance at a 3 day 'Open Space Technology' training workshop	That there is no limit to the numbers of people that can be involved in decision making. Understanding of the power of passion in development.
2000	Design and implementation of participatory evaluation of Lismore City Council's Crime Prevention Program	The power of remaining content free in a project evaluation process. That providing analysis techniques combined with group management techniques worked.
2000	Participation in a 2 day 'Log Frame' training course.	The subsequent realisation that the internationally accepted LogFrame for project documentation can be created using the 'ToP' process with a group.
2001	Development of the 'Quest for Regionally Significant Projects'	A growing understanding that there is an 'art' in the design of multi-stakeholder decision making processes, but that there are processes available for all aspects of the design cycle.
2001-4	Design and implementation of common interest group development processes, including: Charleville Alternative education group Charleville Improved sports facilities group. SW Qld. Interagency domestic violence group The Outback Service Delivery Network annual integrated planning forum. The Qld. Department of Primary Industries EMS project Participatory action research for SW Strategy. Wyandra Residents Action Group The Community Engagement Group Community of Practice	Refinement of the interaction between group processes and the design/development cycle. A growing understanding of how each group has different parameters, requiring a specific approach within the terms of a common theoretical approach.

2001-4	Development of the DVD – Outside the Gates	<p>Synthesis of the knowledge gained into three distinct areas:</p> <p>Group processes: enabling all to be heard.</p> <p>Methods to enable multiple stakeholders participate in each segment of the development cycle.</p> <p>Methods to assist groups engage other stakeholders</p>
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## Appendix 3

### Karpman's Drama Triangle

From: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karpman\\_drama\\_triangle#An\\_example](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karpman_drama_triangle#An_example)

#### An example

An example would be a welfare caseworker whose official function to get clients off welfare and to support themselves with jobs. If the caseworker does anything to prolong the dependency relationship, she is not really helping but "Rescuing".

There may be subtle or overt pressure from her agency not to have too many successful clients. Threatening to cut off benefits to obviously lazy or selfish clients would be frowned on -- even if or **especially if** such tactics resulted in clients suddenly finding gainful employment after years of dependency.

For the drama triangle to come into full flower, one of the players must shift positions. For example, a Victim may become a Persecutor complaining of getting too much help, not enough help, or the wrong kind of help. A Rescuer may become a Persecutor, complaining that the clients don't appreciate her enough.

Officials at the welfare agency may take a role in the game, Rescuing staff and clients as long as they play along quietly but Persecuting any staff who start showing good results.

[edit]

#### Another example

A more familiar example might be this fictitious argument between John and Mary, a married couple. It should be noted that sometimes the rescuer point seems calm and even reasonable. If the words placate, soothe, calm, explain or justify, it can be considered a Rescuer response--it is an attempt to move the other person from their position.

.

John: I can't believe you burnt dinner! That's the third time this month!

Mary: Well, little Johnny fell and skinned his knee, it burned while I was busy getting him a bandage.

John: You baby that boy too much!

Mary: You wouldn't want him to get an infection, would you? I'd end up having to take care of him while he was sick.

John: He's big enough to get his own bandage.

Mary: I just didn't want him bleeding all over carpet.

John: You know, that's the problem with these kids! They expect you to do everything!

Mary: That's only natural, honey, they are just young.

John: I work like a dog all day at a job I hate...

Mary: Yes, you do work very hard, dear.

John: And I can't even sit down to a good dinner!

Mary: I can cook something else, it won't take too long.

John: A waste of an expensive steak!

Mary: Well maybe if you could have hauled your ass out of your chair for a minute while I was busy, it wouldn't have gotten burned!

John: You didn't say anything! How was I supposed to know?

Mary: As if you couldn't hear Johnny crying? You always ignore the kids!

John: I do not, I just need time to sit and relax and unwind after working all day! You don't know what it's like...

Mary: Sure, as if taking care of the house and kids isn't WORK!

Anyone reading this article could undoubtedly continue this argument indefinitely.

What is of perhaps more interest is how one can remove oneself from the triangle, which, as the example makes clear, can be exhausting.

The simplest method is the non-defensive response. This works at any point no matter what the role the other person is taking, as it doesn't give a cue as to the next response.

For instance:

Mary: Well maybe if you could have hauled your ass out of your chair for a minute while I was busy, it wouldn't have gotten burned!

John: Yes, that's true.

Although Mary may attempt to restart the cycle by continuing to scold, if John continues in the same vein, Mary will eventually run out of things to say. Unless Mary is actually abusive, in which case care should be used in employing this method, John's calm response invites discussion rather

than continued wrangling. She might realize that she didn't ask him for help, and they might well be able to resolve the situation by planning on a course of action should something similar arise in the future.

It works just as well for the victim role:

John: I do not, I just need time to sit and relax and unwind after working all day! You don't know what it's like...

Mary: I'm sorry you're feeling so tired.

This acknowledges any real problem the other person might have without continuing the dance. Again, the other person may attempt to restart the cycle by continuing to complain, but again, with continued non-defensive responses, the other person will run out of things to say.

While the "rescuer" role is seemingly the least problematic of the three points of the triangle, it still is a part of a non-communicative cycle, and thus should be treated in the same manner.

Mary: That's only natural, honey, they are just young.

John: Yes, they are young.

Once again, the cycle is broken, and John has made it clear to Mary that he needs no further placating or assistance.

Other excellent non-defensive responses:

"Oh."

"I see."

"You may be right."

## Appendix 4

### Example of workshop running sheet

11:00	Welcome	Geoff
	AWI	Paul
	Purpose – bid to AWI	
	The Context– DPI oncosts \$ Available for projects/region/year The outcomes previously identified (see below)	Peter
11:15	Outline of the day	MB
11:20	Focussed conversation around draft document	
	What do you remember? What information stood out for you? What in the document intrigues you? What are some of the key points? What will be some of the challenges presented by this project? What will be the implications for you of this project bids success or failure?	
11:40	Name of the project	
	Brainstorm key words	What are the essential elements of the project?
	Brainstorm names	
	Brainstorm/ collate/ rank	Use as example of b/c/r
	cards	
12:05	Expand more strategies to outcomes	
	Outline hierarchy of outcome/strategy/output/action	<i>Suggestion: look at the blockages.</i>

	Mark off 6 groups – Each group takes one outcome. Identifies any other strategies. Report back	
1:00	Lunch	
1:45	Energiser exercise	
1:55	Review of resources available:	Geoff to do roundup??
2:10	In regional groups:	
	As per attached schedule	
3:15	Tea	
3:30	Each group to report back to plenum	What projects Who doing things when (Time frame)
3:50	In regional groups	
	As per schedule	
4:50	Report back as plenum 3mins each	
5:00	Participants report back on what they will be doing to implement their program	
5:15	Assessment of day	
5:30	Close	

From previous workshop

<i>.1 Outcome</i>	<i>.1 Strategy</i>
Reduced predation	Provide safe environment
Higher reproduction rates	Strategic nutrition
Increased value of wool & meat	Strategic nutrition
Reduced stock losses and chemical use	Integrated parasite management
Increased productivity	Superior genetics
Improved resource management'	(Strategy to be determined)



## Appendix 5

### Weekly reflection

☒ What are some of the things you've been doing? What Results were Produced?

(Measurable? Non Tangible? Status report/update of projects/goals)

	Too much time on theatre props	
	Managed to get a 28second slide show of Charleville Visions as part of the theatre show	
	Got End notes	
	Ran a difficult w/shop on staff retention and recruitment. Not sure how it went	
	Re submitted the RADF funding applications	
	Spoke at Rotary again	
	Submitted the NT application	
	Half done the Premiers Dpt. application	
	Participated in a really good 'community engagement group' meeting.	
	Attended an interesting 'School and Community' meeting (100% for trying – 5% for achievement)	

☒ How do you feel about them? (Really)

( Feeling? Being? Personal News?)

Staff recruitment w/shop hard work. Trying to take it out of the realm of 'meeting', but gauging exactly what to get participants to do in a short time frame is tricky. Most It's the semi-structured formal workshop (or is it the super structured informal).

☒ What Problems or Dilemmas are you facing right now?

(Potential Problems? Current problems?)

I am running out of time to practice the OST meeting, which is on Monday arvo. Just read the manual which suggests putting a limit to the numbers, as this makes it special – should have done that. I

hope Harison's book (which I have ordered) outlines what to do in the closing ceremony bit! (and at the end of day one)

#### ☒ How Have You Shifted this Week?

(Insights? Growth? Perspective?)

Working on the theatre event has been interesting. The event has all been about a theatre person 'working with the community' to enable 'the community express it's own reality' etc. Great stuff. However, the content is all about not being able to find a car parking spot, getting waylaid by friends at the coffee shop, old time camp fire yarns etc. In other words – yes it's succeeded. On the other, it's the reality of just the arty theatre crowd. They are also the ones that are assessing my RADF funding for 'concept development' of getting an applied theatre person out for a year, and I don't think they can quite make the connection that they are not the whole world.

#### . How Can I Help Most?

(Listen? Love? Challenge? What else?)

Listen as usual,

Evaluation against last months goals.

*Sort out soft ware for doing the phd. To computerise grounded theory methodology*

Got Endnotes from the library (but haven't opened the package)

#### ☒ What do You Want to Accomplish by our Next Session?

To have carried out a really successful OST based Integrated Planning Forum for the Outback Service Delivery network.

Finished and submitted the Premiers Dpt. application

## Appendix 6

File Maker Pro data base with reference link to EndNote

The screenshot shows the Book Review software interface with several annotations pointing to specific fields:

- Endnote Reference Number**: Points to the **endnote** field.
- Possible section piece might fit**: Points to the **possible section** field.
- Interpretation of quote**: Points to the **interpret** field.
- Quote section retyped or cut and paste**: Points to the **quote** field.
- Title of piece**: Points to the **title** field.

The interface includes a sidebar with a "general" tab, a "Records: 269" indicator, and a "Sorted" button. The main area contains fields for **title**, **date**, **page**, **quote**, **possible section**, **endnote**, **quote2**, **page2**, **quote2**, and **interpret2**.

## **Appendix 7**

### **pdf documents provided with the DVD**

These are to provide additional information on some of the tools and techniques illustrated.

# Outside the Gates



## 1 Generating the ideas

There are two parts to enabling participants generate useful ideas that fully utilise the wisdom of the group. The first is 'brainstorming', a semi formal process to generate ideas, and the second part is 'collation' or clustering which is a methodology to process the range of ideas generated.

### Brainstorming

#### **Background**

Brainstorming is the process of getting everyone's idea or thoughts heard and written up about an issue or topic. Unless there is a formal process of listening to people, only the confident ones, quick thinkers or ones with a loud voice have a say. This makes those less confident in speaking out, or who need a bit of time to organise their thoughts, feel disempowered.

Just because somebody thinks quickly, doesn't mean that it's the best thought. Making sure everybody's ideas are collected gives everyone the chance of finding the best solution, idea, or way of looking at things.

Having the ideas written down separates the idea from the personality. This helps against others liking or not liking an opinion or idea because of their perceptions of the person providing it.

#### **Outcomes**

By providing a process that everyone will feel that they have been listened to, that their idea has been put forward with the same weight as everyone else, enables all to move on to the next stage.

#### **Method**

The simplest method is to ask each person in turn what they have to say and for the facilitator to write it on flip chart paper. This is sometimes appropriate, but can be time consuming.

Having the group move around the room writing their views to pre-prepared questions gets the group moving.

Having the group write on cards is probably the most rigorous, and really useful when there needs a lot of thought around a topic. It generates a lot of information, and needs a lot of time for collation.

# Collation

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## Background

The brainstorming process is a relatively easy process both for participants and the planning facilitator. The problem comes with what to do with the long lists of different ideas or viewpoints. The collation process enables the group to manage the list with two different outcomes, though they happen simultaneously through the process. It is though not an easy time for any group, Sam Kaner referring it to the Groan Zone (Kaner 1996).

## Outcomes

- The first outcome is to achieve a smaller and more manageable number of items for the group to continue working with.
- The second outcome is that the group of individuals come together as a group. They identify their commonalities through a discussion that is focussed on looking for commonalities, not differences.

## Method

There are three principal ways of collation.

- The fastest, though least rigorous form of collation, is through the 'think/pair/share' process. Ask the small groups to brainstorm around an issue, and then agree on just one (or two) key items to present to the whole group.
- A more rigorous method is to ask participants to mark statements that 'are saying the same thing in different ways' and then name them.
- The most rigorous is to use the card storming and grouping technique. In this method the brainstorming part of the exercise is done through participants writing on cards. The collation part is where the group 'clumps' similar ideas together and names the group as a whole.

When working with either of the latter two methods, the following steps can be used to process the ideas generated.

## Step one

Ask the group "In this list, which statements are saying the same thing, though using different words?" If using cards, the individual statements can be physically grouped together. If the list is on sheets of paper, use symbols. Don't use a) b) c) or 1) 2) 3) as this presumes some sort of ranking of the ideas. Use symbols such as stars, squares, or triangles.

As a facilitator it is best not to supply input yourself in this process, even though it is difficult to keep quiet when there are what seem to you obvious similarities between some of the ideas, and there is no word from your group. Try and stay cool and respond to your group only, not your own observations.

There might be some obvious ways to you to form groups of the symbols: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 but people from a different cultural background to you (such as non English speakers, or those challenged by literacy) might group them in a way that you would never have thought, such as:

Made up of straight lines	Comprise a mixture of straight lines and curves	Made of curved lines
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	10	8
11	12	9

If participants feel that a card can fit in two groups, write out a duplicate so it can be in both groups

## Step 2

Ask the group to provide a name or statement that sums up the ideas grouped together. This can be hard work for participants, though it provides the mechanism for the group as a whole to coalesce their disparate viewpoints, and identify their common ground in identifying core issues behind their individual thinking. When someone calls out a name, repeat it and check with the others to ensure agreement. This is the time that the group is really working hard and is not usually a fast process. Keep checking with individuals of their agreement and encouraging the quieter ones to contribute.

## Recording

When writing up the workshop notes, the following format demonstrates that everybody's input has been incorporated, including the grouping and naming process

In this example, participants of the 'Interagency Domestic and Family Violence Group' were asked to outline some positive goals that might be achievable in the next two to three years. These ideas were grouped, with a common direction being identified for each group of thought.

Individual brainstorm response to question: What positive programs or projects might be achievable in 2-3yrs time?		Name attached to each group
■	More health programs/education	Coordinated response to domestic violence
■	Counselling for children who witness violence	
■	Dual directional programs - adults & children	
	Reduction in calls for service for repeat offenders	Legally enforced changes
	Respondent counselling	
	Harsher penalties	
	Stronger punitive measures for perpetrators	
	Criminal charges for DV (physical and emotional)	
●	Stop children witnessing DV	Positive empowerment
●	Interpersonal relationships	
●	Increase self esteem	
●	More respect	
●	Respect and responsibility for self and others	
	Prevention	Educational program
	No bullying in schools	
	Early childhood education	
	Police and school education program	
	All grades 11 & 12 students to be trained in proactive behaviours	
	Changing perceptions	

Notice how some of the individual ideas seem to not really relate to the others in the group, or even that it's difficult to see how the group got the result they did from the ideas presented. However the critical issue is to note the clarity of the options that were developed in the end, with just four 'high level' strategic goals that the group can now focus on.

## Conclusions

Collation is an important part of the group deliberation process. The art is correctly gauging the level of thought needed by the group around a particular subject compared with the time available. Having the group 'skip over' the process in too short a time on an important issue can result in there being unresolved differences later in the decision making or planning process. However if the group works too hard on delving deep into an area too quickly, or focuses on a peripheral subject, then time is wasted and participants feel let down by the process.

## References and further reading

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## 2 Making Decisions Ranking and Scoring

### Background

Ranking and Scoring can be used in two different situations:

- 1 Analysis, to grade and compare items with each other. See Analysis sheet. #4
- 2 As a decision making tool, to enable gradations of agreement. This is best used as the last part of the 'brainstorm; collate; rank' process.

### Analysis

An essential part of participatory development is for the knowledge of the group to be used in parts of the development process. The group itself provides the information both at the analysis stage, as well as the Monitoring and Evaluation stage. (See sheet # 4).

### Decision Making

There are often a number of items that have been listed as being important by the group. You now need the group to indicate their preference in order to come to some decision. For example, after brainstorming there are a number of strategies, and the group needs to decide which strategy to work on first.

### Method

There are many similarities between ranking and scoring systems and participatory analysis systems. The following two methods are often used in the brainstorm collate rank process.

## Sticker Dots

Sticker dots are a great way for ranking and scoring, the major danger being overuse. There are a number of theories, and even formulas, to determine the number of 'dots' to hand out. My own basis for handing them out is:

- At least one dot less than the total number of items (this prevents the don-key vote of one dot on each item) with a maximum of ten. If there were only five items, I would distribute four dots, but if fifteen items only ten dots.
- A limited number of dots to be used as a maximum per item. My own preference being either two dots, if less than six items (out of five dots total), or three dots if more. Thus in the example of five items with four dots, I would tell participants that the rule is a maximum of two dots per item. If there were fifteen items with ten dots, the rule would be a maximum of three dots on any one item. This prevents someone who is particularly vociferous

around one particular subject overloading that item with ten dots. (It's akin to shouting).

Alternatives to sticker dots can be seeds, or stones or even ticks with a marker pen. However the advantages of sticker dots are:

- People like the 'peel off – stick down' process.
- The result is permanent (loose items such as seeds need to be separately recorded)
- There is a tangible tally of how many votes a participant has, they don't have to remember how many 'dots' or 'votes' they have left.

## Sequential Voting

---

Sequential voting is a process (with a number of variations) that allow group members two chances to vote. The rationale being to enable a greater consensus and 'buy-in' to the final decision than a 'first past the post' system.

### Method

Either through a multi-vote system (such as two hands to represent real passion) run one set of voting. At this point, eliminate the items that are at either end of the results i.e. those obviously having considerable agreement around, and those not having much support. After the elimination of the extremes, run a further round of voting to clarify those in the middle.

If what is being looked for is a 'winner' or one option of many to be endorsed by the group, the sequential voting technique can still be used. First allow the group to identify the top three or so contenders, followed by discussion and a further round of voting containing only these items.

If there is still residue disagreement around the decision, further discussion can be held, perhaps even with new concepts being developed. The purpose of the process being to work towards achieving a consensus, rather than achieving winners and losers.

### References and further reading

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# Outside the Gates



## Think-Pair-Share

# 3

### Background

The established way for groups to make decisions is to form sub committees that look at specific aspects of a problem. This is for two reasons:

- 1 Complex problems require a variety of expertise
- 2 Traditional decision making systems start breaking down with more than about 12 people involved.

Unfortunately, while this process works in many cases, there are also many where it does not work. This is for two reasons:

- Breaking down complex problems into small parts often leads to a breakdown of the interrelationship that exists between the elements. This leads to unrealistic expectations being made of those involved in the other elements.
- Those not participating in the decisions made by a representative committee often feel that different decisions could have been made. This might be because they are not as fully aware of the facts or because they would have approached the problem from a different cultural perspective. Either way, those not involved will endeavour to undermine the decision.

### Method

The essence of 'think-pair-share' is to enable all in a group be involved in the whole problem, or part of a problem.

It is a common process for a group to form into small groups and report back to the total group. However if small groups are asked to consider the same problem and report back, it enables more to be heard and a greater richness in the final decision.

The skill of the facilitator is reflected in making the right decision regarding:

- The question
- The number of participants in each group
- The time to give each group to consider the question

Some factors that might effect such a decision include:

- The complexity of the question
- The number of people in the total group
- The dynamics of those involved

Six people is about the maximum for an un-facilitated group to work effectively. When there are more than six, there is a real possibility of someone feeling left out, and not listened to.

### Conclusion

The 'think-pair-share' process is a basic tool for facilitating groups, and can be successfully used for up to about six participants in a group.

# Outside the Gates



## 4

### Participatory Analysis

#### Background

A successful plan can only be developed from a good understanding of the design criteria. When working with groups it is all the more important for all participants to have a common understanding of their shared reality. The basis for participatory analysis is that it collects the group's existing knowledge, however 'flawed' it might be. While the information collected is true for that group only, it is not the facilitators role to question it. The purpose is to enable that particular group develop a shared and common identity on which they can make decisions.

#### Outcomes

There are three potential outcomes from participatory analysis exercises.

- A greater understanding of an issue or topic achieved through the collection of data from all the participants.
- Agreement of shared perspectives
- Identification of different perspectives.

#### Method

Each process has its own methodology, though none are complex.

#### History Wall

*Prior organisation. Stick up the dates of the required time period on the wall. If it is only a year use the calendar months, if a twenty year period, each card could be two yearly.*

Form the group in a semi circle around the wall and distribute index cards and pens to all members. Commence by advising that this is a collaborative event, and that all participants can complete at least one card; that is when they joined the group or organisation or moved to the neighbourhood. However, get the group really going by asking; "What might have been some of the really eventful happenings in this period".

If necessary, coax some answers from those that have been around longer. Preferably have the participants not only write the cards, but get up and stick them in the appropriate place on the wall. Make sure that the event is read out, for sometimes this develops questions and curiosity from other participants. Every so often, when there seems to be a lag in the proceedings, read a synopsis back to the group in chronological order. This process sometimes jogs peoples memories of other events, but also provides a common understanding of what has happened.

This exercise provides a real opportunity for all members to come to a shared understanding of events in the past pertinent to their group.

## Physical Mapping

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*Prior organisation: Obtain maps of the subject area, printing them out on A3 sheets.*

Distribute one map to each participant, together with a collection of red and green sticker dots. Ask the group to place a red sticker dot on any area that they don't like, and a green one for areas that they do. Almost certainly somebody will ask on what criteria to make a judgement, just advise them it's entirely up to them. Some people will only stick on a few dots, others lots. After approximately 5 – 10 minutes, either ask for a volunteer to explain their map, or if a larger group, have participants pin them up on a wall.

To initiate discussion on participants perceptions, identify either an area where there is a lot of agreement – “I can see that quite a number of you indicate a dislike of this area, what is going on here?” Alternatively, identify a part where some have indicated a dislike and others a like: “There seems to be a difference of opinion about this area, would someone like to say why they like it?”

The resultant discussion focuses the group onto a particular location or place that they either have a common agreement about, or else demonstrates to the group that while they as individuals might have particular feelings about an area, it is not shared by others. This perception then provides a stronger base for the group as a whole to focus their energies.

## Skills Audit

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*Prior organisation: none.*

Use a simple brainstorm and, if required, collation of participants skills. This can also be extended to resources in general. It is an especially valuable exercise when working with traditionally marginalised groups, for they are often unaware of the extent of their collective skills. As with all participatory analysis exercises, this exercise is not intended to be highly rigorous, or extend beyond the limits of the group. The purpose being to provide the group with a common understanding of itself.

A common response after this exercise is amazement at the groups collective resources.

## Cultural mapping

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*Prior organisation: Cut out from different coloured card sheets a variety of sized circles. Potentially allow about six cards in each of about six sizes, making 36 cards in total.*

Commence the exercise by explaining that this is to be a cultural map, but that the definition of culture can be extremely broad. Advise that you yourself belong to a number of cultures, perhaps your gender, your professional culture or perhaps a hobby that you share with others, such as the horse riding culture. Ask each member of the group in turn to identify a culture that they personally identify with, but it has to be different to all the ones called out before. This

makes it progressively harder for those asked later, but it generates a good idea of the breadth of what we mean by culture. After this exercise, brainstorm and collate all the different cultures in the area and rank into groups according to the 'influence that they have on the community or organisation as a whole'. Complete the exercise by asking the group to identify the amount of overlap between each cultural group and to place the cards accordingly.

The process of identifying the groups and considering the overlap between them always generates conversations and develops a deeper shared understanding of the organisation or neighbourhood.

## Performance Ranking

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*Prior organisation: Index cards, blue tack, wall, containers.*

There are two situations in which ranking systems can be used,

- Analysis, to grade and compare items with each other.
  - As a decisional tool, to enable gradations of agreement.
- (See Ranking sheet).

Ranking existing items as an analytical tool can be extremely illuminating for group participants. There are two common methods, though both commence with a brain storm, and if necessary, collation of the items. Write each item to be ranked onto a separate index card.

Subsequent to this there are two different methods to chose from.

- 1 Ask the group to identify one of the brainstormed items that performs really well, and fix that to the far right of the wall. Then ask the group to identify an item that performs really badly, and fix that card to the far left of the wall. Work through the rest of the cards, asking the group to identify their position relative to the best and the worst items.
- 2 Have five containers (ice-cream containers, lids from copy paper boxes or even filing trays) and label them 1 – 5. Work through the cards, calling out each item asking the group to rank them on a scale of 1-5. After an answer is agreed on, place the card into the appropriate container.

After the ranking, initiate a discussion around what might be revealed. The results are often quite illuminating to the participants.

### **Examples include:**

- Public Housing residents identified that not only was there a wide range of services available in their neighbourhood, but that most of them provided a good service.
- Shire residents wanting to improve sporting facilities discovered that while it was the team sports that attracted the most participants, those sports had the poorest facilities.



## Prioritisation Matrix

	Cost of use	Permanent Costings	Availability	Car parking	Spectator focus	Toilets/change facilities	Quality of playing	
Venue 1								
Venue 2								
Venue 3								

### Method

Set up a matrix with items to be ranked on one side, and criteria on the top, such as the example with sports facilities. Ask each member of the group to give each permutation a score between 1-5. Average out the scores at the end.

## Calendars

### Prior organisation

Draw up an appropriate time calendar matrix for the events to be analysed. It will make it easy for the participants to indicate through counters or sticker dots when actions and activities occur. Ensure that there is a consistency in the categories, all saying either 'more is better' or 'more is worse'.

### Example of a calendar matrix.

Issues	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Road floods												
No work												
Vandalism												
Gambling												

Once the matrix has been completed, simply initiate a discussion around what might be displayed. Sometimes there is an obvious pattern, sometimes none at all. Either way, the act of completing the matrix provides a documented output of all participants perceptions.

## Relationship Modelling

*Prior organisation: None, if already have the skills. Otherwise, training in Applied Theatre is preferable.*

Two powerful forms of relationship analysis are Image Theatre and Forum Theatre. Both were developed by Augusto Boal (described by Douglas L. Paterson at <http://www.wwcd.org/action/Boal.html>)

- Image Theatre uses the human body as a tool of representing feelings, ideas, and relationships. Through sculpting others or using our own body to demonstrate a body position, participants create anything from one-person to large-group image sculptures that reflect the sculptor's impression of a situation or oppression.
- Forum Theatre works from rehearsal improvisation to create a scene of a specific oppression. Using the Greek terms "protagonist" and

"antagonist," Forum Theatre seeks to show a person (the protagonist) who is trying to deal with an oppression and failing because of the resistance of one or more obstacles (the antagonists).

Forum scenes can be virtual one-act plays or more often short scenes. In either case, a full presentation is offered to the audience. The joker (difficultator) then says to the audience we will do this again, and if you would do something different than what the protagonist (not the antagonists) is doing, stand up and yell stop. The protagonist will then sit down and the audience member is invited forward to show their solution of the moment. Once the intervention is performed, the audience invariably applauds, and the joker invites the audience to discuss the proposed solution, and to offer even more solutions.

### **References and further reading**

Augusto Boal. Games for Actors and Non-actors, Routledge, £10.95 (accessible, full of practical approaches to forum and image theatre).

Peter Harrop. Techniques of the Theatre of the Oppressed: A User's Directory, available from Peter Harrop, University College, Bretton Hall, Smyth Street, Wakefield WF1 1ED, UK £5, overseas £7.

Pretty, J., Guijt, I., Thompson, J., Scoones, I. (1995). Participatory Learning and Action: A Trainers Guide. London, International Institute for Environment and Development.



# Outside the Gates



## Visioning

5

### Background

It is only possible to plan to achieve something, even if the driver for change is reacting to an issue or area of concern. In many instances the vision will already be supplied to a group by somebody else, such as a target set by the organisation. However for true empowerment, groups should have the capacity to develop their own goals, outcomes or visions that make sense to them.

The key is to enable participants to use their imagination, and develop a document or a 'statement of intent' to which all can ascribe.

### Outcome

A visioning exercise enables a group to develop a clear collective vision of what they wish to achieve. This provides a clear direction to which they can plan.

### Method

Four methods are described to assist a group achieve a common vision. Each method can be used independently, or else more than one can be used to capture different details and ideas.

## Guided visualisation

*Prior organisation: Prepare a short and appropriate guide for use with the group. Two common approaches are:*

- Taking the group through a day 5 years in the future, from getting up in the morning to going to bed at night.
- Asking them to imagine that they have had to leave the area, but that they have had the opportunity to return for a few hours in 5 years time.

The important elements of the guided visualisation being that the story itself should be as close to being value free as possible, with no assumptions being made by the facilitator. An example of the second approach being:

Your friend drops you off at the end of ...street. You walk (up/down the hill/ over the bridge) into the neighbourhood you knew so well. You gradually become aware that things have not stood still in your absence. You look around at the houses and gardens (shops/parks), noticing specific improvements and changes. You are glad that you decided to walk because it allows you to take it all in. As you stroll down ...street, a woman calls out to you from one of the houses (shops). You stop and realise that it was one of the girls you knew when you lived in the area, but she had grown up! You return

her greetings and go over to chat. You ask her about some of the issues and concerns that had troubled you when you had lived in the area. She describes how the projects that you had been involved in had born fruit, and that they had made a real difference to the area. This is wonderful news, and you ask if she could describe in more detail some of the things that had changed, and the impact on the local community. She suggests that you go to a (café/bar) for something to eat and talk some more.

You notice how pleasant the surroundings are. The food is delicious, and you make a note of what there is on the menu. After a pleasant half hour, you thank her and continue your stroll to see if you can check out further on those projects of yours. As you continue your walk you become increasingly amazed at the impact of the changes that have occurred. You see the little signs everywhere, in how people talk to each other, what they are wearing, how they walk. You start making mental notes of these positive changes that have occurred in the people and place that was your old neighbourhood. Soon you are back in ... Street, and see your friend waiting for you. You can't wait to get back into the car and start telling them all the news.

- Appropriate modifications should be made to the story to make it more specific to the particular area.
- Ask participants to have paper and pen handy and sit in a relaxed position. Explain to participants that you want them to close their eyes and you are going to take them on an imaginative journey.
- At the end of the guided visualisation you want them to open their eyes, but not say anything. They are just to write down or draw what they saw on their paper.
- In a calm even voice read out the visualisation.

Once they have each written down their own personal vision notes, break the participants into at least two groups. Ask each group to develop a common vision between them. Allow about 10 minutes, and ask each group to report back to the total group. At this point (after congratulating, each group), swap the documents and request the other group to modify and work up the others vision. In this iterative way, the group can develop a common vision.

## Creative Writing

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*Prior organisation: Write out the letters of the alphabet on at least one sheet of flip chart paper (Dependant on the size of the group).*

Ask the group to complete the alphabet by writing a vision or idea for each letter. At the end, these can be ranked and used as the basis for a guided visualisation or even as the starting point for another creative exercise such as a 'newspaper report written in five years time'.

## Drawing and Collage

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*Prior organisation: Collage exercises work best if the pictures have already been cut out from magazines. This prevents inhibitions, but also stops attention wandering as interesting articles are come across.*

Ask the group (or groups) to put together a visual representation of what they would like to see in 3-5 years time. Have each group report back, and then collate the information.

## Card Storming

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*Prior organisation: Index cards, blue tack and pens*

Working in pairs, ask the group to provide ideas for what they would like to see in 5-10 years time. Collect the cards, and collate and name. For a small group of say 10 people, allow at least 1 hr. 30 mins for this exercise.

### References and further reading

Spencer, L. J. (1989). *Winning Through Participation: Meeting the Challenge of Corporate Change With the Technology of Participation*. Dubuque, Iowa, Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co.

Williams, R. B. (1996). *More Than 50 Ways to Build Team Consensus*, Hawker Brownlow.

# Outside the Gates



## 6

### Planning

#### Background

There are two aspects to planning

- 1 Strategic planning
- 2 Operational planning

#### Method

Each planning system requires a different methodology, though for optimum results it is necessary to carry out strategic planning before operational planning.

### Strategic planning

Strategic planning provides the rationale for acting. It is a process that at one end has the statement of a broad aim, vision or goal and at the other a specific action that needs to be taken to achieve it. It provides a logical framework for carrying out actions as opposed to following convention or waiting for fate. The focus question is Why? i.e. Why something should be carried out.

The internationally accepted methodology for documenting this process is referred to as a LogFrame, as it sets out the process in a framework.

<b>Goal/Vision/Outcome</b>
<b>Strategy/Objective</b>
<b>Output/</b>
<b>Action</b>

The different words in each line refer to some of the common terms used for the same aspect of the framework.

The sequence can be read either from top to bottom, or bottom to top depending on the context. Thus:

- If I do this ACTION it will result in This OUTPUT
- If I buy some food and cook it tonight (Action) it will result in a meal (Output) for the family.

This will contribute to my OBJECTIVE, leading to my broad GOAL/OUTCOME  
A family that eats well (Objective) will be a happy family (Goal or Outcome)

Looking at the same example from the different direction:

- My GOAL is to have a happy family. A good STRATEGY to achieve this would be for the family to be well fed. An OUTPUT that will contribute to this would be an evening meal, which will require some ACTIONS on my part to ensure it happens.

Each level has to be self contained with only one element. Words such as 'through', 'by' and 'with' are linking words that span different elements between the levels. The heavy line separating Strategies from Outputs indicates the limits of what one can physically do. In other words, the limiting factor of any action is an Output.

There are always different Strategies that can be used to achieve the same Goal, just as there are always different Outputs that can exist in the same Strategy. The logic is a reflection of the ideology of the person developing the plan.

**Examples being:**

**Water Engineer:**

Achieve your Goal of a happy family, with them having access to fresh water (Strategy). This requires a reticulated water system (Output) and you should volunteer to dig the trenches this afternoon.

**Health Professional:**

To achieve your Goal of a happy family, requires that they have access to a good health service (Strategy). This requires a doctor in town (output) and you should sign this petition for one right now. (Action)

**Soft drink salesman:**

Achieve your Goal of a happy family, with them drinking our product (Strategy). This requires having a bottle in your fridge (output) and you should buy some right now. (Action)

**Music teacher**

To achieve your GOAL of having a happy family, requires them to be entertained. (STRATEGY). Using this STRATEGY you should play the piano for them tonight, (OUTPUT) and an ACTION you could take is to attend piano lessons today.

However, while the logic stands up in each case, it is the ideology of the person making the plans that alters the resulting action. An understanding of this is the core and critical difference between a 'planner' and a 'planning facilitator'. A planner will impose their own values and judgements as to how others should achieve their goals, while a planning facilitator will provide the process to enable another develop their own rational content.

Thus to empower others in this process requires not putting ones own values onto the content or sequence. When working with individuals, methods to stimulate thinking and discussion are Strategic Questioning (Peavey: 1994) and The Art of Focussed Conversation (Stanfield: 1997). However, it becomes more problematic when working with a group, many of whom as individuals will have their own views as to how to achieve a commonly desired goal. This is where the technique developed by the ICA in the Technology of Participation (Spencer: 1989) is so useful to the planning facilitator.

By asking the sequence of questions:

- What is your Vision?
- What are the underlying Blockages to achieving the Vision?
- What can you do to overcome these blockages?
- What Actions do you need to take to achieve these Outputs?

Enables a group to develop a Logical Framework without even mentioning the words Goals/Outcomes/Strategies/Outputs, for it can be seen that the basic structure is the same as the LogFrame.

Facilitator question	Element in the Logical Framework
What is your Vision?	Goal/Vision/Outcome
What are the underlying Blockages to achieving the Vision?	Strategy/Objectives
What can you do to overcome these blockages?	Output
What Actions do you need to take to achieve these Outputs?	Action

The essential difference being that the strategy is obtained not by asking: 'What is your strategy to achieve your desired goal?' But the far easier to understand and answer question: 'What are the underlying blockages to achieving the vision?'

Thus the planning facilitator might be working with a group of women whose goal is to achieve 'a happy family'. The framework developed might be:

Facilitator Question	Element in Logical Framework
What is your Vision? Answer: A happy family	Goal/Vision/ Outcome A happy family
What are the underlying Blockages to achieving the Vision? Answer: The cultural acceptance of domestic violence	Strategy/Objective Domestic violence not to be tolerated by the community
What can you do to overcome these blockages? Answer: Shame the perpetrators, make them know that the rest of the community does not approve when they are violent.	Output: A physical demonstration by the rest of the community that the perpetrators actions are not acceptable.
What Actions do you need to take to achieve these Outputs? When neighbours hear domestic violence happening to start banging saucepans, metal buckets etc.	Action: When neighbours hear domestic violence happening to start banging saucepans, metal buckets etc.

Using this questioning method together with appropriate group processes, the planning facilitator can enable any group to develop a strategic plan to achieve their goals, within their own world view.

Once the group has developed an appropriate strategy, the next part of the plan is to determine how to set the actions in place. This next part is operational planning.



## Operational Planning

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The focus question for Operational Planning is How? There is no longer any debate about the merits or otherwise of the output being achieved, it is merely about how to achieve it.

Thus returning to cooking the meal for the family. The desired output is a meal prepared. The steps to achieving this might be:

- Find/choose recipe
- Check ingredients required
- Make list of items not already in pantry
- Purchase ingredients
- Assemble cooking utensils
- Cook meal
- Serve meal

However each one of these steps might be a major project in its own right. For example, 'find recipe'. This could potentially include making a budget assessment, considering the likes of the family members, identifying whether it's a special occasion or not, researching what is available in the store. The probability is that all these are considered rapidly through the process of leafing through the cookery book on the book shelf. However if it was a child embarking on this project, it might be worth asking them questions around these issues. In a similar manner, if the desired output is 'move office' and the office comprises 1500 people, there would be many steps and substeps in this process.

*There are three tools that the planning facilitator can use to assist others develop an operational plan.*

- Steps and Calendar
- Potentially asking the 'Blockages question' again
- Who/What/When cards

### Steps and Calendar

Have the participants consider what each step might be, and write them on sticky notes or cards. This allows the plan to be created in a fluid manner, with many revisions. The cards can then be laid out with an appropriate date range, perhaps using a variation of the history wall, but in the future.

### Blockages Question

There will always be the situation where one of the steps identified states something really obscure such as: 'Construct hexomotorgram' (or some such obtuse jargon). The planning facilitator has no knowledge of what a hexomotorgram is, or what it will take to construct. In this case it is worth asking the question, 'Is there anything likely to prevent the construction of a hexomotorgram from happening?' The answers will provide the clue to what to do next. If the response is 'Nope', move right along. If the response is something along the lines of "Hmm, depends if we can get the wire, and the resource committee could cause a headache, not to mention whether the union will allow the overtime needed for the melt down", then you know this needs

further looking at, and a strategy developed for this step in its own right.

### **Who, What, When Cards**

Developed by R. Bruce Williams, (Williams: 1996) Who/What/When cards demand that every sub step or action has somebody identified to carry it out and a date for it to happen. Williams suggests that the role of the facilitator at this point is to demand reality. If a an action is to “hold Christmas party” the facilitator should demand to know who will book the venue, who will organise invitations, who will organise the special event etc.

### **Conclusion**

There are two basic elements to creating a plan.

- Strategic Planning, that focuses on the question Why?
- Operational Planning, that focuses on the question How?

The planning facilitator needs to be aware of which stage the participants are at in the process in order to ask the appropriate questions that will lead them to identifying an appropriate action. There will often be situations where there are sub outcomes within a total plan. Each of these need to be separately considered to ensure efficient activities and substantive outputs.

### **References and further reading**

Orr, D. (1999). An Introduction to the Logframe Approach: Course Workbook and Materials. Melbourne, IDSS Professional Development Program.

Williams, R. B. (1996). More Than 50 Ways to Build Team Consensus, Hawker Brownlow.





## 7 Monitoring and Evaluation

### Background

Monitoring and Evaluation are activities carried out to assess how plans have been carried out and what outcomes have been achieved.

Monitoring generally relates to operational planning. It is to check whether something has happened or is on target to happen, and identifies new time lines if necessary.

Evaluation generally relates to strategic planning. It is an assessment of how successful the project was in achieving the desired aims.

Increasingly, this part of the process is being referred to as 'Learning', for this is truly what is going on.

### Outcomes

Good Monitoring and Evaluation provides a positive learning environment. Through consciously acknowledging what has been learnt from the project or program that has been implemented, a group is in a stronger position for the next project.

### Method

There are many Monitoring and Evaluation techniques, and many professional 'evaluators'. Consensual and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation is where these activities are carried out by those involved in the project, and many of the tools and systems used for participatory analysis can be used for monitoring and evaluation.

## Monitoring

The simplest form of monitoring a project is through comparing progress made to progress planned. There are bound to be items that were thought to have been important at the time of planning that for various reasons did not materialise, and vice versa. Issues or hold-ups never envisaged can take up an in-ordinate amount of time and need to be recorded for future leaning.

The main task in monitoring is to ensure that, in general, progress is being made to achieving the stated output despite the unexpected. The principal problem for a planning facilitator is where an action committed to by a participant simply hasn't been carried out.

The main questions to be asked at this point is to ask the group how long they are willing to allow the planned item to 'slide', what might be the implications to the project as a whole, and whether they need somebody else to do the ac-

tion. It is usually a difficult situation, with the one who made the original commitment often wanting to still carry out the work. The planning facilitator might ask if they would like some assistance, and perhaps someone else in the group could assist.

## Evaluation

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Consensual and participatory evaluation of a project is often carried out at the end of planning cycle, though ongoing evaluation can also be beneficial, especially for larger projects.

### Planning for Evaluation

While many of the same tools used for 'analysis' can be used for evaluation, it is useful to plan for evaluation during the planning cycle of the project. A useful question to ask participants during the planning stage is:

*What would you feel, hear or see if this project was successful and achieved positive outcomes?*

It is then possible to add into the plan some measuring systems at the beginning of the project that can be remeasured either during or at the end of the project as well. For this the group will need to develop some indicators to use. The important element is to ensure that the actions required for evaluation get implemented as a legitimate part of the project.

### The Evaluation

At periodic times during the project, or at the time of a final evaluation, the following can be asked.

- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- What might work in the future?
- What were the unexpected results? (positive and negative)
- What has been learnt?

### Conclusion

Good Monitoring and Evaluation provides the basis for learning and long term sustainable change.

# Outside the Gates



## 8 Stakeholders

### Background

Not everyone needs or wants to be engaged in all decisions. However to ensure sustainable decisions, it is a precondition of participatory development principles that those with a stake in the decision are engaged appropriately.

An issue when working with groups, is a tendency for the group to see themselves as the sole, or 'legitimate' decision makers. This might be for many reasons, including being voted in as a group member (such as a local council), or being 'vested' as the decision making group, such as being a 'representative council' or 'advisory body'. In these cases, it is necessary for the planning facilitator to assist the group identify other stakeholders that might have a 'stake' in decisions that it is considering.

### Outcomes

The intended outcome of a group carrying out one or more of these exercises is for them to become more aware of other stakeholders potentially interested in their topic. This will enable the group to consider later how they might then involve these other stakeholders.

### Method

A Useful way for a planning facilitator to enable a group consider other stakeholders, is to help the group develop an 'engagement plan'. The elements of an engagement plan are

- 1 A list of the stakeholders involved or who have an interest in the outcomes of a project
- 2 The level that the group wants to engage them
- 3 The tools for use to achieve that level of engagement.

## Size of the Problem

*Prior organisation: None*

Groups concerned with highly complex issues that directly effect their work or personal life, are often so overwhelmed that they 'just want something done about it', for example Domestic Violence or Drug and Alcohol abuse. Helping a group gain a better understanding of the complexity of the topic enables them to develop realistic strategies with achievable outputs. Asking the group to compare their problem with a known, 'tame' problem such as building a house, or office block helps them gain a better understanding that their issue is not going to be 'fixed' by attending a couple of meetings. The exercise can start discussions about the resources and time needed for their topic, together with identifying potential allies.

### Method

Place an object in the centre of the space, and ask the group to consider the size of the topic they are considering. If small, (no more complex than deciding and

making breakfast in the morning), stand right on the object. If a really large project, so large it seems unsolvable, stand as far from the object as possible. Ask them to mentally note where they and each other are. Follow up with asking participants to consider a different task, preferably one that they have some comprehension of, such as designing and building a house or office block. Using the same scale, ask them to reposition themselves to illustrate the complexity of that project. Follow up with questions regarding the time and resources needed for the latter, the number of people involved in the project and how it's achieved.

Questions might be:

- What are the steps needed to build a house?
- How long does it take to design and construct a multi storey office block?
- How many people are involved?

If this is a smaller problem than the one that you are considering, how long might yours take?

Who else might need to be involved to satisfactorily solve your problem?

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## Stakeholder Matrix

*Prior organisation: Card with matrix drawn. Sticky notes or index cards.*

### Method

- Brainstorm and collate all the stakeholders involved in the topic.
- Write the name of each stakeholder group on an index card
- Ask the group rank the stakeholders from those with the highest stake in the outcome to the lowest.
- Finally, have the group plot the stakeholders on the matrix against resources as well as stake.

After plotting the stakeholders on the matrix, generate a discussion with questions such as:

- What do you notice?
- Which stakeholders with resources are not here today?
- What activities could you carry out to ensure that your project will be funded as opposed to some other?
- What relationship do you want to have with those who have a high stake but low resources?

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## Frequency/Impact Chart

*Prior organisation: Pre-prepared chart. Sticker dots.*

This exercise is particularly useful when working with groups that have resources, or responsibilities to implement projects. It assists them to gauge what level of engagement is necessary for the topic in question.

### Method

Enable the group to identify a key stakeholder. Starting with the 'x' and 'y' axes of the chart only, ask them to identify whether the resultant decision made will have a high or low impact on the stakeholders, and also the frequency in which this project or item occurs in their lives. Once the group have indicated

on the chart their perceptions, draw a line from mid point on one axis to mid point on the other. Generally speaking, projects such as repainting the toilets that happen infrequently and don't have a great impact on most stakeholders, do not need much stakeholder input. However, something such as a weekly task roster will generally achieve better outcomes if the stakeholders involved are also involved in the decision. Similarly, a major new project that happens infrequently, such as a new capital works project, will achieve better outcomes with a strong engagement processes incorporated in the decision making.

#### **Questions to ask the group:**

- What does this tell us?
- Is there any particular stakeholder group that might need to be given special consideration?

## **The Knotty Problem**

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*Prior organisation : none*

#### **Method**

Ask for one volunteer who might like to be the leader of the group in a demonstration exercise to step forward.

Ask the others to form a circle, and place their right hands into the centre. Hold onto someone's hand that isn't their neighbour in the circle. Then repeat with left hands. They will now be in quite a knot.

Without the group letting go of hands, and through verbal instructions only, the outside leader now advises the group how to untangle themselves. The group are only allowed to follow instructions from the leader in silence, and not contribute to solving the problem. It is rare that the group untangle themselves through this method.

After a time, invite the leader to join the group and create a new knot. This time allow the group to talk with each other and untie themselves.

#### **Questions to ask at the end of the exercise might include:**

- What were some of the differences in the two exercises?
- How did it feel giving the instructions?
- How did it feel not being able to speak, only follow instructions?
- Why was there a difference between the two exercises?
- Is there any learnings that we could transfer to our current situation?

#### **Conclusions**

Asking a group to identify the other stakeholders in a particular topic is a first step before enabling them to decide how they want to relate or include them. Not all stakeholders want to, or need to, be involved in all decisions. Through enabling a group to identify and make decisions about how they are going to liaise with other stakeholders enables them to make better decisions about their project as a whole.

# Outside the Gates



## 9

### Engagement Processes

#### Background

A group will often identify that it wishes to engage with other stakeholders, but has little knowledge of possible techniques to use. In this case, it is the participatory planner that has expert knowledge. To enable the group determine what kind of technique it wishes to use requires providing unbiased information on the various systems and techniques that are available. The techniques illustrated are some of the more engaging techniques. There are others such as sales and informing techniques covered in other publications should the group decide on a lower level of engagement with a particular stakeholder group.

#### Outcomes

The group will make an informed decision about how it wishes to relate to other stakeholders, and develop a mechanism to do so.

#### SWOT Chart of 3 Engagement Processes

*Prior organisation: Make up the table on an overhead or PowerPoint or copy onto a large flipchart. Add other systems as appropriate.*

#### Method

This should be simply presented to the group, without making a recommendation as to which to use.

Technique	Strengths	Weaknesses	Good For
Semi Structured Interviews.	Good for engaging individuals.	Requires a lot of resources.	Engaging key stakeholders.
Speak Out (Sarkissian, Cook et al. 1997).	Focuses around specific topics set by the organisers Enables stakeholders to be heard easily.	Participants have no control of the agenda..	Enabling lots of people 'drop in' and quickly express their view around a topic.
Open Space (Owen 1997).	Enables participants develop their own agenda.	Requires stakeholders to commit for a set period of time e.g. One day.	Enabling a diverse group express their particular views on wide agendas. Also useful if there are lots of people, and not many skilled in facilitation.

There is no one correct method, or even methodology to decide on an engagement methodology, but through suitable questioning, the group can be assisted in making an appropriate decision.



*Questions to ask the group.*

- How many individuals in this stakeholder group are there?
- How clear are we about the topic?
- What is our purpose of engaging these stakeholders?

Sticker dots or some other ranking method could be used to enable the group make a decision as to which process to use.

An essential element of engagement in general, and all these techniques, is listening. This is together with asking questions that enable others express their view. It is the basis for facilitation, and a training session on active listening can be beneficial.

## Reflective Listening Training

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*Prior organisation: Identify some topical subjects from the newspaper. These should be items that people might have a view on, though they should not be on the topic that is central to the group.*

### Method

Organise participants into groups of three. Ask each group to identify a speaker, a listener and an observer. Advise participants that you will provide them with a topic on which the speaker is to talk for three minutes. The listener is to actively listen, reflecting back what they are hearing to confirm to the speaker that they have heard correctly. It is not a debate. The observer is to watch the listener, and identify whether they are listening well to what the speaker is saying on the subject.

After three minutes, the observer should report back to the others, as well as the speaker advising whether or not they felt that they had been listened to.

## The Speak Out

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### Background

Developed by Community Planner Wendy Sarkissian, (Sarkissian, Cook et al. 1997) this process is especially useful where there is some specific ideas or issues that the group wants feed back on from the broader community.

*Prior organisation: The bulk of the work for a Speak Out is in the planning, thus the planning facilitator should ensure that the group has carried this out thoroughly.*

### Method

Using the operational planning method described in the creative cycle, some items that the group should consider are:

- List of topics requiring input
- Identification of facilitators and scribes
- Venue
- Child care
- Other events

- Flip charts/boards/pens
- Food for facilitators & scribes
- Assessment of peak and slack times of stakeholders
- Advertising
- Endorsements e.g. from Council, Head Office etc.
- Transcription method
- Proceedings collation method e.g. with or without stakeholders involvement
- Proceedings dissemination method

## Open Space

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**Background:** Developed by Harrison Owen, (Owen 1997) a conference organiser in the 1980's, Open Space is a process that enables participants to control a meeting agenda.

*Prior Organisation: As with a Speak Out, the major work is in the planning of the event. The group needs to consider:*

- Engaging somebody with authority or legitimacy to 'open' and 'close' the space
- Venue
- Food
- Setting up of main space and break out groups
- Computers
- Flip charts/pens
- Material to be used in the opening of the space
- Invitations to stakeholders
- Development of the 'theme' and 'givens'

If it is not carried out at the end of the event itself, the group needs to distribute material generated by the participants after the event.

## Semi-Structured Interviews

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### Background

Semi structured interviews are sometimes called Focussed Conversations, or even Strategic Questioning.

*Prior Organisation: None*

Most surveys are extractive, in that they do not engage the participant particularly well. Often they do not even send any information back to the participants such as the results of the survey. As the aim of participatory development is to engage stakeholders in the development process, one of these more inclusive methods is preferable.

### Method

There are two elements to semi structured interviews

- 1 The questions
- 2 The order of questions



The questions themselves should generally be open questions, though there might be a closed question at the end to allow the interviewee an opportunity to make a decision. The group can be advised of the types of questions that exist, generally defined as being:

- leading,
- ambiguous,
- open
- closed

Using group processes (such as 'think, pair, share') participants generate a list of potential questions that can then be ranked according to effectiveness and usefulness.

The second part of the process is to order the questions into a natural sequence. A sequence that is often used being as follows:

- 1 Safe, grounded, objective questions
- 2 Feeling, reflective questions relating to the first
- 3 Inquiring, interpretative questions
- 4 Decisional, conclusive questions

This process provides a logical sequence that allows the interviewee the opportunity to demonstrate to themselves using their own knowledge:

- 1 What is actually happening
- 2 How they feel about it
- 3 Why that should be so
- 4 What they would like to do about it.

*Further readings on developing this form of interviewing technique include:*

- Strategic Questioning – (Peavey 1994)
- The Art of Focussed Conversation – (Stanfield 1997)

The planning facilitator can then enable the group to order their questions into this sequence, creating a functional semi-structured interview that they can implement.

## **References and further reading**

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